May 3, 2005

TO: Dr. Wilcox, Superintendent
FROM: Steve Iachini, Director, Research & Accountability
       Dr. Behrokh Ahmadi, Director, Evaluation

SUBJECT: Kaplan Achievement Planner

As part of a comprehensive evaluation of the Kaplan Achievement Planner, two studies were conducted. One study measured the satisfaction with the Kaplan Achievement Planner and the second quantified the effectiveness of the assessments.

To assess the satisfaction among the users of the Kaplan system in 15 pilot schools, a survey was developed. The survey asked questions regarding the Kaplan training, system usage at school, Kaplan support, and customer services. The results of the survey indicated that:

- The respondents to the survey have a high level of satisfaction with the training received.
- Fifty-five percent of the respondents expressed that they are interested in using the Kaplan system, after they have been to training and after administering the assessment.
- The user support and customer services were rated moderately high, however about 25-30% of respondents were not sure how to rate these services; this could have been the result of not having used these services prior to the administration of the survey.

Some areas for improvement were depicted in the results; responses indicated that the Kaplan staff should become more familiar with schools’ in-service needs and students’ achievement level and needs. Also, the results show that Kaplan should improve demonstrating the connection among the Kaplan reports, analyzing the classroom data and student performance. These results were shared with Kaplan and they are taking steps to make improvements in these areas.

The effectiveness of the Kaplan Achievement Planner, was studied by using the results of the first two Kaplan assessments.

All Kaplan Baseline Tests are intended to measure students’ expected performance level at the conclusion of the school year. As such, it is expected that test scores will increase with each successive administration. This assertion was supported by a preliminary analysis. Students’ Baseline Math scores improved significantly from the first to the second administration in all grades except 8 and 9. Similarly, Baseline Reading scores improved across subsequent exams for all grades except 5, 6, and 9.

In an effort to determine the relationship between Kaplan Baseline Test scores and FCAT performance, the correlations between 2004/2005 Kaplan assessments and students’ 2004 FCAT Math and Reading Scale Scores were computed. If the Baseline Progress Tests are measuring the same constructs as the FCAT, the expectation is to see a positive correlation between the two assessments, indicating that students who scored high on the Baseline Progress Tests also scored high on the previous year’s FCAT. As expected, these data indicate a high degree of correlation between the Kaplan Baseline Math and Reading Test Scores & students’ 2004 FCAT Math and Reading Scale Scores. Given these results, it is probable that the teacher’s use of the Kaplan Achievement Planner is preparing students for success on the FCAT assessments. These preliminary results offer a good indication of the effectiveness of the Achievement Planner assessments. More in-depth analyses will follow as additional data become available later this year.
The results of the effectiveness study were shared with Kaplan and they have hired a psychometrician to assure the validity and reliability of the achievement planner assessment.
As part of a comprehensive evaluation of the Kaplan Achievement Planner, a survey was developed to assess the satisfaction among the users of the Kaplan system in 15 pilot schools.

The survey asked questions regarding the Kaplan training, system usage at school, Kaplan support, and customer services. The instructional staff at the pilot schools was asked to respond to the survey; teachers were asked to respond only to questions related to the training and the system usage.

Two training sessions were offered to the staff of the pilot schools; 39 attended the first training session only, 10 attended the second training session only, and 103 attended both.

The participants were:

- Principal: 2
- Assistant Principal: 3
- Classroom Teacher: 152
- Other: 5

Teachers who responded to the survey were teaching in the grades displayed:

- Grades 3-5: 51
- Grades 6-8: 57
- Grades 9-12: 50

Summary of Results

- The respondents to the survey indicated high level of satisfaction with the training received.
- Some of the areas for improvement that were depicted in the results are:
  - The Kaplan staff should become more familiar with schools’ in-service needs and students achievement level and needs.
  - Kaplan should improve demonstrating the connection among the Kaplan reports, analyzing the classroom data and student performance.
  - Fifty-five percent of the respondents expressed that they are interested in using the Kaplan system, after they have been to training and administering the assessment.
  - The user support and customer services were rated moderately high, however about 25-30% of respondents were not sure how to rate these services; this could have been the result of not having used these services prior to the administration of the survey.

The survey results and comments are presented on the attached documents.
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November 2004
Kaplan Achievement Planner Survey
Pinellas County Schools
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Pinellas County Schools
Kaplan Achievement Planner Survey
November 2004
Kaplan training has improved my knowledge of how to analyze data reports.*

The training has prepared me for what to expect from the baseline assessment in my classroom/school.

