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An affiliate of the
National Education Association

Marcia Ferreira

Before the

Education Committee

March 19, 2015

Re:

SB 1095 AAC Student Assessments

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Marcia Ferreira. I am an elementary school teacher in East Hartford where I serve as a math coach. I am also here on behalf and as a member of the Connecticut Education Association.

I am testifying today on SB1095 and urge committee members to replace the seriously flawed SBAC test with an assessment system that:

- Incorporates teaching and learning
- Is embedded in the curriculum and aligned to the Common Core
- Restores time to instruction
- Provides immediate, meaningful, and useful information to teachers and parents
- Provides for comparisons within a school year, over multiple years, and across schools and districts
- Measures student growth and grade equivalence
- Identifies and addresses student competency on specific standards
- Reduces test-anxiety
- Reduces high-stakes
- Does not disrupt the teaching schedule
- Avoids hours-long pre-tests and the loss of entire periods to interim tests

We use such a system in East Hartford and I am here to explain how powerful and effective it can be for promoting high-quality teaching and instruction. This type of system uses “Curriculum-Based” or “Progress Monitoring” testing (“PMTs”) to identify student competencies on standards and to direct instruction for improving learning.

Attached are screen shots and a narrative showing how this approach "meets each student where the student is" by providing more personal attention to each student – something that cannot be accomplished with SBAC.

We have also put together a very short (< 3mins) video showing how PMTs work and the types of personalized reports they can generate (click: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVoA8LuutYc). I hope that you can find time to watch this quick informative introduction.

PMTs are vendor products created with the expertise of psychometric and curriculum experts. There are a few companies that provide these products to school districts. The one that I am showing you today, visually and in the attached examples, is called STAR (Renaissance Learning http://www.renaissance.com/products/star-assessments), and is used in about 20% of Connecticut school districts today.

These assessments are also about one-third the cost of SBAC.

Thank you for this opportunity to show you some of the positive things happening in our schools.

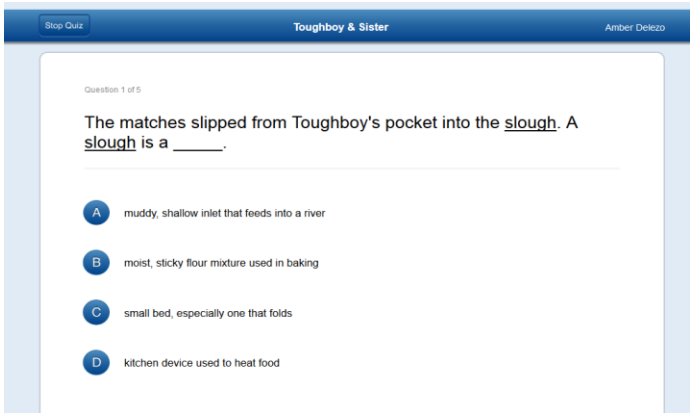
Please see the attached materials.

