January 2012

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING MONTHLY

Wachusett Regional School District, 1745 North Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522
www.wrsd.net/literacy 508.829.1670

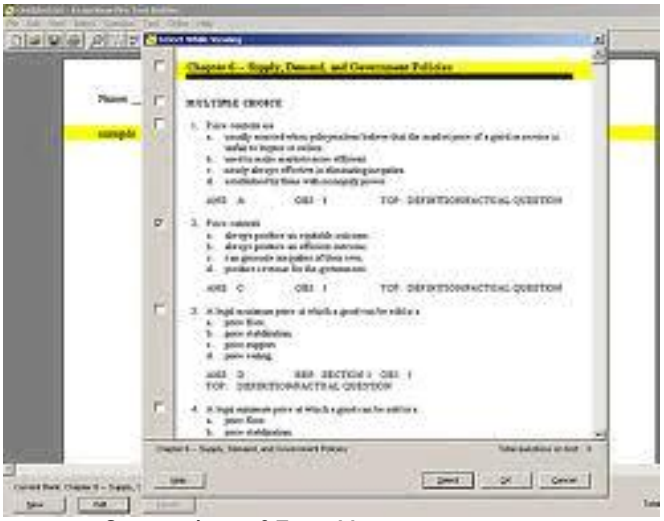
Focus on Technology

ExamView

By Deborah LaBombard, Instructional Coach for Science and CPS

ExamView is a test generator that has thousands of questions correlated to Common Core State Standards. Teachers can access ExamView through their desktops. Teachers should have an icon that says CPS ExamView and/or ExamView Test Generator. The banks that align with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards are nested within the Learning Series, which is found by clicking on these icons.

In addition to these test banks which are available district-wide, many textbooks come with ExamView CD-ROMS. If you are a teacher who uses a textbook with a copyright date of 2001 or later, you or a colleague may very well have an ExamView CD-ROM that came with the text. By locating the CD-ROM (or determining if your textbook has a corresponding ExamView CD), teachers can gain access to thousands of additional questions correlated to the textbook chapters and Massachusetts frameworks. To determine if your textbook has an accompanying ExamView CD-ROM, visit http://www.einstruction.com/products/examview/titletrack or contact me for assistance.



Screenshot of ExamView test generator

Interested in learning more about ExamView? See page 12 of this newsletter for information about an afterschool professional development opportunity offered this month, or plan to sign up for coaching at your convenience.

Limelight?...CPS?...ExamView?

Still unsure about the different applications and capabilities of these systems? Please see pages 11-12 for more information.

Winter Assessment Dates

WRSD Math Assessment (Grades 3-5)
November 14 to January 6

WRSD Reading Benchmark Conferences (Grades 1-5)
January 3 to February 3

AIMSweb (Grades K-4)
January 13 to February 3

Tips for Conferring in Writers' Workshop

By Rachel Kodra, Instructional Coach for Literacy and Limelight

Writers' Workshop is a special time in all of our classrooms. It's a part of the day when students are given choice in what they want to write about within a specific genre, when they are explicitly taught how to compose ideas and learn various writing techniques and strategies, and when students are given time to deepen their writing experiences. Likewise, knowing where each of your students is as a writer is an ongoing process that takes time to develop. At the heart of this is the importance of conferring. Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi, coauthors of *Writers' Workshop -The Essential Guide*, list six basic principles to help teachers engage in meaningful and long-lasting writing conferences.

- **Listen** – Have the student do most of the talking. What is it about their writing that they are sharing with you? Listen to their writing ideas before offering your expertise and recommendations.

- **Be Present as a Reader** – React to your student's writing piece as you would if it were something you were reading on your own. If there are funny parts...laugh, if it's sad...acknowledge the sadness. This will help deepen your writing conferences.

- **Understand the Writer** – This conference strategy refers to getting a handle on what the student is doing (or trying to do) with their writing. As a teacher,

build upon what you already know about each student as a writer to help guide your conference. It takes more than a single conference to fully grasp a student's purpose, process, audience, and writing craft.

- **Follow the Student's Energy** – Look to see what the student is doing. Are they writing incessantly? Are they slumped over their desk? Are they constantly up and out of their seat? Do they appear "stuck?" These insights will guide you in how to proceed with your conference.

