



Go to Interactive Sitemap

STAFF | STUDENTS | PARENTS | VISITORS | SCHOOLS

Tuesday, January 9

Main Menu for:

Assessment

< back

▪ I.S.A.T. Test Results

▪ S.A.I.

< Office of the Assistant Superintendent

S.A.I. Standards, Assessment, Instruction



Standards, Assessment, Instruction

District 108's model for continuous student achievement

What is SAI (Standards, Assessment, Instruction)?

SAI is a district-wide initiative for continuous improvement in student achievement. The SAI model is based upon research in the field of cognitive psychology, which studies how people learn and retain knowledge. SAI also relies heavily upon classroom research studies that have identified "Instructional Best Practices" in each subject area. Finally, SAI takes some of its structure from the book *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins & McTighe, which combines cognitive and classroom research into a comprehensive way of thinking about curriculum. Much of the jargon heard in District 108 relates to SAI. This Website is designed to explain the meaning of terms like "SAI", "I Can Do It!", "Cycles", "SAI Tests", "Grade Level Objectives", etc.

The SAI model divides the school year into three cycles. Each cycle begins with a pretest that informs

the teacher and student what objectives need work. They use the results to plan where to focus each student's learning during the cycle.

What are the core values of the program?

Value #1: **Everyone knows the curriculum**

The term "everyone" includes not only teachers and staff, but also parents and students. We've rewritten our district -objectives to help ensure that parents and students can read and understand the district expectations.

Value #2: **Everyone takes responsibility for student learning**

This includes all staff, parents and especially students. Our primary focus is to teach students to become responsible for their own learning.

Value #3: **Everyone uses data to make instructional decisions**

Access to current student data is necessary for making critical decisions about teaching and learning. Data about student achievement and progress is collected and reported through daily work, the SAI Pretests, "I Can Do It!" sheets, and each student's portfolio.

What does SAI look like in the classroom?

To help parents and community members to better understand the SAI process, we've developed an [on-line tour of SAI](#). Visit the tour to get a simple graphical view of what SAI looks like in the classroom.

What are the basic parts of SAI? And what do they mean?

S = Standards

SAI begins by identifying the desired results in student learning - what we want students to know and be able to do. Stephen Covey explained this as "beginning with the end in mind" in his book *The Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People*. "To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction" (1990).

The grade level objectives, based upon the Illinois Goals for Learning, set the standard for District 108 students. They are the "S" in SAI, and they tell us "where we are going." The direction we are heading is "continuous improvement," that is, every day each student takes small steps toward achieving the objectives. For more information on this section of the process, visit the [Standards page](#).

A = Assessment

After the target or standard is identified, we determine what type of evidence we need to collect to determine whether we hit the target. We use a variety of assessment tools during each of the 3 district-wide assessment cycles throughout the year. During each cycle students take an SAI assessment that is designed to mirror the items on the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT). They incorporate a mix of multiple-choice, explanatory essay, and extended problem solving activities in both reading and math. Also, an ISAT style writing sample is taken in each cycle. For more information on this section of the process, visit the [Assessment page](#).

I = Instruction

During the last stage, teachers and students review the current data on student knowledge and then begin planning instructional units using the best instructional practices. District curriculum teams have identified instructional best practices in language arts and math. In addition, new classroom materials are being adopted including both print and non-print resources. For more information on this section of the process, visit the [Instruction page](#).

How is SAI different from the way things were done before?

SAI came to exist because of increased demands that public schools be accountable for student learning of "World Class" objectives. The Illinois State Board of Education created a state-wide set of objectives, called

"Illinois Learning Standards," which are tested every year with the "Illinois Standards Achievement Test" (ISAT). District accountability for these standards is based on how well students perform on ISAT. The results are made public every fall, and some of the district's funds are dependent upon continuous improvement in those scores. The different accountability system required a different way of organizing schools.

Prior to SAI, our district had objectives that defined what students had to know and do at each grade level. However, those objectives were based upon the earlier and less rigorous Illinois Goals for Learning. Also, the assessments primarily took place at the end of the school year. There's nothing wrong with testing students at the end of the year to find out if they met expectations. However, if this is the only assessment that is done all year long, then what happens if a student hasn't mastered the objectives? In many cases, it was too late to intervene and the student was sent to summer school.

In the SAI process, we are able to track each child's progress throughout the entire school year, not just from year to year. By comparison, our old model of having the assessments only at the end of year was like taking only a "snap shot" of a child's progress. With the SAI process, we are continuously taking snap shots and are building a "photo album" instead. (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998)



Instead of taking just a "snapshot" of student progress at the end of each year.....



the SAI process has us collecting an entire "photo album" of student progress throughout the entire school year.

How does SAI compare to what many schools and universities call Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (or CIA)?

The two ideas have many similar concepts, however, there are two key differences...

Standards instead of Curriculum

Wiggins and McTighe describe curriculum as a "blueprint for learning that is derived from content and shapes it into a plan for effective teaching and learning. Thus, curriculum is a specific path with identified lessons in an appropriate form and sequence for directing teaching." (1998) We believe in this definition of curriculum and therefore feel that the first part of our plan should NOT be called curriculum. It should be called standards, because the first step is to identify the desired outcomes, not the entire path for teaching and learning.

Assessment comes before Instruction

This is the more significant of the two differences. Traditionally, educators think of assessment as something that is done after the teaching: First - we teach chapter 9 from the text book and then when the chapter is almost over, we create a test to assess whether students "get it" or not. The SAI process turns this situation around and makes us identify the acceptable evidence that is necessary in order to determine whether a student understands, then the instruction begins.

How will we know if SAI is successful?

The goal of SAI is exactly the same as Goal #1 of the [District's Improvement Plan](#), "We will increase student performance through the school improvement process." "We're not looking for sharp increases in test scores, but instead a gradual and continuous improvement. As a part of Goal #1 of the District Improvement Plan, there is a "Results" section that focuses on the various student achievement results. It is within this "results" section that we will be monitoring the progress of SAI.

Resources:

Covey, Stephen. (1990) *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York: Fireside

Wiggin, Grant & McTighe, Jay. (1998) *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

[View the SAI Powerpoint](#)

| [Standards](#) | [Assessment](#) | [Instruction](#) | [SAI Homepage](#) | [SAI Tour](#) |

Pekin Public Schools District 108

501 Washington Street
Pekin, IL 61554
Phone: 309.477.4740
Fax: 309.477.4701

This page was last updated on Wednesday, July 21, 2004
© 1996-2004 Pekin Public Schools District 108. All Rights Reserved.
[Legal Disclaimer](#) | [Feedback Form](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Interactive Map](#) | [Help](#)