Progress Monitoring Assessments Explained

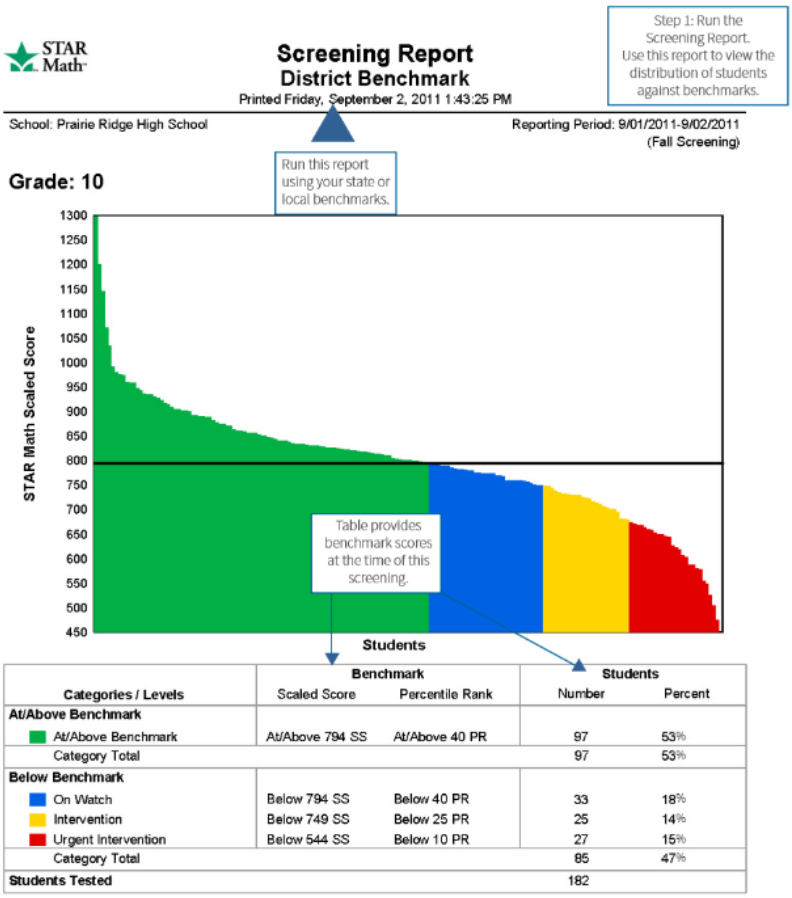
-East Hartford educator Marcia Ferreira-

My colleagues and I have a wide range of abilities and needs within our student population and we are always looking to tailor instruction to meet each individual child. We know that in order to teach each child, we need information that will guide instruction. Progress monitoring assessments/tests (PMAs or PMTs) are an essential tool for helping us to do just that.

Progress monitoring tests give teachers immediate feedback that helps drive instruction. Below are screen shots from a PMT website to help explain how powerful they are for teaching and learning. This system, called STAR, is in use in my school district.



We give STAR three times a year. This gives teachers in my district valid, reliable, and actionable data in just 10-20 minutes of testing time.



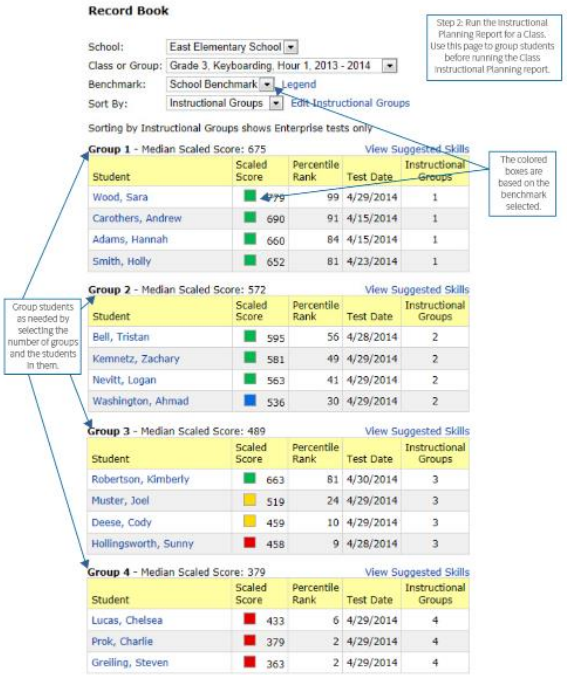
Categories / Levels	Benchmark Scaled Score	Benchmark Percentile Rank	Students Number	Students Percent
At/Above Benchmark				
At/Above Benchmark	At/Above 794 SS	At/Above 40 PR	97	53%
Category Total			97	53%
Below Benchmark				
On Watch	Below 794 SS	Below 40 PR	33	18%
Intervention	Below 749 SS	Below 25 PR	25	14%
Urgent Intervention	Below 544 SS	Below 10 PR	27	15%
Category Total			85	47%
Students Tested			182	

Students can take either a reading or math test with STAR. They log in with their own individual password and answer approximately 34 multiple choice questions. Since the assessment is adaptive, we know that it is individualized for each child.