- **Build on Strengths** – Too often we're quick to point out what's wrong with a piece of writing rather than locating and sharing with a student a part that actually went well or was written superbly. The next time

Please see Tips for Conferring on page 3.

Tips for Conferring continued

you're conferring with a student offer praise...it could be centered around a wonderfully chosen word, a vivid image, or even that they remembered to use a capital letter at the beginning of their sentences.

- **Teach One Thing** – As Lucy Calkins writes, "Teach the writer, not the writing." A writing conference is an opportunity to build upon and enhance a student's *overall* repertoire of strategies and techniques, rather than a way of merely fixing a piece of student writing.

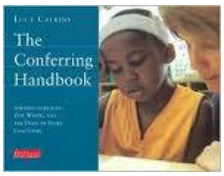
And remember, the best thing for you to do once you have finished a writing conference is to keep a record of it. Give yourself a minute or two to capture the important topics you talked about. It's time well spent!

Ways to Begin a Writing Conference

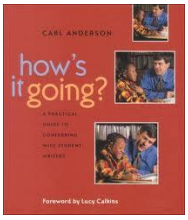
Asking open-ended questions are an effective way to invite students to set the agenda for a writing conference. Some conference starters include:

- ✓ How's it going?
- ✓ What are you doing today as a writer?
- ✓ What do you need help with today?
- ✓ What part of the story are you working on today?

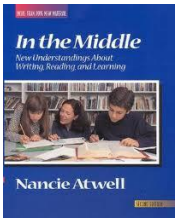
Professional Resources for Conferring with Writers



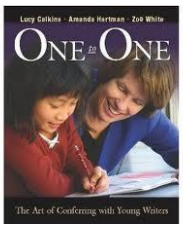
The Conferring Handbook (2003) by Lucy Calkins, Amanda Hartman, and Zoe White
*Part of the *K-2 Units of Study* series



How's It Going? A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers (2000) by Carl Anderson



In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning (1998) by Nancie Atwell



One to One: The Art of Conferring with Young Writers (2005) by Lucy Calkins, Amanda Hartman, and Zoe White

JAM (Just-a-Minute) Physical Activity Program

By Bradley Clark, Instructional Coach for Physical Education, Health, and Wellness

The Wachusett Regional School District (WRSD) is committed to helping our students meet recommended daily physical and exercise guidelines set by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Children and adolescents (ages 6-17) should receive at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. Meeting this expectation can be somewhat challenging during the winter months due to the weather. JAM is a free online wellness resource for schools. The JAM (Just-a-Minute) program brings physical activity and health education into the traditional classroom. JAM is designed to teach students healthier lifestyle habits. JAM has even been recognized by Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" childhood health and fitness campaign as a great tool to use with students.

JAM offers these two main resources:

JAMmin' Minute®: A one-minute fitness routine that includes 5 very simple exercises that kids (and staff) can do while either standing at their desk or sitting in a chair. Included in this weekly communication is a health tip, something simple that teaches a healthier habit. These routines are authored by us and we invite schools to submit routines to us!

JAM Blast®: Athlete-delivered healthy living and eating messages with a coordinating 3-5 minute exercise routine that focuses on that athlete's idea about what is most important for peak performance. Fun facts about each athlete are included.

Elementary students participating in JAM activities

Classrooms can author their own exercise routines too! Get a class, the entire school, or a group of students to create 5 exercises and submit them to JAM with a favorite health tip and they might publish it as the featured resource of the week!

WRSD is now registered for JAM!

JAM's online library can be accessed at http://www.healthetips.com/jamlibrary.php. Please add this link to your professional bookmarks on your school computer.

Please see JAM on page 5.

JAM continued from page 4

Benefits of JAM

- Encourages wellness through daily physical activity and health education for students and staff
- Improves student concentration in the class and provides a good "brain break" during or in between lessons
- Emphasizes establishment of daily habits
- Improves self-esteem and self-confidence
- Allows everyone to participate including those with physical challenges
- Provides physical activity and health education that is efficient, effective, and fun!

JAM is one of many great resources that will be coming your way this year! Look out for new tips and tools to use in your classrooms with your students! Let's get moving and kick off a healthy new year!

