



Dear Teachers -

I hope that your new year is off to a great start!

As you know, this year the district is utilizing the updated version of the *Benchmark Assessment System*. The expectations for the comprehension component are more aligned with recent standards and are therefore more rigorous. I am hearing very positive feedback from teachers regarding the accuracy of the information that is gathered and how it can help provide a profile of each student that will inform your daily instruction.

That said, I am also aware that the time component for administering the assessment has been challenging. I am writing to provide some guidance and temporary solutions to help you gather the information you need and move ahead with your instruction.

The most important goal is to sit with every student and hear them read, gathering some specific information about strengths and goal areas. While the instructional level is obviously an important guideline that we use to match books to readers and plan for small groups, the authentic information we gather about their reading behaviors is equally important. To strike a balance this fall (and given the transition to the new tool), we are offering the following recommendations:

1. Find an instructional level (rather than the highest instructional level) if possible, **or**
2. If you administer a couple of assessments on a student and still haven't found an instructional level, move on to another student, and enter the last data you gathered with the BAS into Testwiz (even if it is putting in the Frustration Level). You can always go back to that student or perhaps you've gathered enough information on that student already to begin instruction. Consult with your building CTL or Literacy Coach about next steps for that/those students.

The data you gather is not necessarily the student's **placement level** for instruction, even if you do find an instructional level. I am aware that many students are scoring well below grade level on the BAS, and I would not want students to spend a significant amount of time in below-level texts, based on this one assessment. Meet with your CTLs or your literacy coach for guidance in these situations. The data you gather in doing these assessments will be extremely helpful in deciding what to teach next in order to move students to the next level.

I appreciate your commitment to conducting this assessment in such a thoughtful manner. We will continue to gather feedback and support you in this work.

Thank you for all you do!

☺ Lisa