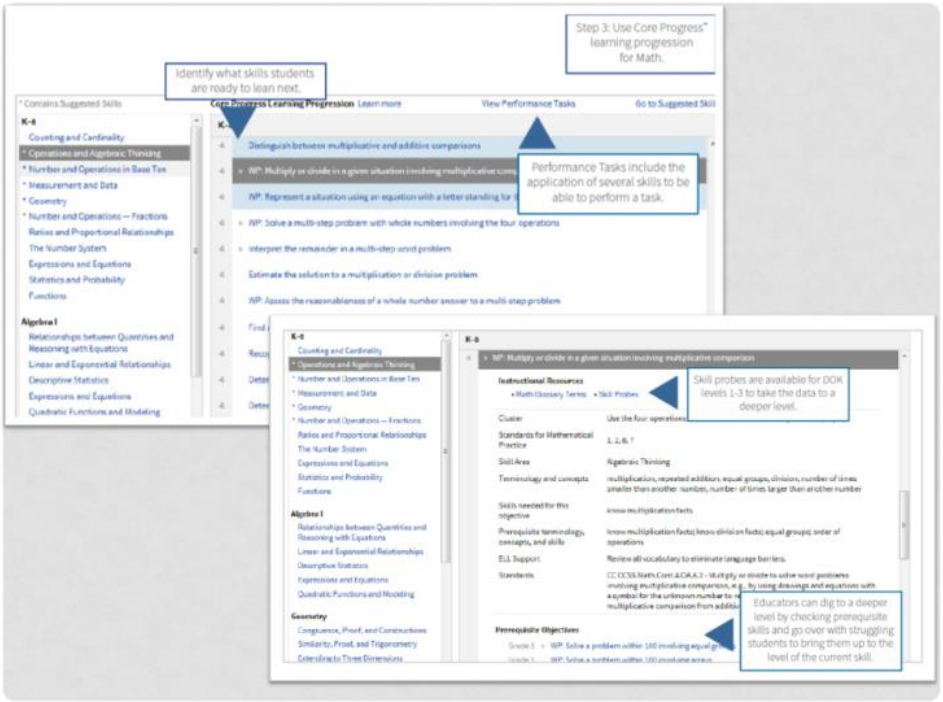
Data is available for teachers immediately. One of the most useful reports that teachers use is the screening report (at left). **(See larger copies of reports that follow.)**

This report allows educators to see which students are on track to make benchmark (green), on "watch" (blue), and identifies which students will need further support (yellow) and modified instruction (red).

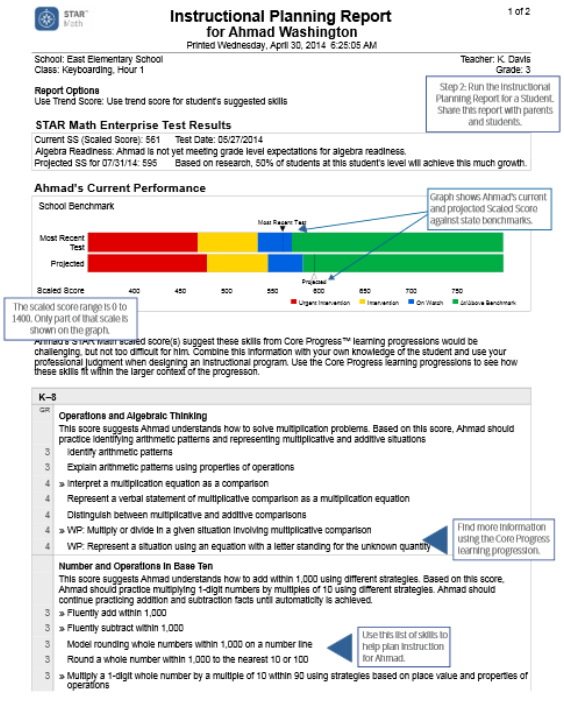
In addition to data that shows the entire class, STAR also allows teachers to create instructional groups and match instruction to meet each student group's needs.