Ideas for Using JAM

- Add JAM to classroom curriculum, assemblies, morning announcements over the PA system, or use JAM as a reward
- Set up friendly competition in the classroom, among staff, or district-wide
- Create home-school connections with JAM publishing activities on the school website or newspaper, or uploading videos of students using JAM to school website
- Use JAM activities as a warm up or combine several routines for a complete program in physical education classes
- Allow students to lead each other as the "JAM Leader" or "Drill Sergeant" of the week

Health-E-tips®

JAM Blast

Featured Athlete:	Hines Ward, Wide Receiver/Pittsburgh Steelers

Hines says:
"Healthy living is extremely important to me. It gives me the strength I need to perform at a very high level and catch everything that is thrown at me – all day long. Staying active, exercising and eating the right foods works for me now and I know it's important because I plan on living a long, healthy life. It will work for you, too!

Name: Hines Ward Number: 86 Position: Wide Receiver Team: Pittsburgh Steelers
Height: 6-0 Weight: 205 Birthday: March 8, 1976
Birthplace: Seoul, South Korea College: Georgia
Fact: 1st Korean-American to win MVP award at Superbowl XL

It is important to have a strong midsection. I keep my core strong so I can accelerate whenever I need to."

Mins	Train like an Athlete (seated routine)
1	Tighten abs and lift left knee to right elbow
1	Tighten abs and lift right knee to left elbow
1	Hold onto seat of chair, legs together, lift and lower knees
1	Hand on abs, squeeze and release abs
1	Tighten abs and hold

Eat like an Athlete

"I like to keep it simple! I love eating lean grilled chicken breast, whole grain rice, and vegetables for long term energy!"

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NFL Play60 THE NFL MOVEMENT FOR AN ACTIVE GENERATION

Get your copy of this routine: healthetips.com/jamlibrary.php

Check out more from NFL Play 60 and get moving! www.nflrush.com/play60

Disclaimer: Please be advised the exercises hereunder may not be suitable for everyone, in every age, and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. To reduce the risk of injury all children should consult their doctor before beginning this or any exercise program. The exercises presented herein are in no way intended as a substitute for medical counseling.

Sample JAM Blast

Science Notebooks: Starting 2012 Write!

By Deborah LaBombard, Instructional Coach for Science and CPS

Teachers have the best of intentions, but often our "to do" list is larger than the time we have! If you had intended to explore the use of science notebooks in the fall, but haven't yet gotten to it, January is a great time to start! Let one of your New Year's Resolutions be to incorporate more writing in your science classroom through the use of a Science Notebook. The following list of tips will assist you in getting things started on the right foot.

Students from Scott Jaffe's fourth grade class at Glenwood Elementary School recording "Mystery Powders" observations in science notebooks

WHAT IS A SCIENCE NOTEBOOK?
A science notebook is a powerful tool for documenting the learning in a science unit. It contains writing and drawings that document the ongoing thinking and investigation that occurred.

WHY WOULD I USE A SCIENCE NOTEBOOK?
A science notebook is more than just "a collection of stuff" but can enhance the thinking, learning, and content area reading and writing that happens in your science classroom. Through lists, observations, predicting, questioning, and other inclusions in the science notebooks, student have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and communication skills. In addition, a well planned science notebook can be a useful teacher tool for both formative and summative assessment.

SCIENCE NOTEBOOK IN KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY GRADES
Students as young as preschool and kindergarten can benefit from drawing ideas, predictions, observations, and conclusions in science notebooks. These drawings and early attempts at writing can help even our youngest learners to communicate science ideas orally and in writing/drawing. Additionally, students in elementary school are well suited to engage in ongoing investigation and high quality writing during inquiry investigations in science. Research has demonstrated that the more opportunities students have to write, the higher they achieve in standardized testing in all areas, not just content-related tests.

SCIENCE NOTEBOOKS IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
Science notebooks can be an incredibly powerful tool in these grades. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects has now

Please see Science Notebooks on page 7.

Science Notebooks continued from page 6

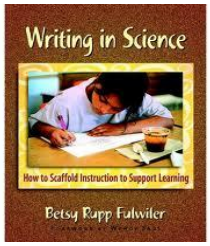
infused more reading, writing, and talking in science than ever before with a much greater emphasis on literacy in the content areas. For middle and high school teachers, a science notebook can be a place where students write claims and arguments, create informative and explanatory texts, organize data, draw evidence, and engage in the writing process, all as required in the new Common Core Curriculum Framework document for middle and high school science teachers.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?
Choose one upcoming unit to try out a science notebook with. Plan out the investigations and/or inquiry questions. Consider what aspects of the investigations would lend itself to inclusion in science notebooks, ideas include predictions, purpose, observations, experimental plans or procedures, data, reflections, and conclusions. Get support from your principal, a colleague, or WRSD Instructional Coach for science notebook planning, implementation, or analysis. For samples of science notebooks, useful articles, and other resources contact me. Most importantly, remember there is no wrong way to use a science notebook, just get started and make it your own!

