



## DataDirector is here for you!

NOVEMBER 2015

### Dear DataDirector Districts:

With another school year fully underway, the **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt™** assessment team welcomes you back. Our goal is to provide you with an update on **DataDirector** as well as our continued investment in our assessment offerings. One of the most significant improvements we made is to our hosting infrastructure for improved stability and performance. Our movement to an elastic infrastructure should help to provide our clients with more consistent performance levels—regardless of peak demand. And as **HMH®** invests in our next generation assessments, we will continue to support and maintain **DataDirector** throughout the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years to ensure your ongoing success using the system.

Our investments in infrastructure are a part of the larger **HMH** strategy in which we are working to realize a vision of a new and innovative approach for providing digital services to school districts across the country. We believe that districts will appreciate this new consistent approach, which will:

- Simplify use
- Reduce training needs
- Allow users to access all of their HMH products and services in one place

Assessment functionality is one of the core components to the new system, which will offer many of the same features available in **DataDirector** while leveraging the latest in technology—providing innovative functionality for a consistent, reliable, and scalable experience. Additionally, to help with our current and future product road maps, we also want to introduce one of our key team members: Anthony Czyzyk, Product Manager for **DataDirector**.

We are looking forward to working with **DataDirector** users in the development of **HMHONE™ Assessment**, to incorporate your feedback. Our internal teams are working on transition plans, including the migration of data and training as to correspond with our future release.

Again, we will be supporting **DataDirector** and hope you continue to utilize its robust assessment and reporting functionality. We appreciate all you do for your students and wish you continued success in this new school year.



Anthony Czyzyk  
Product Manager,  
Assessment & Platform  
Solutions

Sincerely,



Tracey Barrett  
Vice President, Assessment and Analytics Solutions  
Product Management and Product Marketing



## Product Update: *DataDirector* Enhancements

By **Anthony Czyzyk**, *Product Manager, Assessment & Platform Solutions*

**DataDirector** has successfully moved its infrastructure to a new hosting facility. The new host is a premiere provider in a highly secure location with fully managed IT infrastructure and applications in traditional and cloud-enabled environments. The move allows for a higher level of satisfaction for **HMH** and for our **DataDirector** users with the following benefits:

### Expert Responsiveness and Proactive Monitoring

The expert staff of onsite technicians will be proactively monitoring the **DataDirector** servers and will be able to better serve us by providing quick responses to any incoming alerts. The dedicated staff will also administer and manage infrastructure-related tasks as a first-line of defense against any network downtime. With 24/7/365 monitoring in place, proactive security scans, and onsite technical resources, the new hosting provider offers one of the industry's strongest service level agreements (SLAs).

### Enhanced Security

The new location has the highest security standards in the industry for data integrity and related processes. This includes multiple levels of physical security to the data centers and other sensitive areas; secured authentication and access to networks, programs, and data; as well as monitoring to proactively identify and correct system vulnerabilities.

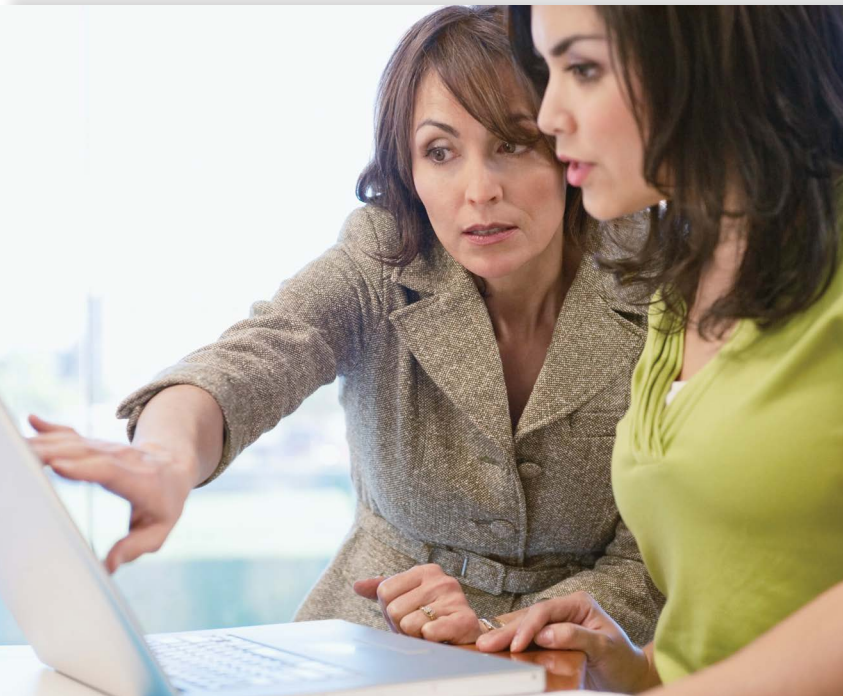
### Technical Support

The new partner will provide knowledgeable and responsive technical support services for improved efficiency. In extreme circumstances (such as server or network downtime), applications and services can be restored in minutes. In addition, the new provider will maintain systems and network connections, and can quickly respond with additional hardware, middleware, or application support when needed.

