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# Parent Focus

November 2014

## Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled

### Dynamic Learning Maps Parent Information

All children participate in state accountability assessments. The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System (DLM) is an instructionally relevant system that supports student learning and measures what students with significant cognitive disabilities know and can do. The system uses the DLM Essential Elements to support the design of individualized experiences for each student by presenting questions and tasks that are appropriate for a student's needs and abilities.

#### What are DLM Essential Elements?

The DLM Essential Elements are:

- Specific statements of the content and skills students with significant cognitive disabilities are expected to know and be able to do
- Intended to provide links between the general education content standards and grade-specific expectations



*A student using a switch*

#### What does an "instructionally relevant" assessment mean?



*A student using an iPad*

The DLM assessment system:

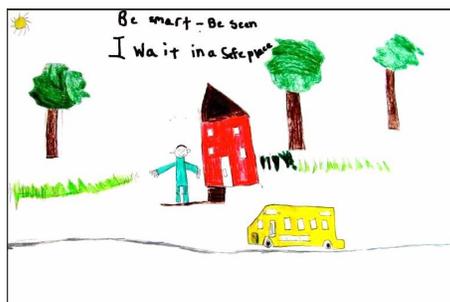
- Provides a student with similar instructional and assessment experiences
- Provides educators, parents and other IEP members with information about a student's performance
- Is used to make appropriate instructional decisions

#### How will my child benefit from participating in the assessment?

The DLM instructionally relevant assessment:

- Provides documentation of student academic growth
- Provides information the IEP team may use to celebrate successes
- Informs educators so they can build on student knowledge and improve learning

### MSSD Student Wins Poster Contest



*Tanner Johnson's poster won first place in the special education category in the annual MAPT poster contest.*

Tanner Johnson, a student at Cedar Ridge School, recently participated in the annual Missouri Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) poster contest and was named the first place winner in the special education category.

Tanner's poster was submitted to the national contest held in October by the National Association for Pupil Transportation. Congratulations to Tanner on his achievement.

## Parent Focus

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## Helen Davis School's Parent Group Works Together with Local Businesses to Acquire Caroline's Cart

*By Jennifer Burns, Home School Coordinator*

Helen Davis School has organized over the last two years a parent empowerment group that meets up to five times each school year. The meetings are meant to be a stress-free time where parents can get valuable resources to help their families and make connections. The group provides guest speakers and parental support, based upon parent feedback. Guest speakers have included professionals discussing stress management techniques, experts on adaptive equipment and augmentative communication, and support agencies in the community. At other times, the group meets without speakers to discuss and share ideas with one another, as parents have the experience, knowledge and ideas to help one another through challenges or provide a helping hand. The group meetings are held in the evenings at school with childcare provided by Helen Davis staff volunteers. Refreshments and prizes are provided and sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

At one of the final spring meetings in 2014, parents were discussing the challenges of grocery shopping with their children with physical and developmental disabilities. One of the parents shared information regarding Caroline's Cart, a special adaptive grocery cart that provides safety and ease to those shopping with individuals with physical challenges. The guest speaker at that meeting, Mr. Kenton Randolph with Randolph Seating & Mobility, listened to the plight of the parents and wanted to assist. Mr. Randolph contacted the local Hy-Vee store manager, and together they purchased Caroline's Cart. Within a few short weeks the cart was delivered to the store and the parents and students came out to take a test drive. The cart is a tremendous asset in the community and will benefit many individuals with disabilities. More information on Caroline's Cart is available at <http://www.carolinescart.com/>.

We are pleased to have this parent support system in place at Helen Davis School and have discovered that good things happen when we work together.



*Parents with their children and representatives from Randolph Seating & Mobility and Hy-Vee at the local Hy-Vee store for the delivery of Caroline's Cart.*

## DIGNITARIES VISIT OZARK HORIZON AND SKYVIEW SCHOOLS

by Reta House, Building Administrator

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) at Ozark Horizon and Skyview Schools invited Missouri State Senator Mike Cunningham, Missouri State Representative Shawn Rhoads, Mayor Jack Pahlmann (West Plains) and Mayor Delbert Crewse (Mountain Grove) to visit our schools on October 15, 2014. Other distinguished guests were Donna Catt, Director for Program Services for Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) and Darlene Baugher, Area II Director for MSSD.

These honored guests visited classrooms, observed students at work, observed how students used assistive technology such as iPads, augmentative communication devices and visual schedules, and observed students' work on display. The students presented our visitors with art projects they had made to say thank you for visiting our schools.

Senator Cunningham and Representative Rhoads expressed their admiration to the staff at both schools. They also expressed their appreciation for the invitation and they indicated they enjoyed the visit and would like to visit again.

This has turned into an annual event during the month of October in recognition of Disabilities Awareness Month. The day was enjoyed by all.



*Standing, from left: West Plains Mayor Jack Pahlman, Representative Shawn Rhoads and Senator Mike Cunningham tour Ozark Horizon School to meet the students and staff.*



*Senator Mike Cunningham and Mayor Delbert Crewse tour Skyview School to meet the students and staff.*

## MSSD Schools Recognize Disabilities Awareness Month

October was Disabilities Awareness Month. Many of the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) students and staff participated in activities or events throughout the month. This article demonstrates how some MSSD schools recognized Disabilities Awareness Month.

Ozark Horizon School's Intermediate Classroom participated by creating original artwork. The class created a poster of a flower garden including the statement "Every child is a beautiful flower and all together make this world a beautiful garden!" The class created a timeline using sensory materials to depict the events pertaining to Americans with disabilities throughout the course of history.

The Young Adult Classroom made a bulletin board, with the help from all the students, which positively depicted disabilities. The Young Adult students also made "All About Me" posters which depicted what each student is capable of doing and future goals.

Helen Davis School kicked off Disabilities Awareness Month with a guest speaker for their parent group. Jeff Dunn, Advocacy Specialist with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, shared his personal story on living his entire life with a physical disability and the need to focus on a person's abilities rather than disabilities. Helen Davis School staff asked parents to participate in recognizing their child's abilities by sharing an achievement, progress or task that makes them proud of their son or daughter. Parents shared one word, a sentence or a small paragraph about their child. Those were posted throughout the school to share with all staff, students and parents.

Additionally, Helen Davis School staff took the People First Language Pledge. The pledge is to make changes in how the individual thinks and talks, and to use People First Language, to put the person first, not the disability. Using People First Language is about having respect and following the Golden Rule. The pledge also instructs the individual not to use negative terms or labels that are used as insults or that may be harmful. The signed pledges were displayed in the hallways to spread the word and encourage others.

<b>People First Language</b>	
<b>Say:</b>	<b>Instead of:</b>
Person with a disability	Disabled, handicapped
Person without a disability	Normal person, healthy person
Cognitive disability	Mental retardation
Person with autism	Autistic
Person who uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair-bound
Person with a physical disability	Crippled, lame, invalid
Person with a mental health or a psychiatric disability	Mentally ill, insane
Person communicates with...	Non-verbal
Accessible Parking	Handicapped Parking



MISSOURI SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED

Website: [dese.mo.gov/se/mssd](http://dese.mo.gov/se/mssd)

**NOTE:** If you have items of interest for Parent Focus, please call 573-751-0706, 800-735-2966 (Missouri Relay) or forward them to Debbie Downing, Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; or send an email to [debbie.downing@dese.mo.gov](mailto:debbie.downing@dese.mo.gov).