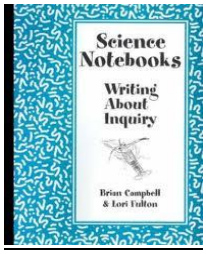
Student reviewing science notebook

Further Reading About Science Notebooks

The Essentials of Science and Literacy: A Guide for Teachers (2009) by Karen Worth, Jeff Winokur, Sally Crissman, & Martha Heller-Winokur



Writing in Science: How to Scaffold Instruction to Support Learning (2007) by Betsy Rupp Fulwiler



Science Notebooks: Writing About Inquiry (2003) by Brian Campbell and Lori Fulton

Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy: Grades Pre-K to 12 Incorporating the Common Core State Standards for English, Language Arts, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (2011) Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

WRSD Literacy Website Updates

By Catherine Schofield, Curriculum Supervisor

A number of new lessons, unit plans, and other resources have been added to the WRSD Literacy website. As you are planning your Readers' and Writers' Workshop units and lessons for the next few months, be sure to check out the following.

Readers' Workshop Lessons

- Summarizing
- Synthesizing

Writers' Workshop Unit Calendars

- Fiction – grades 2-3
- Craft of Revision – grade 3
- Essay – grade 5
- Memoir – grade 5

Writers' Workshop Lessons

- Poetry
- Fiction
- Craft of Revision
- Essay
- Writing About Reading/Book Reviews
- K-3 Nonfiction (includes How-To books, All About books, and Writing to Inform)

Other Literacy Resources

- K-8 Writing Benchmarks and Assessment Rubrics
- Writers' Workshop Mentor Text Lists
  - Letter Writing
  - Craft of Revision
- Writers' Workshop Publishing Guide
- Archived Instructional Coaching Monthly newsletters

Over the past several years, teachers from across the district have developed wonderful focus lessons, unit plans, and other literacy resources. If you have lessons or other materials that you would be willing to share with grade-level colleagues from across the district, please email them to me at catherine_schofield@wrsd.net and I would be happy to add them to the district's literacy website.

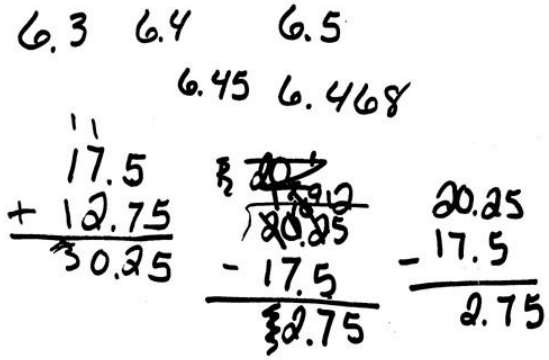
Thank You!

As the quarterly mathematics assessment window draws to a close, we would to take this opportunity to thank teachers of grades 3-5 and school administrators for their cooperation and patience over the past month. Transitioning the quarterly mathematics assessments into Limelight and integrating the CPS "clickers" with Limelight has been a significant change and an opportunity to grow as 21st century educators. As with any new technology, this process has been a learning curve for all of us, but also an exciting advance that offers the opportunity to improve teaching and learning for all students through more immediate and efficient access to student data.