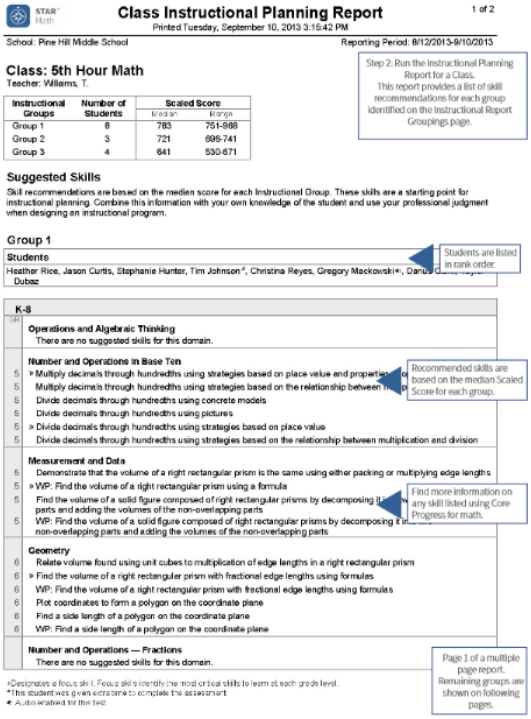


Teachers have an idea of exactly what each standard looks like. For example, after my students have tested, I can pull the exact standards where they need instruction.



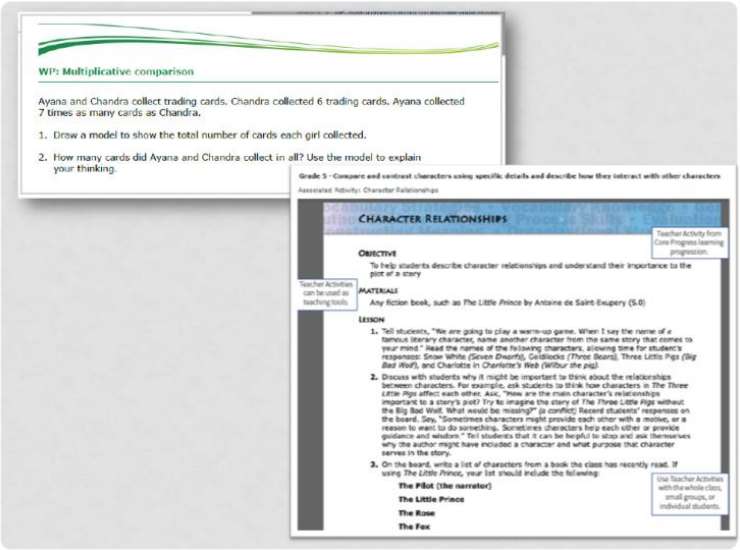
Teachers are able to get individualized information for each student. In addition, teachers are able to match up specific standards that they can use for instruction because STAR offers a great deal of resources and activities.





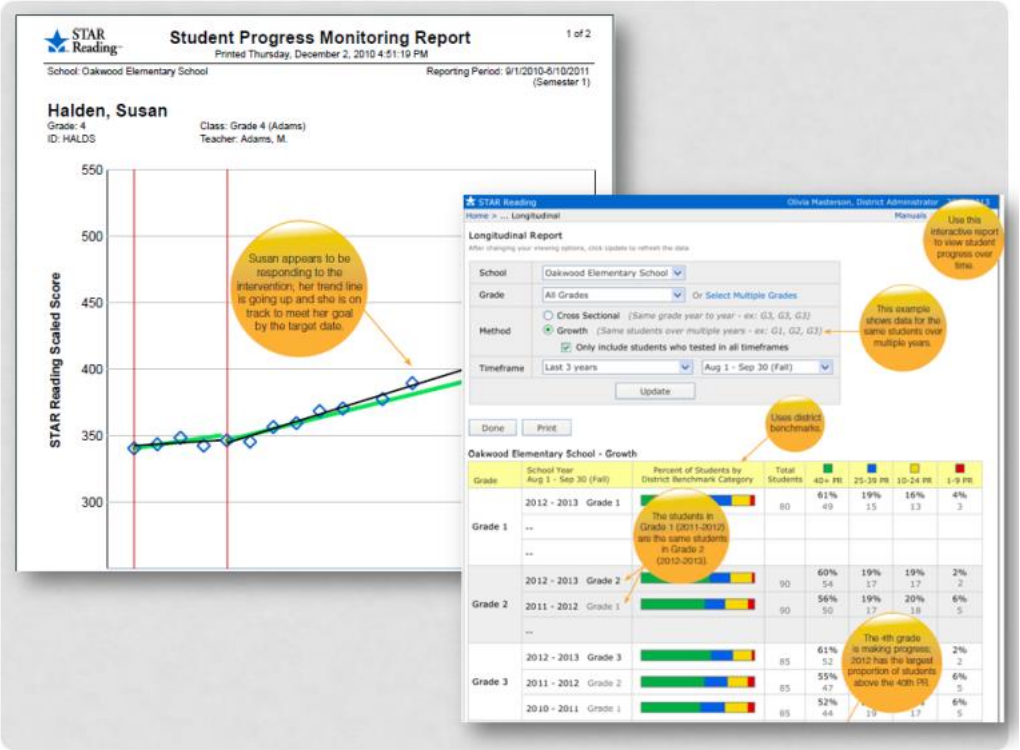
STAR will allow me to plug in those specific standards and find resources and activities that match those students' needs.