### Network Connectivity

Data protection and Disaster Recovery (DR) solutions are provided to safeguard the data and minimize downtime in the event of a crisis. The data centers are powered through highly efficient systems backed by generators that can keep the site fully operational at full load for up to 24 hours.

**HMH** has successfully moved many of our other platforms to the new hosting facility and the level of service provided has met and exceeded the expectations of the company. Moving the **DataDirector** infrastructure to the same centralized location not only allows us to streamline efforts for all of our platforms, but also increases the company's leverage for improving support and service for our **DataDirector** customers.



## What is DataGrader?

HMH provides *DataDirector* customers with more than one choice for scanning, with options like *DataScanner™*, *GradeCam™*, and *DataGrader*. *DataGrader* is the latest scanning solution to be integrated into *DataDirector* and includes many key benefits.

Like *DataScanner*, *DataGrader* assists districts in effectively creating, printing, scanning, and grading user-created answer documents. However, *DataGrader* also offers increased flexibility and added ability with the following key benefits specific to the *DataGrader* answer sheet.

### Key Benefits

**Create** - Can consist of multiple pages, allowing for a greater number of questions per test.

**Print** - Can be photocopied so that one answer sheet can be printed, allowing for copies to be made for each student.

**Distribute** - Can be generated for ease of distribution at the district, school, or class level.

**Scan** - Answer documents are automatically formatted for scoring.

**Grade** - A unique code for each test administered is utilized so answer sheets for various tests can be scanned in the same batch and the results for each test are automatically associated with the tests administered.

**Re-grade** - Can be re-graded and the new scores will replace the previous results.

There are many factors to consider when deciding if *DataGrader* is the correct scanning solution for your district. If your district is interested in learning more about *DataGrader*, your Education Services Consultant can provide any additional information and discuss the considerations for transition. Please note that districts can continue using *DataScanner* and do not need to switch to *DataGrader*.

## Comparing Apples to Apples and Erasing the Tally Marks

By Vicki Thomas, HMH Formative Assessment Account Executive



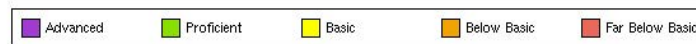
With today's educational climate so focused on demonstrating student mastery of objectives, teachers, administrators, district level personnel grapple with the ongoing challenge of proving not just growth, but mastery as well. Knowing this, I am always constantly surprised by two things when I speak with educators: 1) that they compare apples to oranges, and 2) that they are still using tally marks to demonstrate progress.

Apples to apples—not oranges—sounds like a common sense comparison, right? Yet, how many times do we as teachers give a pre-assessment that is built of lower level questions and then give a post-assessment that is all higher level thinking skills or performance based tasks? And then we wonder why students are not demonstrating growth. With this scenario, students would show regression; and that is not what we want at all. Changing the measuring tool is not going to provide statistically sound results. The best approach is to build a pre-assessment that covers the needed standards (not all), and a variety of thinking skills and difficulty levels, then to build a post-assessment that mirrors the pre-assessment. It could even be the same questions. Then you will be able to compare apples to apples—not apples to oranges—and determine accurately if your students are learning the material.

Let's talk about tally marks. Tally marks have seen their heyday, but need to be retired when it comes to talking about data, assessment, and demonstrating progress. There is no teacher who has time to tally up how many students got which question correct and do the calculations to demonstrate mastery of the material. *DataDirector* has this covered for you. Embedded in several of the reports, there is a button called "Add Assessments." It's been around for a bit, but you may have been afraid to click on it. Try it—you'll be pleasantly surprised.

