



JLCS Assessment Newsletter: Quarter 2

Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School: Friday Dec. 11th, 2009

High Expectations=Results

Dear Families:
Happy Holidays! We hope everyone is excited to have a two-week break soon. Our Scholars and staff have been working very hard these last few months, and they have all definitely earned some rest and relaxation. One of the areas in which everyone has been hard at work is Assessments. Students recently completed Fall NWEA assessments and have taken three TLI module tests. If you're wondering what those are and what I'm talking about, please, keep reading! This newsletter, and subsequent ones each quarter, will help inform you about Jacksonville Lighthouse Scholars' academic performance and progress we're making as a school toward meeting our AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) goals for student achievement. We are also sending home student progress reports from NWEA & TLI, in addition to those from their teachers. In order to help you better understand your Scholar's academic level and areas of strength and growth, we are hosting Assessment Conferences next week. Attached to this newsletter is conference information. If you would like an Assessment Conference, please complete it and return it to your child's teacher by **Monday, December 14th**. Also, feel free to contact me. As Director of Instruction, I'm responsible for assessments and am more than happy to speak with you about your Scholars' progress and test results.

Thanks, and enjoy your winter break!

Sandra Kinne, M.A.Ed, M.P.A.
JLCS, Director of Instruction
501.985.1200 ext 103
skinne@lighthouse-academies.org

Lighthouse Academies: We prepare our students for college through a rigorous arts-infused program.

Jacksonville Lighthouse: Through commitment and collaboration, and effective instruction, JLCS will engage our scholars in a rigorous, arts-infused curriculum that prepares them for success in college and promotes life-long learning.

Work hard. Get smart. Graduate from college.

TLI

- JLCS works with The Learning Institute (TLI) to identify areas of need for Scholars around the Arkansas state standards and help schools prepare students for success on state benchmarks.
- Scholars take TLIs, as we refer to these tests, monthly in Math and Literacy. (We alternate between Reading and Writing each month.) There are 8 "module" assessments for each subject throughout our school year. These are pencil & paper tests, and TLI provides immediate feedback so we can get an "academic pulse" of our classrooms.
- **TLIs are Arkansas standard-aligned** and used to measure not only growth throughout the year but Scholars' level of mastery of state standards. Each module tests students' proficiency on specific state standards, and many of those standards are reassessed throughout the year on subsequent module tests.

NWEA

- Scholars throughout the Lighthouse network take the MAP: Measure of Academic Progress test through NWEA. We refer to these assessments at NWEAs.
- NWEA tests determine Scholars' instructional level and measure academic growth through the school year and from year to year in areas of Reading, Math, and

Language Usage. Your Scholar takes these tests on the computer.

- NWEA assessments are target a student's academic performance in Mathematics, Reading, and Language Usage. These tests are tailored to an individual's current achievement level. When taking an NWEA test, the difficulty of each question is based on how well a student answers all the previous questions. As the student answers correctly, the questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. The final score is an estimate of the student's achievement level.
- The scale used to measure Scholars' progress is call an RIT (**R**asch **u**n**I**T). The RIT scale is an equal-interval scale much like feet and inches on a yardstick. It is used to chart Scholars' academic growth from year to year.
- Some Scholars may have met their grade level goal, and that's great. But, we still want to ensure they're growing and making academic progress. Typical student growth is about 15 points on the RIT scale, and our goal at JLCS is to see at least that much growth in every Scholar between the Fall and Spring tests. You can discuss your Scholar's individual goal with her/his teacher during next week's Assessment Conferences (see attached).