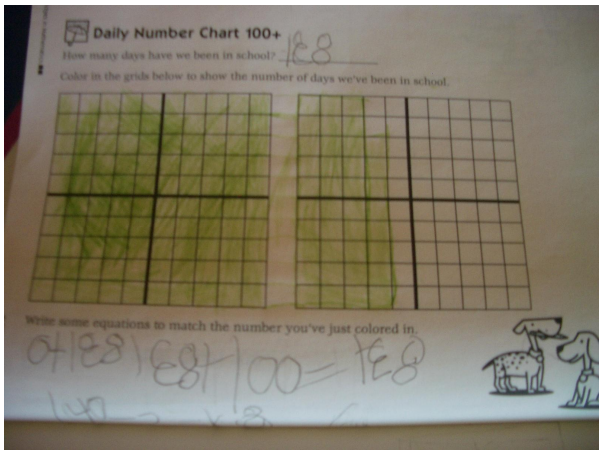
Looking at Student Work in Mathematics

By Charlene Griffin, Instructional Coach for Mathematics and iPads

All teachers everywhere "look" at their students' work on a daily basis. Often this entails perusing the work for completeness and examining it for correct answers or accurate work. A teacher may then assign a grade or some sort of indicator of how the work demonstrates a student's performance in relation to the task required in the work. Usually a teacher does this part of his/her job in isolation, perhaps taking stacks of papers home, spending hours correcting them sometimes adding comments like "good job" or "nice work", and then returning them to school to hand back to students simply by distributing them into their cubbies or mailboxes, often the destination just before the wastebasket.



Over the last decade or so, the concept of "Looking at Student Work" (or LASW) has begun to take on a more significant meaning and a more relevant role in many schools. Teachers in these schools

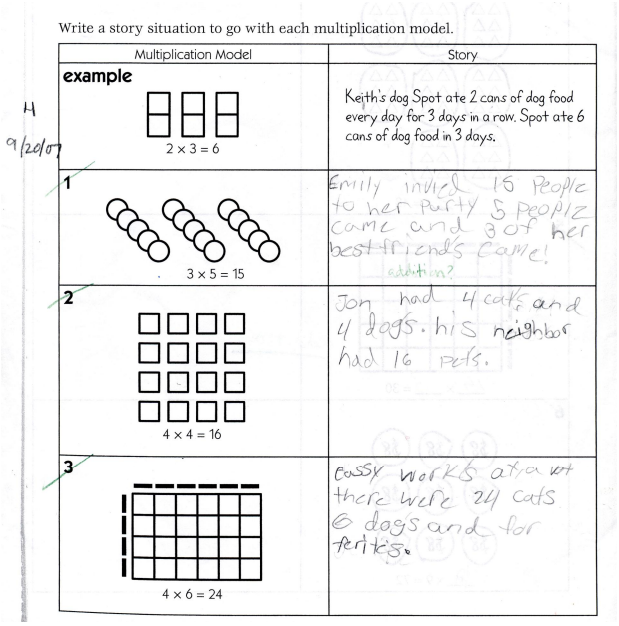


"have begun purposefully probing the rich evidence that lies immediately at hand (their students' work)… searching for what it can yield about how students best learn…Instead of disappearing into the bookbag or wastebasket, these artifacts become a valuable mirror of how the school's practice does or does not reflect its intentions." (www.middleweb.com/LASW). Not only does the practice of looking closely at and analyzing student work yield valuable information about a particular student's learning, it also provides a wealth of information about the teaching a student is receiving. Moreover, when teachers engage in this practice together, in small collaborative groups (a true Professional Learning Community), the depth of the analysis and the ideas generated concerning the effectiveness of current and future teaching in a school are magnified greatly. In most schools where this collaborative analysis of student work takes place, teachers

Please see Student Work on page 10.

Student Work from page 9

follow a certain protocol as they meet. This varies from school to school, but it usually includes certain components, particularly in LASW in mathematics. First work samples from one, or perhaps a few students must be selected and collected (in math this would usually be some sort of problem-solving or open response type assignment). It would be impractical to try to do this depth of analysis with the work of every student. Then teachers might identify the big mathematical ideas (often based on educational standards appropriate for that grade level) that students seem to understand as demonstrated in the work.

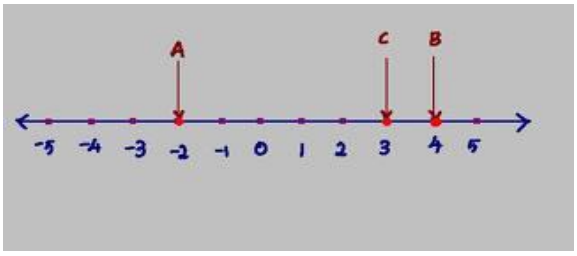


Write a story situation to go with each multiplication model.