This feature will allow you to compare 2, 3, 4, or even more assessments side-by-side. Look at the screen shot below from the *Proficiency Level Summary Report* that is comparing two *Riverside Interim Assessments* for ELA at Grade 3. This is the first of the charts and graphs that show on the page once two (or more) assessments are compared:

Assessment ID(s):	16			67		
	District % Students	School % Students	Class % Students	District % Students	School % Students	Class % Students
Advanced	8.97	8.97	10.53	18.18	18.18	15.79
Proficient	37.18	37.18	36.84	46.75	46.75	57.89
Basic	39.74	39.74	42.11	23.38	23.38	15.79
Below Basic	12.82	12.82	10.53	7.79	7.79	5.26
Far Below Basic	1.28	1.28	0.00	3.90	3.90	5.26
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

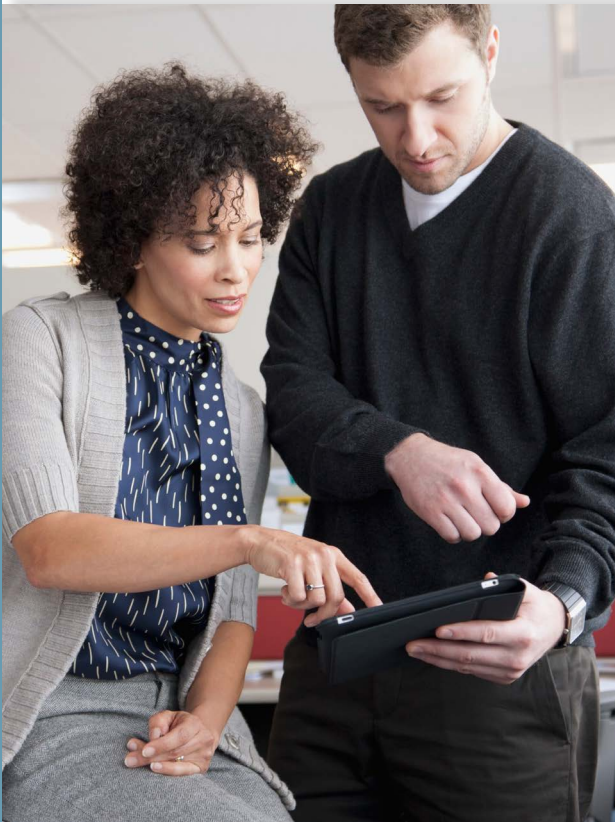


(continued)

## Comparing Apples to Apples and Erasing the Tally Marks

At a glance, it is very easy to see that across the district, school, and classroom there has been growth and an increase in mastery. Want to know which students make up that 5.26% that are “far below basic” in the class? That number, and all the rest, is a link that will take you to a list of the students that make up the number.

But wait, there’s more! Want to see how these two assessments compare at the standard level? Scroll on down your report page and you will find this chart awaiting you. Remember that this is based off of two *Riverside Interim Assessments* for ELA at Grade 3. These assessments arrive with the items aligned to standards and clusters. But you can align any assessment to any standards that are available in **DataDirector**, and cluster the standards on the assessment, too. With just a glance at this chart, I can easily see that these 3rd graders are demonstrating mastery and showing growth:



Standards and Clusters	16			67		
	District	School	Classroom	District	School	Classroom
Total Items:	35	35	35	35	35	35
Total Points:	35	35	35	35	35	35
LA.3.RL.3.3	55.77%	55.77%	47.37%	77.92%	77.92%	88.84%
Reading: Part 1	62.96%	62.96%	59.83%	66.03%	66.03%	69.81%
Reading: Part 2	54.33%	54.33%	57.89%	64.37%	64.37%	65.13%
L.1LANGUAGE	59.29%	59.29%	61.84%	65.42%	65.42%	73.03%
L.2Conventions of Standard English	46.47%	46.47%	52.83%	56.49%	56.49%	69.74%
L.3Knowledge of Language	62.82%	62.82%	57.89%	76.62%	76.62%	68.42%
L.4Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	75.21%	75.21%	75.44%	73.59%	73.59%	78.95%
RF.1FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS	43.59%	43.59%	43.86%	62.77%	62.77%	57.89%
RF.2Phonics and Word Recognition	43.59%	43.59%	43.86%	62.77%	62.77%	57.89%
RI.1INFORMATIONAL TEXT	58.76%	58.76%	60.09%	59.04%	59.04%	57.49%
RI.2Key Ideas and Details	58.85%	58.85%	63.16%	61.56%	61.56%	64.21%
RI.3Craft and Structure	56.84%	56.84%	56.14%	59.31%	59.31%	54.39%
RI.4Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	60%	60%	60%	56.36%	56.36%	52.63%
RL.1LITERATURE	62.93%	62.93%	59.65%	73.2%	73.2%	78.47%
RL.2Key Ideas and Details	63.25%	63.25%	61.4%	78.18%	78.18%	85.28%
RL.3Craft and Structure	61.11%	61.11%	56.14%	58.87%	58.87%	64.91%
RL.4Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	64.1%	64.1%	59.65%	79.22%	79.22%	80.7%
Overall Assessment	59.01%	59.01%	58.95%	65.27%	65.27%	67.67%