I can find sample lessons, videos, games, problems, and all the resources I would need to teach that standard.



If I want to know how my students are doing in comparison to other students in the district or the state, I can also run that report and find out if they're on their way to meeting benchmark in comparison with other students at that grade level.

Growth can be measured by individual student over the course of a year, and from year to year.



To sum up – progress monitoring tests give us information that helps us teach each child instead of teaching to the test. I have information I can use immediately to intervene to make sure no students fall behind.

STAR is just one of the progress monitoring assessments teachers use to monitor student growth. It is immediate, reliable, research based, widely used, and aligned to the Common Core.

Step 1: Run the Screening Report. Use this report to view the distribution of students against benchmarks.

Screening Report
District Benchmark

Printed Friday, September 2, 2011 1:43:25 PM

School: Prairie Ridge High School

Reporting Period: 9/01/2011-9/02/2011 (Fall Screening)

Run this report using your state or local benchmarks.

Grade: 10

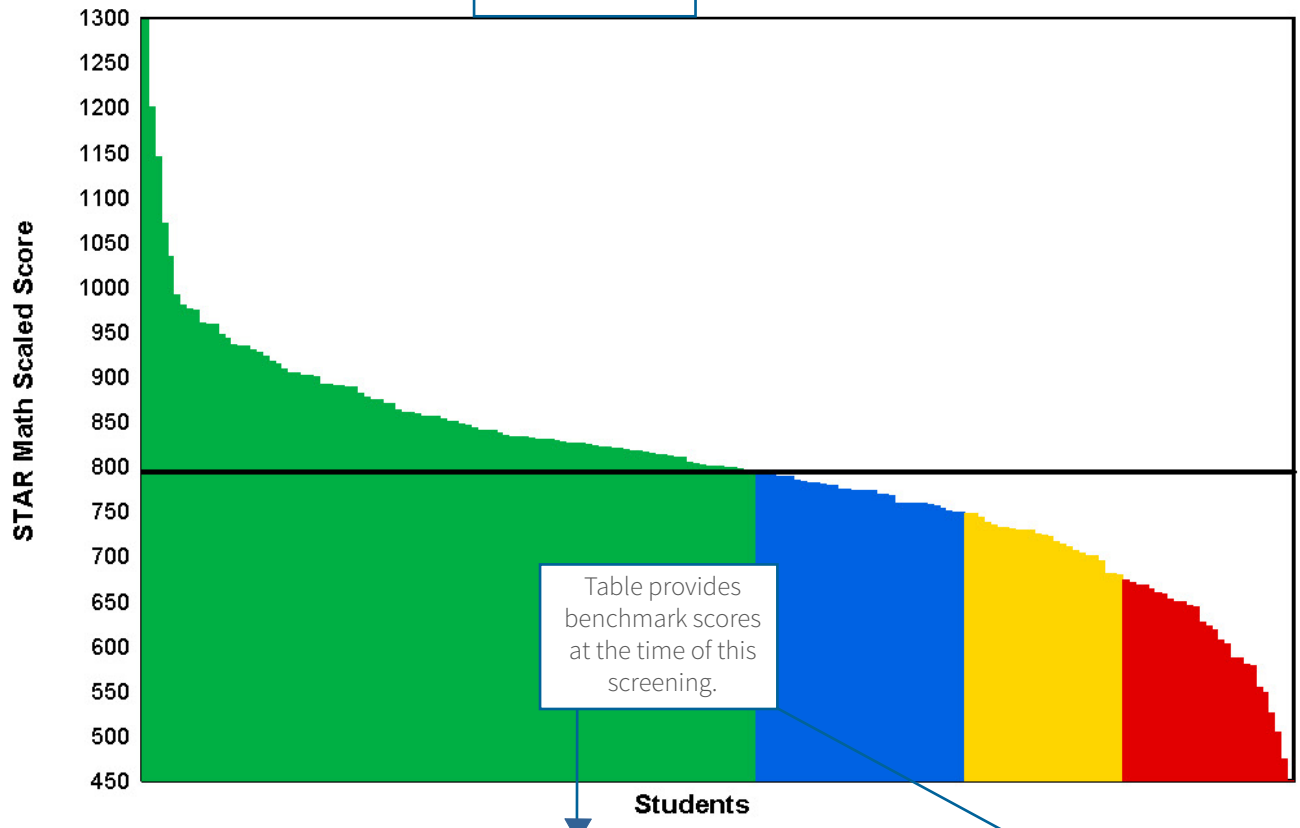


Table provides benchmark scores at the time of this screening.

Categories / Levels	Benchmark		Students	
	Scaled Score	Percentile Rank	Number	Percent
At/Above Benchmark				
At/Above Benchmark	At/Above 794 SS	At/Above 40 PR	97	53%
Category Total			97	53%