LHA goals for NWEA

	Reading	Math
K	165	160
1 st	177	178
2 nd	190	191
3 rd	200	202
4 th	207	211
5 th	212	219
6 th	217	224

Q: Why are students tested? What do teachers do with all this data? Teachers use the data from both assessments to drive instruction in the classroom and ensure all Scholars' academic needs are being met. Teachers meet regularly and work collaboratively within their grade levels, the Upper Academy team, and with the Director of Instruction to analyze areas of strength and growth. They identify areas for enhancement, instruction, and enrichment and identify students who fall into each category. Using that data, teachers create standard-aligned lessons and activities for both whole group and small-group instruction using the LHA curriculum (Imagine It! and Saxon). Teachers provide differentiated, rigorous instruction throughout the day and focus on specific areas of need through workshops/centers and skills focus time.

Q: How do the NWEA & TLI affect my Scholar's grade? Students do not receive a grade for the NWEA. TLI module tests are incorporated into students' grades through an adjusted percentage configured for us by TLI. Each assessment counts as one grade during the quarter in which it falls. That is, modules 3 & 4 will be counted during the second quarter.

Today is the day we make it happen.

Q: Are JLCS teachers just using NWEA & TLI to inform instruction? No. Teachers use student work, informal assessments, anecdotal observations, state benchmarks, weekly formal assessments, homework, and many other measures to ensure students are mastering state standards and demonstrating proficiency.

Q: My student has an IEP and has certain accommodations for testing. How are these met with TLI & NWEA testing? TLI module tests, students' accommodations are met. For example, if a student's IEP allows for the test to be read orally, the student has the test read to her/him. For NWEA, given the way the test is designed, no parts of the Language Usage or Reading tests are read allowed. This is to ensure an accurate assessment of students' ability – exactly where they are “ready for instruction today.”

Q: Can I access the tests' sites and get more information about my Scholar's achievement? You can get more information about the NWEA at: www.nwea.org and about TLI at: www.tlionline.net Unlike with other tests, we don't have the capacity to have families do this for TLI and NWEA. Families are encouraged to contact teachers with concerns and should also direct questions to our Director of Instruction, Sandra Kinne, at 501.985.1200 ext 103.



TEST TAKING REMINDERS FOR FAMILIES

- Meet with your Scholar's teacher as needed to discuss her or his progress. Ask the teacher to suggest activities for your Scholar to do at home to help prepare for tests and improve your Scholar's understanding of schoolwork. Families and teachers working together benefits Scholars.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home.
- Make sure your Scholar is well rested on school days and especially the day of a test. Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.
- Give your Scholar a well-rounded diet. A healthy body leads to a healthy, active mind.
- Provide books and magazines for your Scholar to read at home. By reading new materials, a child learns new words that might appear on a test.

Upcoming Assessments @ JLCS

January

- 1/12: TLI Writing 4
- 1/13: LHA Writing Assessment #1
- 1/14: TLI Math 4

1/22: Second Quarter Ends

February

- 2/1-2/26: Revised NWEA Winter Testing Window
- 2/2: TLI Reading 5 QUIZ
- 2/4: TLI Math 5 QUIZ
- 2/16: TLI Reading 5
- 2/18: TLI Math 5

March

- 3/2: TLI Writing 6 QUIZ
- 3/4: TLI Math 6 QUIZ
- 3/16: TLI Writing 6
- 3/18: TLI Math 6

April

- 4/5-4/16: Window for SAT-10 (1st & 2nd)
- 4/12-4/16: State Benchmark, 3rd-6th
- 4/20: TLI Reading 7 QUIZ
- 4/22: TLI Math 7 QUIZ

May

- 5/4: TLI Reading 7
- 5/6: TLI Math 7
- 5/17-6/11: NWEA Spring Window
- 5/18: TLI Writing 8 QUIZ
- 5/19: LHA Writing Assessment #2
- 5/20: TLI Math 8 QUIZ

June

- 5/17-6/11: NWEA Spring Window
- 6/1: TLI Writing 8
- 6/3: TLI Math 8

Family Tip: One thing we cannot stress enough is: Don't stress about these tests! Given the frequent exposure to standardized assessments and the repeated simulation of testing conditions, our Scholars should be prepared for the benchmarks in the Spring.

Nothing less than excellence.