I feel sure that Kaplan's staff and trainers understand the needs of my classroom/school.

Kaplan's staff and trainers are sensitive to the teachers' needs.

I am familiar with the different reports that Kaplan produces.

I know how to use the reports to analyze my class's performance level.

The Kaplan system is easy to navigate.*

The Kaplan system is supported in my school.

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Pinellas County Schools

November 2004
Kaplan Achievement Planner Survey
Pinellas County Schools
Kaplan K12 Learning Services Achievement Planner

Beginning in the 2004/2005 school year, Pinellas County Schools contracted with Kaplan K12 Learning Services to institute a pilot program using the Achievement Planner software to provide educators in the district with data-driven progress testing that is aligned with Sunshine State Standards to assess student achievement across the school year. The 15 schools chosen to implement the pilot testing program were Anona Elementary, Countryside High, Cypress Woods Elementary, Dunedin Elementary, Frontier Elementary, Gulfport Elementary, Hamilton Disston, Largo Middle, Mt. Vernon Elementary, Riviera Middle, Seminole High, Seminole Middle, Shore Acres Elementary, Skycrest Elementary, and St. Petersburg High. The purpose of the program is to improve student achievement and to close the achievement gap between subgroups defined by the No Child Left Behind Act. This report is the result of a preliminary evaluation of the effectiveness of the Kaplan Achievement Planner pilot program in Pinellas county schools.

Parallel versions of the Kaplan Baseline Tests are administered 3 times throughout the school year: in August, November, and April for elementary students and in August, November, and January for secondary students. All Baseline Tests are intended to measure students’ expected performance level at the conclusion of the school year. As such, it is expected that test scores will increase with each successive administration. An important feature of the Achievement Planner program allows teachers to access assessment results in the form of individual and class-wide reports that identify students’ areas of weakness and provide prescriptive lesson plans for improvement, which will translate into improved FCAT performance for students in this pilot program. Assessment reports are also available to administrators on school-wide and district-wide levels of analysis.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the mean Math and Reading scores, respectively, on the first and second Kaplan Baseline Progress Tests for students in grades 3 through 10. The maximum score possible on each Baseline Test is 50. As shown in Figure 1, most students significantly improved their Math test scores from the first to the second administration. Students in grades 8 and 9 did not show appreciable gains in Baseline Math Test scores; those scores were statistically equivalent.
As shown in Figure 2, the majority of students in grades 3 through 10 also significantly improved their Reading test scores across subsequent examinations. Reading score gains were not evident in grades 6 or 9, and 5th graders exhibited a perplexing trend of superior performance on Test 1 compared to Test 2.

The ultimate goal in using the Achievement Planner program is to improve student performance. In an effort to determine the relationship between Kaplan Baseline Test scores and FCAT performance, the correlations between 2004/2005 Kaplan assessments and students’ 2004 FCAT Math and Reading Scale Scores was computed. If the Baseline Progress Tests are measuring the same constructs as the FCAT, the expectation is to see a positive correlation between the two assessments, indicating that students who scored highly on the Baseline Progress Tests also scored highly on the previous year’s FCAT. These correlations are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 for Math and Reading performance, respectively. It should be noted that students in grade 3 during the current school year did not take the FCAT in 2004, so this data has been eliminated from the current analyses.
As shown in Figure 3, the range of correlations between Kaplan Math Test 1 & 2004 FCAT Math Scale Score is $r = .702$ to $.759$, and the range of correlations between Kaplan Math Test 2 & 2004 FCAT Math Scale Score is $r = .695$ to $.799$. The average 95% confidence interval is $\pm .03$.

Similarly, Figure 4 illustrates the range of correlations between Kaplan Reading Test 1 & 2004 FCAT Reading Scale Score is $r = .668$ to $.734$, and the range of correlations between Kaplan Reading Test 2 & 2004 FCAT Reading Scale Score is $r = .605$ to $.764$. The average 95% confidence interval is $\pm .04$.

Taken together, these data indicate a high degree of correlation between the Kaplan Baseline Math and Reading Test Scores & students’ 2004 FCAT Math and Reading Scale Scores. Given this data, it is probable that the teacher’s use of the Kaplan Achievement Planner tool is preparing students for success.
on the FCAT assessments. These preliminary results offer a good indication of the effectiveness of the Achievement Planner assessments. More in-depth analyses will follow as additional data becomes available later this year.
WHAT SHOULD KAPLAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS TRAINING SERVICES?

