

NWEA: Measures of Academic Progress testing starts Jan. 21

Beginning the week of Jan. 21, your child will take tests called Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP).

We give students MAP tests to determine your child's instructional level and to measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year to year in the areas of reading and math. Your child will take the tests on a computer.

MAP tests are unique in that they adapt to be appropriate for your child's level of learning. As a result, each student has the same opportunity to succeed and maintain a positive attitude toward testing.

With MAP tests, we can administer shorter tests and use less class time while still receiving detailed, accurate information about your child's growth.

Each school year, students in grades 1 – 6 take the tests in the fall (September), K – 6 in the winter (January) and spring (May), in reading and math. Following each testing period, you will receive a report showing your child's growth.

We are truly excited to begin a new era that focuses on every child's individual growth and achievement. Partnering to help all kids learn, parents and teachers can have a profoundly positive effect on the lives of our children.

For more information on resources for parents, download the Parent Toolkit at www.nwea.org/support/article/930.



Academy students will take MAP testing in late January.

Staff Profile: Irakadeem Griffith



Starr Detroit Academy educators strive each day to help students reach their potential in all aspects of life. It's what makes the Academy special, working to help the whole child excel.

Whether it's mastering a new academic concept or helping scholars learn community responsibility, SDA staff members are leading the way.

Irakadeem Griffith, a fifth- and sixth-grade English and social studies teacher, sees the positive school culture in action every day.

"Starr Detroit Academy is special because of the school values, culture and orientation of high expectations for students, families and staff," Griffith said. "We share a growth mindset in all aspects. Every day is different. There is a culture of candor, feedback and professionalism that the staff executes and works to relay to our scholars."

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Griffith earned a bachelor's degree from Utica College of Syracuse University, where he studied political science and sociology. Fresh out of college, he worked as a staff recruiter at a charter management company in New York City before moving to Detroit through Teach For America and joining the Academy team.

The idea of not settling for anything less than each scholar's best is ingrained in SDA's mission and core values, a big reason why Griffith chose to work at the school. He also likes having the opportunity to fulfill several roles, both as an educator and mentor to his students.

"I've been with Starr Detroit Academy since it opened last year," Griffith said. "I love working in a startup school because you have the ability to wear multiple hats, collaborate with others and help create and sustain a culture that entails traditions and customs. This proactive approach makes this work meaningful."

Other staff members have taken notice of Griffith's passion. In addition to his role at SDA, he is currently pursuing a master's degree in teaching from Oakland University.

"He is such a dedicated staff member during the day and at night as a tutor to students," Principal Kimberley Pressley said. "He leads by example, and we're fortunate to have Mr. Griffith at Starr Detroit Academy."

Starr Detroit Academy is dedicated to the mission of preparing kids for academic mastery, college, work and life.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No school

Jan. 21 - Feb. 7:
NWEA Testing (K-6)



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Reading strategies for parents at home

Reading with children is a proven way to promote early literacy. As most parents know, however, it's not always easy to carve out time each day for reading. Luckily by putting a few simple strategies into action, a parent can make a significant contribution to their child's reading in as little as 20 minutes per day. Here are a few ideas you can apply when reading with your child:

1. When reading a book where the print is large, point word by word as you read. This will help the child learn that reading goes from left to right and understand that the word he or she says is the word he or she sees.
2. When you come to a new word, take this opportunity to talk about it in interesting ways that your child will enjoy and learn from. For example, "This big house is called a palace. Who do you think lives in a palace?"
3. Read a child's favorite book over and over again. This will provide positive reinforcement, and your child will gain confidence as they are able to successfully recognize words.
4. Choose stories with rhyming words and lines that repeat. Invite the child to join in on these parts.
5. Stop and ask about the pictures and about what is happening in the story.
6. Read from a variety of children's books, including fairy tales, song books, poems and information books.
7. Set aside special reading time – and a special reading place. Setting a designated reading time helps in several ways. First, it allows a parent to plan the day more effectively and make time for reading. It also helps the child, especially reluctant readers, to think of reading as a normal scheduled daily activity.
8. Read with emotion. Reading with emotion draws a child into the story in a way that is much more memorable and enjoyable. It also helps them to better understand how words can describe something sad, happy or exciting.
9. Let your child turn the pages. Besides being enjoyable, this activity helps more active children stay focused on the book.
10. Take your child to the library to check out books. Most popular children's books are available at the local library. This is an affordable way to give your child access to a wide range of books. Taking your child to the library also turns reading into a special occasion.

SDA students focus on "perseverance"

An important component to the education students receive at Starr Detroit Academy involves learning some of the traits that will ensure long-term success as members of their communities.

That's why the Academy works to instill its core values in each scholar. These values include **Excellence, Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance** and **Caring**.

In January, scholars are focusing on the core value of perseverance. This value highlights the importance of never giving up regardless of the challenges one may face. Throughout the month, students have participated in activities that demonstrate perseverance like studying even when discouraged or trying a difficult sport.

Starr Detroit Academy core values:

- **Excellence:** We strive to always do our best and focus on accomplishing our goals.
- **Respect:** We treat other people like we want to be treated. We take care of our environment so others do the same.
- **Responsibility:** We recognize our strengths, learn from our mistakes and assume ownership for our actions.
- **Perseverance:** We work hard and never give up. Even when the work is challenging, we will succeed.
- **Caring:** We take care of each other. We help each other. We do not hurt each other physically or emotionally.