Below Benchmark				
On Watch	Below 794 SS	Below 40 PR	33	18%
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Category Total			85	47%
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Key questions to ask based on this and other information: Are you satisfied with the number of students at the highest level of performance? Next, consider the level or score that indicates proficiency. Which students just above proficiency are you "worried about" and what support within or beyond core instruction is warranted? What support is needed for students just below? Do all students represented by your lowest level need urgent intervention?

Details for each student are on the following pages of this report.

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Instructional Planning Report
for Ahmad Washington

Printed Wednesday, April 30, 2014 6:25:05 AM

School: East Elementary School
Class: Keyboarding, Hour 1

Teacher: K. Davis
Grade: 3

Step 2: Run the Instructional Planning Report for a Student. Share this report with parents and students.

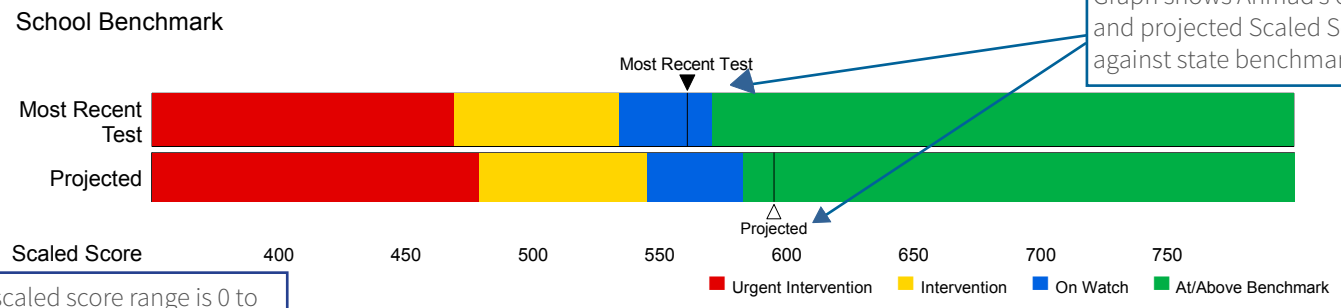
Report Options
Use Trend Score: Use trend score for student's suggested skills

STAR Math Enterprise Test Results

Current SS (Scaled Score): 561 Test Date: 05/27/2014
Algebra Readiness: Ahmad is not yet meeting grade level expectations for algebra readiness.
Projected SS for 07/31/14: 595 Based on research, 50% of students at this student's level will achieve this much growth.