1. More hands on training rather than the presenter doing it for the group.
2. Be sure website is available for training. It was frustrating to not have hands-on capability. So much information was given and no suggestions for implementation beyond testing.
3. We had computer problems and Kaplan did not adjust their training.
4. Computer system at schools must be adequate. Website is sometimes slow, especially if many people are logging in at once. There should be some way for teachers to respond/give input at time of training.
5. Have a backups, such as transparencies of website data for technical difficulties. A fifty-question test is not appropriate for 3rd grade students.
6. Align tests to benchmarks and what is actually being taught in the classroom.
7. Make it easier! The scanning steps stinks (slow computers; class codes change with each cycle, why? Also, giving the Kaplan 3 times and our own FCAT assessments is overkill. My teaching time has been shortened. Scrap this!!
8. Training is good. This takes too much time away from teaching and adds to my already too much paperwork.
9. Organize presentations to focus on specific tasks such as using scanner, checking scores etc. Test questions and answer keys should be printed for us – too much
10. Make sure the equipment is functioning and it is the level being taught.
11. Better communication. Wider time to administer baseline.
12. The training is good – my time is of essence. This adds to my workload.
13. Provide more scanners.
14. Equipment should be up and running. Materials should arrive weeks ahead of time. The math test is not geared to essential learnings.
15. The use of the scanner is unreliable and prone to disappointment. The process takes much too much time. Many hours were completely wasted on useless attempts before and after school hours.
16. Less lecture and more time to work on our own classes. We know the theory.
17. The school needs to have computers that work and be able to pull up students during training. Have student codes before testing (more then a 1 day advance) time to scan.
18. Nothing involving the training services, they were great. I just think that these tests are a ridiculous waste of time away from teaching essential learnings! Can tell, after a few month exactly which ways work for each student
19. The Kaplan Program requires too much “leg work” for example, teachers should be able to access the information at the Kaplan website AFTER KAPLAN HAS SCANNED AND COMPUTED THE DATA. Valuable teacher time should be put towards analysis of the data.
20. Bubble in student codes for us – very time consuming considering we teach all day and need to plan/correct.
21. If going to be a pilot school should supply teachers with laptops to use.
22. Make sure the school has a working system when needing it for demonstrations
23. Be prepared to answer any and all questions. Be certain the technology for demo really works. Go slowly enough for all to understand.
WHAT SHOULD KAPLAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS TRAINING SERVICES?  Pg.2

24. Need to better evaluate level of computer knowledge of participants and group accordingly – moved
too slowly for some and too quickly for others.

25. More time to work with each feature.

26. Provide a training guide in print with a checklist of skills taught – remembering what to do at next
cycle is difficult for my brain! The handouts are easily lost among the paper – a bright color binder
with cloze notes helped me a former presenter.

27. Slow and deliberate to instruct give the audience ample opportunity to respond to instructors,
explore, discuss with the presenter.

28. The 1st baseline test that was administered in August was a complete waste of time because our
entire student body that took the test failed. Therefore, analyzing the reports was a waste of time
because s students were low in all areas. The test was not a true representation of the FCAT since
our school has about 80% of the students pass. This test was extremely difficult to administer
because the "real world of teaching" we just don’t have a 9th grade class or a 10th grade class; we
have a mixture of 9-12 or 10-12 in a single class. The test was also too long for the lower level
students.

29. Use people who have been in the classroom setting recently. Keep them informed on how real classes
are with Level 1 students. When class size is 38 we do not have the resources to individualize
students that need the help. If a workbook came with the material correlating with the different
strands instead of having to pull everything off the computer. A print out could be handed to the
student with the pages in the workbook that would help him improve his/her FCAT scores.

30. I think Kaplan and the trainers need to be more informed about the reliability and validity of the
exams. The exam we gave to the students was not useful for baseline data – it might have been
useful for its intended purpose. There is not any correlation between the exam and FCAT scores.
How can you possibly give a test that is not correlated to the exam it is supposed to improve?

31. Training was fine. There is too much testing and the pacing doesn’t allow for testing every month. It
needs to be Common Assessments or Kaplan not both.

32. I want to see the correlation between the 1st and last assessments before I can say whether the
Kaplan is worth while (it is not at all like the Common Assessments) as an indicator for FCAT success.

