



CURRICULUM NEWS



MID VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT – A LEARNING COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE

FEBRUARY 2017

MVSD Assessment Guidelines: Reminders on Testing and Grading

One purpose of assessments is to generate and report grades to administration and parents. However, our need to grade students should not be the main driver of our assessment practices. Assessments should focus primarily on providing students and teachers with real-time evidence of what and how students are learning so teachers can refine instruction or identify what skills, topics, or lessons need to be taught again. This evidence can be shared informally through verbal and written feedback, and it does not have to be a grade. A varied and balanced approach to student assessment is the ideal.

Teachers often feel under pressure to administer one “last test” near the end of a marking period so they have additional information to assign a grade. In those cases, they are testing primarily so they can give a grade. When several teachers are trying to give a test but do not coordinate their schedules, students may end up taking too many tests on a single day. That practice is not always appropriate and may even be counterproductive. It is also not in keeping with our district’s assessment guidelines. When there are too many tests on a single day, students may become stressed and not perform as well especially if they have unique learning or language development needs. Some students may even avoid school that day because it’s too much pressure. I have copied a section of the guidelines below for your review. Please adhere to them.

- Teachers should not rely exclusively on traditional forms of assessment (e.g. tests and quizzes) for evaluation and grading purposes. Tests should include level 3 and 4 Depth of Knowledge tasks. Teachers should use a variety of summative, formative, and diagnostic assessments.
- Major assessments may have a significant impact on students’ grades, stress levels, family or work responsibilities, and other important factors. A major assessment is any test, quiz, project, presentation, or other academic task that requires most or all of a class period for completion and/or one that requires a substantial amount of preparation before the deadline.

- Teachers should communicate with their grade level and/or subject area colleagues to avoid scheduling multiple major assessments on the same day.
 - **Primary and Elementary Grades:** Reading and Mathematics tests should not be scheduled on the same day. Teachers should avoid scheduling more than two major assessments in different subject areas on the same day.
 - **Secondary Grades:** Teachers should avoid scheduling more than two major assessments on the same day. If teachers wish to schedule up to three major assessments on the same date, they should request approval from the building principal. Teachers should never schedule more than three major assessments on the same day.
- Major assessments should not be scheduled on or immediately following major religious holidays. Please consult the school and cultural calendars as needed to plan the schedule for major assessments.
- Teachers should make provisions for students to make up examinations missed due to illness or other reasons beyond the students' control. Whenever possible, teachers should avoid scheduling the make-up examination on the same day when there are other scheduled assessments.

Food for Thought on Assessment and Learning

Assessment for Learning

- enables teachers to use information about students' knowledge, understanding and skills to inform their teaching
- teachers provide feedback to students about their learning and how to improve

Assessment as Learning

- involves students in the learning process where they monitor their own progress, ask questions and practise skills
- students use self-assessment and teacher feedback to reflect on their learning, consolidate their understanding and work towards learning goals

Assessment of Learning

- assists teachers to use evidence of student learning to assess student achievement against learning goals and standards

Do you need Act 48 hours? Do you want to get ideas you can use in your classroom?

We have some great Spartan University workshops for you!

ESL Adaptations Workshop - February 8, 2017. We will meet from 3:30 – 4:30 P.M. in the Elementary Center Library. Please pre-register in MyLearningPlan for activity #76. Please bring an assessment or instructional materials you will use so we can brainstorm ideas on how to adapt them for your ELs.

Online Library Power User – March 6 or 9, 2017. In this one-hour workshop, teachers will learn how to use the resources available through the Mid Valley Secondary Center Library, resources you can use from your home, your classroom and even your phone. Learn power user tips for using Britannica Online, FactCite, eLibrary, POWER Library, Opposing Viewpoints and Bloom's Literature. Find videos to use in lessons or for flipping your classroom on Classroom Video Direct. Content is beneficial for elementary, middle and high school classrooms. (Offered by Mrs. Piorkowski) Pre-register in MLP for activity #77 or #78.

Changing Educational Acronyms: ~~E.L.L.~~ (It's now E.L.)

The new federal education law, ESSA, has changed how we address our new learners of English who receive English as a Second Language Services. We used to call them English Language Learners (ELLs). However, they are now officially known as English Learners (ELs). Isn't that a bit silly since all our students are learning English? Still, either of those two acronyms are better than the old one, LEP, or Limited English Proficient. LEP was based on a deficiency perspective that frames students based on what they have not achieved instead of focusing on their growth and achievements.



"The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter." Mark Twain

Teachers in the Spotlight: 1st Grade

Our first grade teachers are Mrs. Bowen, Mrs. Golzak, Mrs. Granza, Mrs. Kempa, Mrs. Lopes, and Mrs. Minter. They are passionate about building the foundations for literacy and promoting the love of reading. Their greatest joy is hearing students reading a storybook for the first time. It is the reason they are here as teachers. They love field trips especially when they offer students experiences they would not otherwise have. Three of them are Mid Valley graduates, and they all think that Mid Valley is a special place because we are a resilient community that comes together when support is most needed. They are graduates of East Stroudsburg University, Marywood University, and Penn State University. They have 9 to 26 years of teaching experience. Collectively, they have more than 118 years of experience! There's no picture of them here because some of them were a bit camera shy!

PERMS, Act 48, and MyLearningPlan.com: Reminders

- Check your PERMS account and your PDE deadline.
- Please contact me if you don't have enough hours to comply with PDE's requirements within the established window.
- When you register for an activity in MLP, please read it carefully. Please don't sign up for activities you did not attend.
- Most activities listed in the MLP catalog will disappear by June 10, 2017. Sign-up now for any activities you have attended.

PSSA Exams: Spring 2017	
Testing Windows	Testing Dates
English Language Arts: 4/3 - 4/7/17 (Grades 3 - 8)	4/4 - 4/7/17
Math: 4/24 - 4/28/17 (Grades 3 - 8)	4/25 - 4/27/17
Science: 5/1 - 5/5/17 (Grades 4 and 8)	5/2 - 5/3/17
Make-ups: 5/8 - 5/12/17	
Keystones Exams: Spring 2017	
Testing Window	Testing Dates
May 15 - 26, 2017	
Literature	5/15 - 5/16/17
Algebra I	5/17 - 5/18/17
Biology	5/23 - 5/24/17