

**DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
Wilmette Public Schools**

INFORMATION ITEM

Date: January 23, 2017

To: Members, Board of Education

From: Katie S. Lee
Interim Administrator for Curriculum & Instruction

Subject: Assessment Systems for Student Growth: Part 2

BACKGROUND

Within the past several months, District 39 began to investigate whether another computer adaptive assessment system would combine the positive aspects of Performance Series with enhanced features, *and* provides access to similar districts to construct a local model for student growth comparisons. The investigation has led District 39 to learn more about the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP), *another* computer adaptive assessment system. In addition, Pearson announced in May the company's decision to retire Pearson Inform, D39's current data analysis tool, effective June 30, 2017. Since receiving this notice, the district has reviewed other similar tools available.

NWEA MAP ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Like Performance Series, NWEA MAP is a computer-adaptive, grade level independent assessment used to monitor student achievement and growth over time. It is not a mastery measure of grade level content but rather an achievement and growth measure based on predictive statistics. Test items range in format and the difficulty level adjusts based on student response during a 40 – 55 minute testing session per assessment. The score produced is equal in interval over the span of grades K-12. Therefore, the grade level of the student would not serve as a floor or ceiling for most students.

Notable Features of NWEA MAP

Notable features of MAP are organized by category and listed below:

- ***Assessment questions/tasks are similar to the state mandated PARCC assessment.***
 - Assessment is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards.
 - The first three (3) levels of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (D.O.K) are applied to the design of the assessment questions and/or tasks (Level 1: Recall/Reproduction; Level 2: Skills/Concepts; Level 3: Short-Term Strategic Thinking)
 - Ultimately, the D.O.K. level describes the kind of thinking required by a task, not whether or not the task is "difficult".

- ***Students' scores are based on the Rasch Unit scale (RIT) with a +/- 3 standard error of measure.***
 - A RIT score measures a student's level of achievement in a particular subject and means that the student is likely to correctly answer an item calibrated at that RIT level. Therefore, topics at this RIT level are likely to be topics the student *is ready to learn*.
 - In the fall of 2015, Northwest Evaluation Association conducted a study to predict performance on the ACT achievement tests in reading and mathematics using students MAP scores in grades 5 through 9. The study identified cut-scores on MAP that correspond to college readiness benchmarks on the ACT. Generally, the study found that middle school students who performed between the 70th to 84th percentiles in mathematics or between the 66th to 75th percentiles in reading were on track in his or her preparation for college success.
 - Performance Series has not been used for college readiness studies. However, they are beginning to gather data from districts using Performance Series and correlate scores to the PARCC assessment results.

- ***Goal Area RIT Range provides information that aids in making instructional decisions. Goal specific performance is categorized and matched directly to differentiated programs.***
 - For each student, a RIT range is provided and used to cluster standards under three categories “Reinforce”, “Develop” and “Introduce”. However, Performance Series only provides the scale score and two categories of objectives: “Know” and “Do not know”.
 - Teacher reports display a class of students organized based on similar RIT ranges for each instructional goal. Performance Series provides similar types of information but not in the same “at a glance” view of the entire class. A teacher would need to create the report after gathering data from different sources within the same system. Therefore, the reports are a time saver for teachers and more useful in design to support differentiation.
 - Instructional content is aligned using the RIT range scores where students can access online providers from home and/or school like Compass Learning, Edgenuity, and Classworks. Although Performance Series offers resources, it is not linked directly to the student and most are lesson ideas for teachers rather than a direct student resource for practice.
 - In addition, reading lexile scores connect students to appropriately challenging material.

- ***Normative data is included on student reports.***
 - NWEA MAP's growth norms project growth for every student based on grade level, starting score, and *interval of instructional time* between assessment windows. No other vendor uses the number of weeks of instruction between assessments (e.g., gap between fall and spring tests) as a parameter in their model.
 - Data consultant, Phil Earvolino, shared a couple of more observations based on his work with NWEA MAP and experience with Performance Series.
 - NWEA MAP utilizes up to 8 previous predictors (i.e., to predict spring score in year 16-17, fall and winter in 16-17, as well as fall/winter/spring scores in both 15-16 and 14-15). This is more than Performance Series and makes the model more robust.
 - The student population used to build their growth model is enormous with several 100,000 students per grade.
 - NWEA MAP offers *Virtual Comparison Groups (VCGs)* reporting. This report shows how students are growing compared to similar students educated in similar schools across the country.

