



1150 Garfield St.
Denver, CO 80206
720.424.3560
teller.dpsk12.org

October 23, 2024

Dear Teller Families,

We hope this message finds you well. We are off to a great start to the school year, and so many exciting things are happening here at Teller. With the weather cooling down and fall in full swing, we wanted to provide a high-level overview of how our students are performing both academically and socially.

As many of you know, every school in Colorado is required to have a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), which outlines strategies to ensure all students are prepared for post-secondary education or a career, earning a living wage right after graduation. This year, Teller's UIP focuses on three major improvement strategies:

1. **Data-Driven Instruction:** By December, 80% of our teachers, and by March, 90%, will consistently use student data to guide instruction and adjust teaching methods to better meet each child's needs. We are monitoring this progress through weekly data team meetings, classroom observations, and overall student growth and achievement.
2. **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** By October, 85% of our staff teaching Second Step (SEL curriculum) will be on schedule, and by December, we expect 95% to be on track. This progress will be verified through classroom visits and our Behavior Emotional Systems Screener (BESS) data.
3. **Culturally Responsive Education:** By December, 80% of our teachers will improve in creating safe and welcoming classrooms, helping students feel more comfortable and engaged in learning. By March, 90% of teachers will show further progress, as observed through classroom visits and data from our Student Perception Surveys (SPS).

Academic Progress

At Teller, all K-5 students take a literacy assessment as part of the READ Act, which helps us determine who is reading at or above grade level and how to support students who need to catch up. In addition to these assessments, all K-5 students also take the STAR assessment monthly to track reading progress. This data is reported to the state three times per year (fall, winter, and spring) and shared with families via Assessment Binders.

We are proud to report that **78.2%** of our K-5 students are reading at or above grade level—the highest percentage we’ve seen in three years! Additionally, **90% of our Black students** are reading at or above grade level, which is a significant achievement.

Behavioral and Social-Emotional Health

We also monitor students’ social-emotional health using the BESS screener. This tool helps us identify areas where students may need additional support, without being a formal diagnosis. Based on our fall BESS data, we’re excited to report that **90%** of our ECE through 5th grade students are in the “Normal Risk” category, a major accomplishment in supporting student well-being.

The ideal distribution for supporting students is as follows:

- 80% in Tier 1 (Normal Risk) - Teller is at 90%
- 5-15% in Tier 2 (Elevated Risk) - Teller is at 7%
- 1-5% in Tier 3 (Extremely Elevated Risk) - Teller is at 3%

By closely monitoring our BESS data, we can be proactive in tailoring interventions for individual students, adjust classroom practices, and implement school-wide programs to foster a positive and supportive environment.

Key Initiatives

We’ve also introduced a number of initiatives this year to improve teaching and learning at Teller:

- **Team Specialists:** This year, we’ve hired additional Team Specialists to support foundational reading, math differentiation, and social-emotional learning. These specialists help teachers provide personalized instruction, leading to stronger academic outcomes.
- **Learning Labs:** After years of planning, we’ve successfully launched Learning Labs, where teachers observe and learn from each other. These labs foster collaboration and professional growth, improving instruction across the board.
- **Professional Development:** Thanks to early release Fridays, we’ve dedicated time to high-quality professional development. Topics include classroom management, lesson pacing, differentiation, and fostering a positive classroom culture.
- **Data Team Protocol:** We’ve implemented a new data team protocol, ensuring teachers meet regularly to discuss student progress and tailor interventions to meet each student’s needs.

- **Small Class Sizes:** We've prioritized smaller class sizes, with an average of 24 students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, significantly lower than in previous years. This allows for more personalized attention and support for each student.
- **Tier II and Tier III Interventions:** We've introduced the "Really Great Reading" curriculum for Tier II reading interventions, which supports students who are reading below grade level. Tier III interventions are provided by a reading specialist for students needing additional support.
- **WIN Block (What I Need):** This 30-45 minute block during literacy and math allows students to receive the specific support they need, whether that's intervention, Gifted and Talented programming, English Language Development, or Special Education services—all without missing core instruction.
- **PRIDE Time:** Each morning, teachers dedicate time to teaching Second Step lessons, helping students build critical social-emotional skills. With consistent lessons, we've seen a noticeable improvement in student behavior and relationships.
- **Tiger Eye Awards:** This year, we've given out **219 Tiger Eye Awards**, more than double what we awarded at this time last year! These awards celebrate students who demonstrate our core PRIDE traits: Perseverance, Respect, Independence, Diversity and Inclusion, and Excellence.
- **Pep Rallies:** At the end of each month, we hold a school-wide pep rally to celebrate student, classroom, and staff achievements. These rallies have been a fun way to build community and school spirit!

Looking Ahead

As we move into November, we'll continue tracking progress, especially with upcoming data from the **Student Perception Survey (SPS)** for 3rd-5th grade students. This survey reflects how students view their teachers in terms of facilitating learning, supporting students, and communicating high expectations. In addition, 3rd-5th graders will participate in district interim assessments for Literacy, Math, Social Studies (4th grade only), and Science (5th grade only). These assessments help us understand how students are progressing towards meeting state standards and predict future CMAS performance.

We are so proud of the progress we've made, and we know we couldn't do it without the support of our incredible Teller families. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

Best,

Sabrina Bates, Principal

Jason Smartt, Assistant Principal