

Contents...

Disability History
and Awareness
Month 2

Transition
Planning 3

MAPT Safety
Poster Contest
Winners 4

Parent Focus

October 2013

Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled

Dynamic Learning Maps

By Bonnie Aaron, Central Office

What is Dynamic Learning Maps and how will it affect my child?

Missouri and 16 other states joined a consortium called the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). In 2010, the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System Consortium was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Through the grant, DLM has developed an exciting new kind of alternate assessment aligned to the new Common Cores State Standards (CCSS).

The DLM project is guided by the core belief that all students should have access to challenging grade-level content. The DLM assessment is different from other assessments because it provides a common measure of academic achievement for students with significant cognitive disabilities taking the alternate assessment. The new DLM Alternate Assessment System will let students with significant cognitive disabilities show what they know in ways that traditional multiple-choice tests cannot. The DLM system is designed to map a student's learning throughout the year. The system will use items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction. In this way, testing happens as part of instruction, which both informs teaching and benefits students. An end of the year assessment or summative test will be administered in addition to the instructionally embedded system.

What is Pilot Testing?

Recently parents received a letter with news that Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) has been selected to represent Missouri's schools by participating in the DLM Pilot Test. In MSSD schools, the DLM assessment will be given October 21, 2013 to November 22, 2013. Students will take mathematics and English language arts assessments.

Students do not need to prepare in any special way for the assessments. Students in the following grade bands will participate in the Pilot Test:

Grades 3-4

Grades 7-8

Grades 10-11

The purposes of the Dynamic Learning Maps Pilot Test are to address these questions:

- How well does student entry work?
- Are our assumptions accurate on expectations (i.e., number of testlets/ approximate administration time)?
- What feedback do educators have regarding system functionality, administration manuals, manipulatives used in the classroom, and testlet design?
- How well does student-technology interface work?
- What are the views on the accessibility features?

We are excited that MSSD schools will be participating, and pleased that your child will participate.

If you would like additional information about DLM or to view sample subject area and student questions, please visit <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/>. For an explanation of what DLM is and how it works, a brochure is available at http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org/pdf/DLM_Brochure_fin.pdf.

Missouri Declares October Disability History and Awareness Month

By Merv Blunt and Bev Luetkemeyer, Central Office

In May 2011, the Missouri Legislature passed House Bill 555. One provision of House Bill 555 authorizes school boards to require the provision of disability history and awareness instruction in public schools during the month of October of each year. House Bill 555 also designates the month of October to be Disability History and Awareness Month.

House Bill 555, sponsored by Representative Jeff Grisamore of Lee's Summit, was actively supported by disability advocates across Missouri. Many Missouri disability organizations advocated with legislative leaders, provided testimony on behalf of the bill, and worked diligently to see the bill move successfully through the legislative process.

The goals of disability history and awareness instruction in House Bill 555 are:

1. Instilling in students sensitivity for fellow students with disabilities and encouraging educational cultures that nurture safe and inclusive environments for students with disabilities in which bullying is discouraged and respect and appreciation for students with disabilities is encouraged;
2. An understanding that disability is a natural part of the human experience; we are all more alike than different; and regardless of disability, every citizen is afforded the same rights and responsibilities as that of any other;
3. The creation of a more inclusive school community, where students with disabilities are included in every aspect of society, and every student is acknowledged for their unique gifts, talents, and contributions; and
4. Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal opportunity for, all individuals with disabilities.

The following are some other resources to help observe Disability History and Awareness Month.

Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide for Missouri is available on the Web through the State of Missouri Disability Portal at <http://dese.mo.gov/se/documents/se-admin-modishistresguide.pdf>.

The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) is a clearinghouse for materials on disability awareness. People across the nation request information from the clearinghouse for the purposes of promoting disability awareness in their community organizations including schools. Please explore the resources available through NICHCY by visiting their Web site at <http://nichcy.org/families-community/awareness>.

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living has made available through their Web site a Disability History Development Class. The class consists of eight modules designed to help children learn about disabilities, disability etiquette, service animals, independent living centers and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This resource can be found at <http://mtstcil.org/skills/DisabilityHistory.html>.

Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled encourages all family members, students and staff to explore these resources and share them with friends, neighbors and members of your communities.

Parent Focus

Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Archie Derboven,
Superintendent

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Office of the General Counsel, Coordinator – Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 6th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

Information concerning other available resources, programs, etc., is not to be construed as an endorsement by Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled for any specific product, organization, or philosophy.

Transition Planning: It's a Team Effort

By Bev Luetkemeyer, Central Office

Whether it's the first transition plan or the last one before a child graduates it is important to have the right people at the table at the IEP meeting. Because Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) students often cannot speak for themselves, their parents are key players in the transition planning process. Teachers depend on parents to learn about the family's future plans so that the student's transition plan will fit in with the needs of the family and the student. Parents also provide valuable information about the family's involvement with other state and community agencies. Sometimes those other agencies may be able to provide or pay for transition services so they become very important team members for transition planning. But it is often not easy to find and connect with representatives of other agencies that can provide transition services that are vitally important to MSSD students.

