

February Board Report Ozona Middle School

“Teaching to the Test” Discussion

I recently had an opportunity to visit with a young parent; we discussed C Scope and accountability testing. His concern was that C Scope was a politically motivated liberal curriculum tool, and in addition to allowing that in our schools, he was concerned about so much emphasis being placed on a test and “teaching to the test”. I don’t want the board or our parents to think that we are only teaching to a test or that we are politically proselytizing at all in the CCCSD. The STAAR and C Scope are based on our TEKS, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, for each core area. Teachers are planning, instructing, benchmarking, and making Rtl plans based on those elements. We are teaching and re-teaching so that the students do well on the state assessments, but we are teaching and re-teaching the TEKS at a high level of complexity that is required of students on the STAAR. And by using C Scope, we are certain that we teach ALL TEKS every year. We are teaching so that our students are prepared for the test and beyond. The vision behind STAAR is academic readiness, and we are doing everything possible to be certain that our students are academically ready!

Curriculum and Instruction

February 18-22 was **DATA WEEK at OMS!** We took our Mocks on the 20th and 21st, and we crunched numbers from our 2012 testing results with our Mock results, so we could make Rtl plans for our students going into these last weeks before testing. The following **Monday, February 25th** we began our count-down to Super-STAAR-dom for STAAR testing.

1. We will have on Monday, February 25th, 22 school days to Round 1 on April 3rd and 4th (7th Writing, 8th Reading and Math) and 36 school days to Round 2 (6th Reading and Math, 7th Reading and Math, 8th Science and Social Studies).
2. Our classroom instruction needs to continue – we have a plan with C Scope and we are working our plan. However, in Rtl, technology, and academic support, from February 25th to testing dates we need to be getting the kids ready in the other areas necessary for success: filling in skill gaps and teaching test taking strategies.
3. I’ve gathered some great ideas from our staff for this part of our preparation:
 - a. Technology time we can use for iStation and Think Through Math prep time. This provides diagnostic tools and prep tools that give the students and teachers instant feedback on progress for a specific skill.
 - b. 6th grade team suggested using **high frequency words from the mock tests and sample items** that we have to use as their **academic vocabulary lists** for the next several weeks in academic support.
 - c. Rtl time will be split up by the team for those 36 school days to be focused on a high need area to be ready for testing. For instance 7th grade might divide up their 36 days, 12 for writing, 12 for math, 12 for reading, 2 days at a time in Rtl.
4. I met with teams all week to finalize countdown plans for Rtl, technology, and academic support.

We have all worked SO HARD, and this last focused push is going to pay off HUGE dividends for our students!

School Improvement

1. Mr. Byrd, our new PSP, worked with us on January 30th on reporting and was really pleased with the instruction he saw in our classrooms on February 12th. We talked about that the

instructional part of our challenge is going well, but the test prep, fill in the gaps, get the kids ready for a STAAR assessment is where we need to focus.

2. The next round of reporting is at the end of this month and we will be reporting all the strategies that we are using as we prepare for the spring testing.
3. Construction for our Outdoor Science Lab and Garden will begin in March. We have a construction and planting plan that allows for students to participate as much as possible.

Homework House-Extended Day

Homework House has become a huge asset to our school. The extended day aspect of school service has many possibilities for our school. At this time we are looking at ways to extend the idea into the summer. We have students come in for library time and computer time, so we are considering offering some fun math, reading and science time this summer.

Extra-Curricular Activities

The OMS Track Meet will be February 28th. The math and science students are in the middle of their TMSCA season; they have 3 meets to qualify for state competition in April. We took 25 7th and 8th grade girls to ASU on February 23rd to the STEM Conference; this our second trip to ASU this spring.