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SUPERINTENDENT
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Benchmark Assessment Mid-Year Goals required by ECOL Plan

The Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan requires each school district to set mid-year and end-of-year benchmark assessment goals for students in grades K-8 in reading and math for this school year. The county collectively decided that before these goals could be set, fall 2020 baseline data was needed. These data sets were needed to minimally assess the impact that last spring's COVID-19 school closure had on student achievement and growth.

The fall 2020 county-level NWEA data analysis, the national analysis by NWEA released in the "Learning During COVID-19: Initial Findings on Students' Reading and Math Achievement and Growth Report", and an analysis released by Curriculum Associates in the "i-Ready Deciding the Best Assessment Plan for 2020-2021" document shows student achievement, testing accuracy, and growth were all impacted when schools closed due to COVID-19. The impact on student achievement in reading was not as severe as math, however it is important to note the national NWEA study showed a loss in the 5-10 percentile for math. Regarding testing accuracy and reliability, the Curriculum Associates study indicated some score inflation--especially in the lowest grades, K-1. Regarding student growth, the NWEA study answered if students had any learning gains since the school closure. The national NWEA and Curriculum Associates studies found in almost all grades, most students made some learning gains in both reading and math since the COVID-19 pandemic started. However, gains in math were lower, on average, in fall 2020 than prior years resulting in more students falling behind relative to their prior standing. It is important to note however, the national studies did not share any findings about the percentage of students meeting their growth projections for fall in comparison to previous years.

These analyses, coupled with the challenge of changing instructional methods to accommodate atypical school circumstances, only begin to help us understanding the impact the spring closures had on schools. Students across the county and state have experienced various schedule models ranging from virtual learning, hybrid, and/or face to face. Also, many students have experienced a combination of these in just the first few months of school. Currently, there is no research or prediction that can accurately show the impact this will have on student growth and achievement over the long term.

The initial advice from the Macomb ISD was to possibly use growth as a measure for the education goals that are required for the ECOL plans; however, after analyzing the fall 2020 data, it is apparent that using growth projections that were developed under normal testing environments and schooling may not be as reliable. The normative 2020 student growth predictions that NWEA and Curriculum Associates provided at the student level indicates typical growth for a typical year; however, this is not a typical year and the county analysis shows declines in the percentage of the students meeting projected fall-to-fall growth in comparison to previous years. These declines make it hard to predict the impact that winter and spring will have on student growth when more students may have had in-person instruction. Since schools did not take the NWEA MAP, Curriculum Associates i-Ready, Renaissance Star360, or other benchmark tests in

spring 2020, another potential concern is that there will not be previous fall to spring, nor winter to spring, growth comparisons available.

Student Achievement Indicators for reading and math – NWEA Rasch Unit, “RIT” scores, along with i-Ready and Star360” scale scores”, were used in the published studies mentioned above. NWEA provides average norm “RIT” scores for each grade level and subject area, and i-Ready and Star360 provide average norm “scale scores” for each grade level and subject area. These average RIT and scale scores can be compared over time to provide a way to monitor student achievement. After further analysis at the county level, it appears the average RIT and scale scores are more stable across years than using NWEA or i-Ready growth predictions to monitor student performance.

Mid-Year Goals:

Goal 1: During the 2020-21 school year, the district will show growth in reading achievement throughout the global pandemic for students in Grade K–5 as measured on Curriculum Associates i-Ready Growth in the aggregate and for all student groups who have at a minimum of 30 students, and in Grades 6-8 as measured on Renaissance Star360 Growth in the aggregate and for all student groups who have at a minimum of 30 students.

Goal 2: During the 2020-21 school year, the district will show growth in mathematics achievement throughout the global pandemic for students in grades K–5 as measured on Curriculum Associates i-Ready Growth in the aggregate and for all student groups who have at a minimum of 30 students, and in grades 6-8 as measured on Renaissance Star360 Growth in the aggregate and for all student groups who have at a minimum of 30 students.

Mid-Year Narratives:

Goal 1: As a district, we were able to improve the winter 2021 average scale score compared to our average scale score from fall 2020 in reading for students in grade K-8. We also saw gains in a majority of our subgroups. Students who are African American, male, have disabilities, and/or economically disadvantaged, unfortunately saw a slight drop in their winter 2021 average scale score in comparison to their average scale score from fall 2020. To address any declines, we will be making use of multiple district resources including Early Literacy Specialists, Literacy Coaches, Interventionists, and supplemental instructional programs. We will also continue to monitor progress throughout the remainder of the school year.

Goal 2: As a district, we were able to improve the winter 2021 average scale score compared to our average scale score from fall 2020 in mathematics for students in grade K-8. This improvement trend was also seen in all subgroups in mathematics. We will continue to monitor progress throughout the remainder of the school year.