

To: School Instructional Technology Specialists (c/o School Principal and Reading Coach)  
Fm: Karl Hook  
Date: August 27, 2009  
Re: 3-12 WAM Getting Started

The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading are scheduled to go online Monday, August 31 at 8:00 AM ET.

Remember that it is not required to begin assessing on the first day. Schools have twenty to thirty-five days to complete the assessments, depending upon their start date. Schools that started on August 24<sup>th</sup> have a 35 instructional day assessment period.

As was stated in a number of the conference calls over the past few months, I recommend that schools not begin the 3-12 assessments on the first day that the application is available. As with any new application, there is a chance that some fine-tuning will need to occur. I suggest that you allow us the time to do any required adjustments before students access the application.

When the 3-12 assessments do begin at your school, prior experience shows that only one class should be tested on the first day. While the class is being tested, it is important to have key people observing (specifically, the Reading Coach and Instructional and Information Technology representatives). These folks can report what they have observed to the other teachers before subsequent assessments so that similar issues can be dealt with accordingly.

If more than one computer laboratory is being used for the 3-12 assessments, begin testing only in one lab, then only in another, until all labs have been used by themselves. Then begin using multiple labs at the same time.

We encourage you to report any issues as they arise. In a separate E-mail, we will provide the information that needs to be reported to the PMRN Help Desk in order for us to assist in troubleshooting issues. It is critical that this information is provided to the Help Desk in order to troubleshoot.

We have provided the district Information Technology professionals with some suggestions to facilitate the assessments, such as district or school caching/proxy servers. In many cases, though, this may not be practical due to limited resources. District security policies may prevent these, but other options include:

- Setting up a single profile for all students to access the 3-12 WAM. Call the profile "FAIR" and make the only application available a web-browser that has <https://312.pmrn.fcrr.org> as its Home Page. All students will use the same profile and the cache will not be cleared when students log off, when the computer is turned off, or at the end of the day.
- Having students share the browser's native cache/temporary internet folder between profiles, if students have different profiles, and not clearing the folder.
- Pre-loading the instruction files for the three tasks using the procedures that will be in an E-mail to follow.

Other suggestions to improve the success of the assessments are listed below:

- Stagger the assessment schedule over the 20 to 35 day Assessment Period.
- Limit assessments during peak times that the internet is being used for other purposes in the school or district.
- Limit the number of students accessing the application from a single access point (i.e., one plug in the wall serving multiple computers through a hub or wireless cart system).
- Have teachers/computer lab managers turn on the computers and allow updates to load well in advance of the students using the computer to access the 3-12 WAM.