Need to share this info? You can export it as a PDF or an Excel® document. Need to do something more powerful with this data? Then you could consider Custom Reports. Need to learn more about how to do this report, or how to add the *Riverside Interim Assessments*? Contact your Formative Account Executive. We are always more than happy to help.

Just remember—apples to apples, and no more tally marks.



## New Permissions Settings

Did you know that we have added a new permission to the global permission page of an assessment that allows System, School, and District Administrator users the ability to hide the answer key for the assessment?



When setting global permissions for an assessment, System, School, and District Admin users have the added option to hide the answer key for any given assessment. The “May View Answer Key” selection has been added to the Global Sharing Setting page of an assessment and gives Admin Users the added flexibility to further lock down benchmark assessments.



## Report Corner

### A Day in the Life of An Implementation Specialist

By Kari Barber, Senior Education Services Consultant



Greetings! My name is Kari Barber. You may know me from my years of supporting **DataDirector** customers. I’m so happy that I work with the platform—I’ve been doing it for so long that it’s become an essential part of my work life at **HMH**. Here’s just a sample of some support I provided recently.

A customer using **DataDirector** for the last two years requested assistance for Custom Reporting. Though the user was familiar with the basics of Custom Reporting, the information needed did not seem to be pulling through the report. The customer contacted me for assistance, as I’d conducted their Implementation and Training. After discovering exactly what was needed, I went to work.

**Tip:** *If Assessments are created in DataDirector, though not yet administered, a Custom Report can be built using the assessments. Once the test is administered and data available via scanning or online testing, the Custom Report can be accessed and the data will populate.*

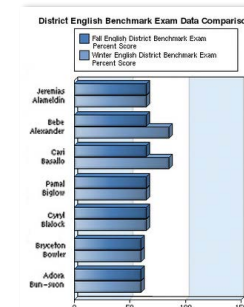
The customer wasn’t doing anything wrong to prevent them from getting what they wanted, **DataDirector** just happens to be such a flexible and robust system, there are more ways than one to get to the data. Starting district-wide with all students, I “modified columns” by adding demographic information the district needed to report out (ethnicity and reading fluency program). Then I began adding in all Math and ELA District Interim Assessments for all grade levels. Once that was complete, I began to “Refine” the data by grade level, copying and renaming the report, removing the refinements, and refining by another grade level. This was done for all Grades 3-11.

The last step was to summarize the data by group through the summary field. I completed the custom work for the customer because of a state-reporting time crunch. After the reporting requirements for the state were met, I worked with the customer on the process to build the Custom Report in advance.

**District English Benchmark Exam Data Comparison**  
(Created on January 15th, 2014 1:39pm PST for Data Director Unified School District)

Displaying 1 - 30 of 66 students

Student ID	Lastname	Firstname	Teacher ID	Fall English District Benchmark Exam Percent Score	Fall English District Benchmark Exam Proficiency Level	Winter English District Benchmark Exam Percent Score	Winter English District Benchmark Exam Proficiency Level
100425	Alamedin	Jeremias	100425	65	Below Basic	85	Proficient
100425	Alexander	Debe	100425	50	Far Below Basic	50	Far Below Basic
100425	Basallo	Carl	100425	60	Far Below Basic	75	Basic
100425	Bilow	Pamal	100425	80	Proficient	80	Proficient
100425	Blotck	Cyril	100425	60	Below Basic	65	Below Basic
100425	Bowler	Bryceton	100425	75	Basic	95	Advanced
100425	Bun-suen	Adora	100425	95	Advanced	70	Basic
100425	Cue	Channath	100425	55	Far Below Basic	55	Far Below Basic
100425	Daboo	Shanese	100425	65	Proficient	70	Basic
100425	Dacheuang	Dyanna	100425	65	Below Basic	85	Proficient
100425	Dennis	Haneef	100425	55	Far Below Basic	55	Far Below Basic
100425	Diamond	Michaelangelo	100425	75	Basic	95	Advanced
100425	Ebanies	Rayvaughn	100425	80	Proficient	80	Proficient
100425	Furgison	Angelo	100425	70	Basic	70	Basic



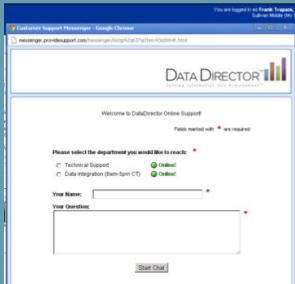
## Online Chat

Your district now has the ability to contact the **DataDirector** Support team via online chat through your **DataDirector** site. Whether analyzing assessment data after school or administering an online test during the school day, you and your staff will have another avenue to contact the **DataDirector** Support team.