Multiplication Model	Story
example 2 × 3 = 6	Keith's dog Spot ate 2 cans of dog food every day for 3 days in a row. Spot ate 6 cans of dog food in 3 days.
1 3 × 5 = 15	Emily invited 15 people to her party 5 people came and got her best friends came! addition?
2 4 × 4 = 16	Jon had 4 cats and 4 dogs. his neighbor had 16 pets.
3 4 × 6 = 24	Cassy works at a vet there were 24 cats 6 dogs and for ferrets.

Beginning with what a particular student seems to know and be able to do is a good way to frame later discussion. Then the group usually turns the discussion to what would be appropriate next steps for this, and by extension, other students in that class. They talk about the effectiveness of the instruction that led the student to this stage in the development of his/her conceptual understanding of the math up to this point and how to build upon it. They troubleshoot problems that this particular student, and again by extension, other students may be having with the concept at hand, and plan their future instruction appropriately. It is important to note that this discussion is not merely an error analysis of the work of any one particular student. Rather, despite the particular details of the protocol any LASW group may follow, they "all aim to learn something that will then affect future teaching and learning, not just of the individual student whose work they examine… but indeed (for) an entire group or class." (Tina Blythe, *Looking Together at Student Work*, 2008).

I know that many teachers in our district look at their students' work to inform their own understanding of how their students are doing in relation to the math standards for their grade level and how best to move them all forward. In some places I have seen this analysis being done collaboratively as well. I would be happy to meet with teachers individually or in groups to discuss these ideas further and/or to engage in the process of LASW together. Please let me know if you are interested in setting up a time to meet about this when I am at your school.



Clarifying Limelight, CPS, and ExamView

By Deborah LaBombard, Instructional Coach for Science and CPS and Rachel Kodra, Instructional Coach for Literacy and Limelight

The following chart shows similarities and differences between Limelight, CPS, and ExamView. Instructional coaches are available to assist you with each of these three programs.

	Limelight	**CPS**	**ExamView**
Purpose	Meant for district-wide assessments such as quarterly math assessments, midterms, and finals (not typically for routine classroom assignments, quizzes, chapter tests, etc.)	Classroom level data used for formative or summative assessment as well as on-the-fly instructional purposes	Classroom level data used for formative or summative assessment as well as on-the-fly instructional purposes
Test Subjects	English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Physical Education, and Other	No test banks, however can be used with test banks in ExamView	Common Core and MA frameworks in reading and math (grades one and above), language skills (grades 3-8), science (grades 3 and above) and social studies(grades 5-7)
Test Features	Can be "pushed" down from the school and/or district level	Can be shared at teacher discretion through email and/or shared files	Can be shared at teacher discretion through email and/or shared files
Password Required	Yes	No	No
Test Registration	Yes - student names are pulled from Power School, students can take the test with any clicker	Class lists must be created before use, students are assigned a specific clicker number	No
Types of Questions	Multiple choice, True/False, Constructed Response, Multipart Constructed Response	Multiple Choice, Numeric, True/False, Yes/No, Short Answer	Multiple Choice, Numeric, Short Answer, Completion, Matching

Please see Limelight, CPS, and Examview on page 12.

Limelight, CPS, and ExamView continued

	Limelight	CPS	ExamView
Standards-based Questions	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes
Connected to MA and Common Core State Standards	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes
Compatible with Mobi	No	Yes	Yes
Compatible with "clickers"	Yes	Yes	Yes (when test is integrated into CPS)
Compatible with ExamView	No	Yes	Not Applicable
Report Options/Features	Classroom and individual student reports available immediately following test administration (viewable in Limelight Tests) Additional reports available in Limelight Analytics	Classroom and individual student reports available immediately following test administration (viewable in report section)	Reports can be easily generated when used with "clickers" in CPS; ExamView can be used with or without "clickers"
Kind of Program	Web-based	Software-based	Software-based
District Contact	Rachel Kodra	Deb LaBombard	Deb LaBombard

Afterschool Professional Development Opportunity

Introduction to ExamView for Grades K-8
January 23, 2012
4:00 – 5:30 PM at Davis Hill Elementary School
Facilitated by Deborah LaBombard

Please visit www.wrsd.net/literacy for more information or to register for this workshop.

Thank you for reading this edition of *Instructional Coaching Monthly*. If you have questions about this newsletter or the district's instructional coaching program, please contact Catherine Schofield at catherine_schofield@wrsd.net .