

October 3, 2016



Dear Family:

During the next two weeks, the 1st-5th graders will take the NWEA MAP tests in reading and mathematics during their academic blocks. We wanted to share more information about MAP testing at Charlotte Lab School:

What is MAP?

- MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) tests are individualized measures of performance in reading and math. Tests are taken on computers and the results will help all of us improve learning for all students. Results help us make informed decisions that promote academic growth.
- Students take the MAP tests during their normal class time. Map tests are not timed; students usually complete the tests in about 45-60 minutes each but also have to learn how to log in, which can add time during the first few rounds of implementation.
- MAP tests are adaptive, which means that the test is designed to target each student's academic performance. The tests are tailored to each student's current achievement level. Because the computer adjusts the difficulty level of the questions as the test progresses, each student takes a unique test.

Why is Charlotte Lab School using MAP testing?

- We elected to administer MAP tests this year to help us better assess our students using nationally-normed criteria; this will help us to ensure that CLS is on-track and will also help us demonstrate academic effectiveness to families and prospective families, faculty and funders.
- We are currently planning to give MAP tests in reading and math to all students, 1st-8th grade, at the beginning-of-year and end-of-year. As we begin to track MAP scores over time, this will also provide important feedback about our ability to help students grow academically.

How will Charlotte Lab School use MAP scores?

- CLS will use the test results to measure student performance, progress and growth. We can identify strengths and weaknesses to determine whether help is needed with a specific skill or whether a student is ready for more challenging work. The results will guide our curriculum planning and instruction in literacy, math, and Quest. CLS does not view MAP scores as defining criteria, i.e. we will not use this data to make long-lasting decisions about class placement, "level", etc. Instead, we consider MAP results to be another data point that will help us to determine what specific skills a child needs to focus on.
- MAP tests are given by the school in addition to the required state exams (NC EOGs) and are used to guide instruction. MAP tests are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, as is the CLS curriculum.
- Keep in mind that the MAP tests are just one of the tools we use to measure student progress. Teachers use this information, together with class performance, results of benchmark screenings, state test results, and parent input to determine whether or not a student needs extra help or enrichment. No single measure is ever used to make programming decisions.

While Charlotte Lab School believes that these tests provide only one data point about your child's academic progress, the results are important to inform our teaching. We ask that all families support their child(ren)'s success on these tests by:

- Encouraging 100% effort;
- Ensuring that your child is well-rested and eats a healthy breakfast;
- Attending school on test days and being on time:
 - October 4-7 2nd-5th grade ELA & Math
 - October 11-13 1st grade ELA & Math
- Reassuring students that MAP testing is just one source of information and does not impact their "grades" or class placement at Charlotte Lab School.

For more information about MAP tests, please visit <http://www.nwea.org>, where you can download the NWEA Parent Toolkit. If you have questions about MAP testing, results, or curriculum, please contact Vikki-Rose Tunick.

Sincerely,

Mary Moss Brown, *Head of School*