Take advantage of the following benefits of **DataDirector** online support:

- Click the **Online Help** link at the top of every screen to access a **DataDirector** Support representative through an online chat window.
- **Chat with DataDirector Support staff** to discuss key functionality or report issues any time Monday –Friday 7:00 AM-7:00 PM CT.
- **Support your students in a timely manner.** With the option to chat online with a **DataDirector** Support representative, you don't need to wait until class is over to address a question or issue. You can get the answers you need even if you are not available to speak on the phone.

To learn more about implementing an online testing program in your district, purchasing **GradeCam**, or accessing online chat, please contact your Assessment Account Executive.



## Data Management

### Data, Information, Knowledge, Wisdom

By Cori Carr

Data-driven instruction. There is perhaps no other phrase that teachers dread more. They either have too much data, or not enough. They have the data, but don't know how to use it to inform instruction. They haven't received training on how to use the data. They may keep a data binder—and in most cases, the binder sits, accumulating dust, in the far recesses of bookshelves. With knowledge of how to turn this data into useable information, teachers can create a classroom in which informed decision-making is the norm.

#### What is data?

Data equals numbers. A student takes an assessment, receives a score—perhaps even a percentile range or an indication of how much the student has improved since the last assessment. It should be noted that there are many pieces of data that are important when making decisions—student attendance, developmental factors, completion of homework, or in class activities. Without careful study and consideration of these factors, this data never gets translated into information. Any teacher will tell you, and rightly so, that kids aren't numbers.

#### What is information?

When data is presented in a useful context, it is called information. Before student test scores can be used to inform instruction in a meaningful way, they must be translated into information. While information and data have a symbiotic relationship, numbers by themselves do not paint a complete picture of any student. However, with training and study (ideally within professional learning communities), teachers can gain the tools to translate data into information and use it wisely to enlighten instruction.

#### What is knowledge?

The teacher knows the student best. She knows what she's seen him do in class, how fluently he reads when she sits with him, how he understands algebraic expression, how nervous he gets during assessments, etc. If the available information that tells us the student is achieving on grade level when it comes to fluency, the teacher can focus on areas where he lags behind.

(Continued on page 7)

## Did You Know?

### Measured Progress COMMON CORE™ Testlets

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt has partnered with Measured Progress to bring you a Common Core classroom solution.

The *Measured Progress* Common Core Testlets can help teachers quickly gauge how well students understand particular sets of reading or mathematics standards with short, pre-configured tests that focus on a specific cluster (English Language Arts) or domain (Mathematics). The Testlets help teachers group students with common learning misconceptions for more effective remediation and targeted practice and instruction in those areas.

- The Testlets include optional tools such as item analysis guides and templates for student self-assessment which engage students in their own learning, and better understand how individuals and groups of students are progressing in a particular area.
- The Testlets are available in **DataDirector** via subscription. Teachers can print the PDF test booklets and generate answer sheets for plain-paper scanning. They can also access all of the **DataDirector** assessment reports they are accustomed to after testing.

### DataDirector Content Blueprint Reports

The Blueprint Report is a detailed snapshot of an item bank within **DataDirector**. The Blueprint Report includes a total item count for that standard set, as well as details regarding the number of items aligned to the most granular level of each standard. This report contains item attribute information like cognitive difficulty level, how many items are multiple choice items, how many are short answer items, and how many are constructed response items. This report is a good supporting document for **DataDirector** users building assessments with an overview of the items within a particular standard set. This report, located under Manage Item Bank, can be run on both Publisher item banks (like Assess2Know Benchmark) and local item banks that your district has created.