Ahmad's Current Performance

Graph shows Ahmad's current and projected Scaled Score against state benchmarks.



The scaled score range is 0 to 1400. Only part of that scale is shown on the graph.

Ahmad's STAR Math scaled score(s) suggest these skills from Core Progress™ learning progressions would be challenging, but not too difficult for him. Combine this information with your own knowledge of the student and use your professional judgment when designing an instructional program. Use the Core Progress learning progressions to see how these skills fit within the larger context of the progresson.

K–8

GR	
	Operations and Algebraic Thinking
	This score suggests Ahmad understands how to solve multiplication problems. Based on this score, Ahmad should practice identifying arithmetic patterns and representing multiplicative and additive situations
3	Identify arithmetic patterns
3	Explain arithmetic patterns using properties of operations
4	» Interpret a multiplication equation as a comparison
4	Represent a verbal statement of multiplicative comparison as a multiplication equation
4	Distinguish between multiplicative and additive comparisons
4	» WP: Multiply or divide in a given situation involving multiplicative comparison
4	WP: Represent a situation using an equation with a letter standing for the unknown quantity
	Number and Operations in Base Ten
	This score suggests Ahmad understands how to add within 1,000 using different strategies. Based on this score, Ahmad should practice multiplying 1-digit numbers by multiples of 10 using different strategies. Ahmad should continue practicing addition and subtraction facts until automaticity is achieved.
3	» Fluently add within 1,000
3	» Fluently subtract within 1,000
3	Model rounding whole numbers within 1,000 on a number line
3	Round a whole number within 1,000 to the nearest 10 or 100
3	» Multiply a 1-digit whole number by a multiple of 10 within 90 using strategies based on place value and properties of operations

Find more information using the Core Progress learning progression.

Use this list of skills to help plan instruction for Ahmad.

» Designates a focus skill. Focus skills identify the most critical skills to learn at each grade level.

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STAR Math — Olivia Masterson, District Administrator 2012-2013

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Longitudinal Report

After changing your viewing options, click Update to refresh the data

School	Oakwood Elementary School
Grade	All Grades — Or Select Multiple Grades
Method	○ Cross Sectional *(Same grade year to year - ex: G3, G3, G3)* ◉ Growth *(Same students over multiple years - ex: G1, G2, G3)* ☑ Only include students who tested in all timeframes
Timeframe	Last 3 years — Aug 1 - Sep 30 (Fall)
	Update

This example shows data for the same students over multiple years.

Track trends back as far as five years.

Done | Print

Oakwood Elementary School Growth

Grade	School Year Aug 1 - Sep 30 (Fall)	Percent of Students by District Benchmark Category	Total Students	40+ PR	25-39 PR	10-24 PR	1-9 PR
Grade 1	2012 - 2013 Grade 1		80	61% 49	19% 15	16% 13	4% 3
	--						
	--						
Grade 2	2012 - 2013 Grade 2		90	60% 54	19% 17	19% 17	2% 2
	2011 - 2012 Grade 1		90	56% 50	19% 17	20% 18	6% 5
	--						
Grade 3	2012 - 2013 Grade 3		85	61% 52	20% 17	16% 14	2% 2
	2011 - 2012 Grade 2		85	55% 47	21% 18	18% 15	6% 5
	2010 - 2011 Grade 1		85	52% 44	22% 19	20% 17	6% 5
Grade 4	2012 - 2013 Grade 4		83	65% 54	17% 14	16% 13	2% 2
	2011 - 2012 Grade 3		83	58% 48	18% 15	18% 15	6% 5
	2010 - 2011 Grade 2		83	53% 44	20% 17	19% 16	7% 6
Grade 5	2012 - 2013 Grade 5		90	61% 55	14% 13	19% 17	6% 5
	2011 - 2012 Grade 4		90	57% 51	17% 15	19% 17	8% 7
	2010 - 2011 Grade 3		90	50% 45	18% 16	21% 19	11% 10

The students in Grade 1 (2011-2012) are the same students in Grade 2 (2012-2013).

Done | Print