What can parents and teachers do to establish linkages with agencies that can help? The first step is to learn about agencies in your own community and region. While family, friends and neighbors are great ways to learn about things and should not be counted out, there are some resources on the Worldwide Web that may be helpful. The Governor's Council on Disabilities has a Web site that links to information from many resources. It also has a Web-based resource directory that can be searched by region, county, type of service offered and type of disability served. Enter as many parameters as you like to narrow the search or search by one or two parameters to broaden the search. Search results generally include the address, phone number, contact person, Web site and email address for the agencies listed. You can find the Resource Directory at http://disability.mo.gov/resource_search/.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education announced recently the Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT) has a Web page listing information about all of the team member agencies. The MITT and its members have been at the forefront of statewide efforts to improve transition planning and post-school outcomes for children with disabilities. The MITT home page is also housed on the State of Missouri Disability Portal. To learn more about state-level agencies go to <http://disability.mo.gov/MITT.htm>.

Missouri's parent training agency, MPACT, has some terrific transition planning resources and learning opportunities that are geared more towards families of children with disabilities. MPACT offers a parent mentor program and training in the area of transition planning and many other topics. Trainings are offered online and in person at locations across the state. MPACT also sponsors an annual transition summit. MPACT offers a monthly e-newsletter to help parents and educators keep up with changes in special education and related laws and trends. To find out more about MPACT, register for training or request their newsletter visit their Web site at <http://ptimpact.org/index.aspx>.

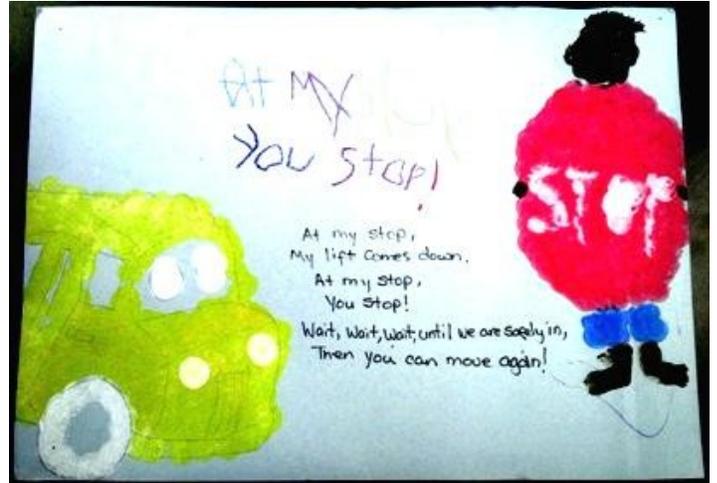
The next step after learning about agencies is to take action to get the agencies involved in transition planning. Parents and educators should work together to decide when it is appropriate to bring outside agency representatives to the table. Parents can invite and bring to an IEP meeting anyone they determine has knowledge or expertise regarding their child. It is courteous for parents to tell the other members of the IEP team about those who have been invited to an IEP meeting. When it is determined that MSSD staff members should invite someone who represents an outside agency MSSD staff and parents must be aware that there are some confidentiality requirements that must be met before MSSD can extend the invitation. Because the IEP meeting invitation identifies the student as a person with a disability, MSSD staff must obtain signed written consent to disclose specific personally identifiable information. There is an MSSD form to help MSSD staff obtain consent.



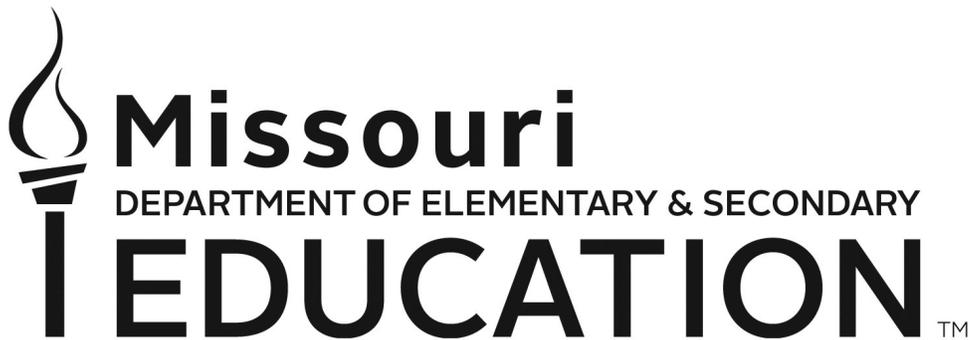
After consent is obtained the road is clear to extend the invitation and work to get the outside agencies to the table. This may be where the real work begins but don't be discouraged. Involving other agencies well before graduation day will help students achieve better post-school outcomes in the long run. Outside agency involvement could be the link that helps a student be engaged in the community or helps a parent find respite care for their adult child after they graduate.

2013 MAPT Safety Poster Contest Winners

The Missouri Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) holds an annual poster contest promoting school bus safety. The posters were judged at the Annual MAPT Conference and Trade Show this past July in Columbia. Jordan, Scarlet, and Chelsea from Trails West School in Grandview submitted the winning poster in the Division 4 (Special Education) Category. Their teacher is Suzette Davie. Their poster, along with the winning posters in the other divisions will be forwarded to the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT). NAPT will select the national winning poster to be used during National School Bus Safety Week, October 21 - 25, 2013. In addition, the winning young artists received a Wal-Mart gift card. Congratulations to Jordan, Scarlet and Chelsea.



National School Bus Safety Week is October 21—25, 2013



MISSOURI SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED

Website: dese.mo.gov/se/mssd

NOTE: If you have items of interest for Staff Highlights, 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.