33. Refresher course for teachers after initial months of using Kaplan.

34. Have data go into SIS menu so graph can be printed to show data by each strand assessed that is
easy to view. Have all assessments be able to be scanned – Assessment C had to be hand-graded.
Kaplan and Common Assessments can’t be compared so I don’t know if students made progress.

35. Do training more often between baseline tests to make sure teachers know how to interpret test data.
Make program easier to navigate.

36. Training is fine. The problem lies with the shortcomings of the software itself, which limits its
effectiveness in the reality of today’s classroom. Need more automated and effective report
generation. Student log in and guidance should be correlated to results of performance on baseline
tests

37. Training was fine.

38. Make sure everything is working, so that the training can be successful. I think there should be a
back plan in case plan A doesn’t work out. I personally felt everything was rushed.

39. Smaller meetings with depts. Conversational approach-vs. -presentation. Technology that works-
PC(S); PowerPoint was broken. Always have a “Plan B: for when technology breaks down! Wasted
time!
WHAT SHOULD KAPLAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS TRAINING SERVICES?  Pg.3

40. The school needs to improve the computer systems in order to properly use Kaplan we need access to internet in all of the classrooms.
41. I need more time to access lesson plans and use in classroom. I have excessive ESE paperwork, meetings and training for Reading Endorsement – no time.
42. I need more navigation help from the Kaplan people.
43. Kaplan needs to arrange it so that teaches can manipulate the data – by changing student groupings. The way it’s arranged now, the data is impossible for me to use because the groupings of my students are all messed up.
44. We were unable to access the Kaplan Achievement Planner.
45. It is only user friendly to the teacher who gave the test. The rest of us have a terribly time consuming ordeal to get item analysis for our students. It took me 3 hours to chart an itemized analysis of the 2 classes to which I gave the test. I can’t imagine how long it will take to figure it for the rest of my students. This was extremely frustrating as well as a major disappointment.
46. Everything!
47. We need more graphs to look at.
48. The trainer who was here to go over scanning did the steps. I would have retained more if I had done it and not watched.
49. The presenter was very knowledgeable about Kaplan.
50. Spread out the training. Too much information too fast. Hard to retain. So much going on this year, hard to spend the time needed to benefit most from the program
51. Don’t know haven’t used it.
52. Nothing – very good presentation – very useful info!
53. Be used instead of Common Assessment.
54. Inform us if 1st test could be returned to student as a study guide. Give a fixed announced date to give test BEFORE teacher design their quarter plans. Why 2 tests? 9th & 10th? Most math classes are mixed grade level – VERY FRUSTRATING to coordinate – booklets answer forms – answer keys, etc.
55. Make the classroom teacher more involved with the questions offered on the test. It needs to be aligned with the curriculum that the teacher is covering in the classroom.
56. Low functioning students are completely turned off and disheartened when faces with all these tests. Perhaps Social System needs to spend money more effectively by hiring tutors and pulling students out for 1 on 1 or small group FCAT skill practice.
57. When scoring the test, choosing the options should be easier. Whether you could select everything at once rather than individually for each class. It would be much easier on the teacher if each student had an individual code rather than codes that overlap from class to class.
58. Train Math and English separately. Pre-arrange a training environment so all participants have hands on opportunity. Make sure teacher data is accurate (I am a math teacher and could only access English data during one of the training sessions).
59. Have a sample of test and show exactly how to scan the information.
60. My training day, the schools computer lab was not compatible with the Kaplan demo. The Kaplan systems over tests the kids when you combine it with all of the other mandatory testing they already do. The kids do not take it seriously. They are OVER TESTED. In my opinion, it’s a waste of the district money.
WHAT SHOULD KAPLAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS TRAINING SERVICES?  Pg.4

61. The training on the first day had only vague answers to questions. The training on the second day could not get the equipment to work, so the whole session had to be rescheduled.

62. Explain how to find/use lesson plans and what to do with tests after they are given.

63. Organize a committee by dept’ make sure everyone is on the same base; too much confusion at this time. We need to be able to work it into our curriculum without it disturbing the entire process.

64. This service is not beneficial to my students; it took 6 days of other meaningful classroom instruction from them, and several hours of my time in training. All of my students are FCAT level 4 or 5 except for 3, who are just under the level 4 borderline.

65. Have computer set up so teachers can do the work on-line.

66. Be prepared to do online training – tell us what were supposed to do besides test and look at reports, scheduling etc.

67. With all of the $ spent on this system, I would think they could send out more than 1 person (who is going to be helping the 2 people doing online testing) so the other teachers can get help with scanning – scoring – and doing it correctly!