(continued)

## Data Management

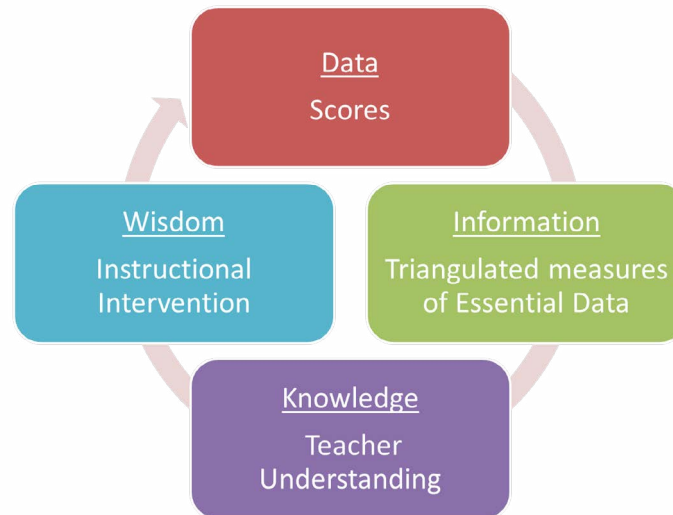
### What is wisdom?

Relying on this combination of data, information, and teacher knowledge leads to wise decisions. The four components of data-informed decision making do not necessarily occur in a linear progression. To distill wisdom, it is important to give educators time to collaborate with others, analyze data points, and truly reflect on their knowledge of the student. The common refrain among teachers, “we just don’t have the time,” will diminish when PLCs are used to collaborate around data, information, and knowledge.

### So what does it all mean?

Educators are sick of data. The value of data without information, knowledge, and wisdom is extremely limited. Strong administrative support for taking data to the next step is vital. Data-informed decision making in all classrooms will likely require a cultural shift that is not easy or quick to accomplish. As with any change, there will be bumps in the road. It is important to remember that good instruction and increased student achievement are the goals of data-informed decisions. Good educators know that students are more than just a test score. With strong administrative support and opportunities to talk about data, this cultural shift will be less painful for everyone involved.

Components of Data-Informed Decision Making



# The DataDirector Difference

**DataDirector** provides innovative online assessment data management and a fast, powerful decision-support system for 21st century learning. Designed to improve performance by helping educators meet the needs of elementary and secondary students, **DataDirector** helps make sense of all data over time, from screening and classroom-based assessments to benchmark and summative tests.

Developed by a team with many years of administrative and classroom experience, **DataDirector** is easy to use and available anytime, anywhere.

**800.323.9540**  
[www.datadirector.com](http://www.datadirector.com)

Connect with us:



## FAQs

### If I'm having issues importing my roster, should I contact Support?

A: For all roster or directive issues, please send an email to [data@datadirector.com](mailto:data@datadirector.com).

### How do I obtain my username and/or password?

A: For first time access, please contact your school or district administrator for your username and password.

### If you have forgotten your password:

- Click on the [Click here if you need help signing in link](#).
- Click the [click here link](#) under Recover your password.

### If you have forgotten your username and password:

- Click on the [Click here if you need help signing in link](#).
- Under Still having trouble? click [Try sign-in help](#).

### What is best practice for creating my own items in DataDirector?

A: To create new items, open the Assessments module, click Manage Item Bank, and then click Create New Item. Ensure that your item is hand keyed into the item editor. Do not copy and paste your item from Microsoft Word. Because of the way copy-paste works in most software, copy-pasting directly from a Word document may introduce characters behind-the-scenes that could cause your items to render improperly. These characters are hidden and not visible, but add extra spacing that may not become apparent until a PDF renders. As a result your PDF may not generate or you may encounter an online testing communication error if you copy and paste text from Word.

If you happen to be working without Internet access, or prefer to copy and paste your text, we recommend saving your document as a plain text document (file extension .txt) and then copy-pasting into **DataDirector**. Plain text documents, by definition, have no added formatting. This will prevent the introduction of additional formatting and characters from Word. Formatting should then be done in **DataDirector** using the formatting toolbar.

### What is Power Reporting?

**A:** A Power Report is a customized report that can assist with master scheduling, identifying correlations between grades received and test scores, analyzing sub-group performance, and more. Power Reports include transcript data and can answer a variety of questions, including:

- Which A-G courses have students passed?
- Which math classes have a specific group of students taken over the last three years, who were their teachers, what grade did they receive, and what were their state math test scores for each year?
- Who are the students who moved up to proficient on the recent state math test, what math class did they take last year, and what were their math benchmark scores?

In order to begin using Power Reports, your district will need to submit transcript data. If your district is interested in using Power Reports, please contact your Account Manager to discuss the process of importing your transcript data.