68. Nothing really – the facilitator was great, our antiquated wiring system could not handle the load when we where all on-line trying to learn the system so one of the training sessions ended abruptly.

69. Need to have “practice” work on line for students to enter and work with to enhance their reading abilities, instead of teacher only being able to print out lesson plans. This would be a Great Asset to the program.

70. Provide more scanners.

71. I would be nice if the computers worked when the person came in to show us. Scanners don’t always work.

72. It would be beneficial if ALL staff had at least an overview training as our enter staff is data driven and we are working in Professional Learning Communities. It would enhance our abilities to support the reading and math teachers.

73. I cannot answer!

74. More frequent, structured in-service for teachers.

75. While the training was excellent and the potential is there, the program did not seem ready to be implemented in this county.

76. Tell us what the numbers mean – is it a predictor of how the student will do on the real FCAT?

77. Smaller groups. More convenient times to train.

78. The training is fin but the baseline test is too difficult for the average student. I do not think is really a fair indicator of success on FCAT.

79. Anne is extremely efficient – excellent consultant/trainer.

80. Stick to tutoring.

81. More hands-on practice sessions of actually scoring Kaplan test. Fun practice FCAT related reading passages (maybe cartoon-character enlightenment or other colorful expressions for careful reasoning).

82. Kaplan services were great. I believe that the problems that arose resulted from an inadequate county server system and from teachers who did not understand how to navigate even after the training. My only confusion is in regard to the organization of lesson plans, although even that is a surmountable problem.

83. More training on lesson plans – use by categories, etc.

84. Shorten the initial PowerPoint presentation!
WHAT SHOULD KAPLAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS TRAINING SERVICES?  Pg.5

85. Kaplan could print out letters to parents giving baseline test results. It would be so easy for your computers and would save us teachers so much time. Teachers have no time!

86. My problem is not so much with the training as the setup of the KAP system. The reports that are useful to me in my classroom are so far embedded into the program with the drop-down menus and repeated selections, it is overly time consuming to get to any useful data.

87. At the first training it would have been much better if we had had our students already entered into the system.

88. Nothing. The training was great.

89. Kaplan doesn’t correspond directly with FCAT so I’m not sure how effective it really is. No girded response, no short answer and it doesn’t really deal in levels, like level 1, level 2, so I know my students improved from baseline 1 to 2 but will it be enough to get to the next level on the FCAT? I’m not sure.

90. Where are the answers to the lessons? Obtaining information on students assessments are extremely difficult. The drop down menus need to move faster. Should be able to print the assessments for the entire class with on request (individual reports) too difficult to print information on individual students.

91. The student’s just need so kind of incentive in order to take the test serious.

92. Make sure the baseline.
WHAT SHOULD KAPLAN DO TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS SUPPORT SERVICES?

1. Code updates need to be more timely. We have large student mobility.
2. Realize that a teacher’s time is limited. Simplify! Simplify!
3. Give correct access information.
4. Make sure the school has a working system when needing it for demonstrators.
5. Data transfer necessary to assign student codes takes too long. Support and understanding of teacher needs is good, however, administrator needs are not well understood. Some needs have been shared without evidence of needs having been met.
6. Efficient turn around time for identifying codes, scoring, and posting scores. Waiting many weeks to get codes, score and posting is not acceptable.
7. Student with the pages in the workbook that would help him improve his/her FCAT score.
8. Update system within 48 hours to include new students (as promised); upload data accurately into report cards and into the county system so that teachers have access to the graphs that we have been using to analyze data. We were at a disadvantage to the rest of the county. Lesson plans are not a necessary tool at this time due to pacing and adequate adoption materials that are available.
9. Have local reps that can come to schools to address issues more quickly.
10. Find out ahead of time if a school does not have the computer system to support the program. I can’t print a single lesson plan for lack of memory. Problem #2 surely there is some way for the teachers who do not give the test to get a print out of their classes. Why can’t we go through a student list and highlight class members and have it print out an item analysis for our classes?
11. Don’t know, haven’t used it.
12. Never had to call.
13. Have updated student lists for the first test.
14. My experience has been quite satisfactory.
15. Have the people in schools during initial training. If we go district wide, have teams ready for deployment during testing week to assist with any major problems (Seminole H.S. first assessment) 2nd assessment went great.
16. More experience with step-by-step directions in working with teachers/students/others for Kaplan (FCAT) testing.
17. Nothing.
18. Devise a test that correlates with County Expectations.