- A district can request this supplemental report for a fee that is not quoted until the request is made. In addition, a sales representative shared that the report could take up to several months to complete.
 - NWEA MAP would have to obtain permissions from other like districts but the likelihood of the permissions obtained anonymously is far greater than with Performance Series.
 - In addition, there are four New Trier sender districts already using NWEA MAP and another sender district is planning this same shift. Therefore, township students' data is included in the pool greatly increasing the ability to construct meaningful, local norms.
 - Sunset Ridge D29 – at least eight (8) years
 - Glencoe D35 – current year (pilot year with select students for winter and spring)
 - Winnetka D36– current year (not a pilot)
 - Avoca D37 – at least ten (10) years
 - Kenilworth D38 – three (3) years.
 - Fortunately, the New Trier sender districts have discussed sharing data so that a data consultant can calculate local growth norms for all in a more timely and cost effective manner.

- ***NWEA MAP assessment system is compatible with all devices.***
 - Unlike Performance Series, there is an NWEA MAP App that can be installed on all iPads. The assessment can also be accessed using a browser making it compatible with all D39 devices used by our students.
 - Director of Technology, Tony DeMonte, inquired about the technological experience of administering the assessment with other districts. According to them, implementation has been going well.
 - NWEA MAP would be piloted for a select number of classes in the spring. This trial run may provide opportunities to learn how best to approach full administration of the assessment in the fall of 2017.

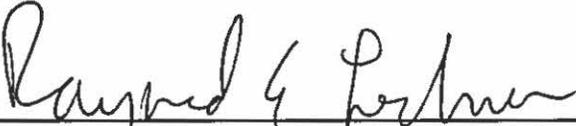
- ***The recommended INFORM replacement called eduCLIMBER has the capability to auto-sync with the NWEA MAP assessment system. The auto-sync feature of eduCLIMBER is a huge time saver for many D39 staff.***
 - Other notable features include:
 - Comprehensive Response to Intervention/Growth Intervention (RtGI) Module that allows for fidelity tracking and progress monitoring including customizable behavior interventions/documentation.
 - Mobile apps are available for student behavior tracking and incident entries; this is a great tool adult supervisors/administrators.
 - District can customize thresholds for both academics and behavior. They are working on including attendance soon that would support our strategic initiative.
 - Customizable smartFORMS for student documentation are created collaboratively with the company so that they are truly personalized for our needs.
 - Automatic sync'ing with several vendors including PowerSchool and MAP.
 - Other assessments such as the ISBE mandated Fitnessgram assessments for Physical Education or district common assessments for ALL content areas can be imported with the help of D39 database experts, Adam Altman and Bill Joyce.

- Team meetings can be scheduled within the system and the auto-sync feature provides *real-time* data sharing via Dashboard pinning. This feature makes it easy for those who need the data to see the data!
- ***The costs of the assessment systems, NWEA MAP and eduCLIMBER, are relatively comparable with our current assessment systems.***
 - Performance Series licenses/contracts in two-year cycles and quotes vary based on Grades 2 - 8 student enrollment numbers. The July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 contract amount equaled \$63,070 (approximately \$31,535 per year).
 - NWEA MAP licenses/contracts yearly. The 2017-2018 school year cost is estimated to be \$35,937.50. This is yet to be negotiated. However, at face value, the enhanced features outlined earlier in this report would make the \$4,402 difference worth the increase.
 - Pearson INFORM data analysis tool initial onboard cost was approximately \$55,000 and then yearly fees of approximately \$6,475 per year. The announcement to discontinue INFORM by Pearson included the fact that maintenance of the product concluded in 2012.
 - In comparison, eduCLIMBER charges \$5.00 per student. Therefore a quote for approximately 3,600 licenses is \$18,000 per year. The initial onboard cost is only \$3,500. Although the amount per year is higher than INFORM, we would be paying for the advanced technology and features not included in INFORM along with the customizable services from their programmers.

CONCLUSION

District 39 recommends the adoption of NWEA MAP and eduCLIMBER as our new assessment systems. We believe that this change offers enhanced features such as the ability to request customized norm-based reports that compare D39 students to other like students as well as a more efficient and comprehensive data analysis tool. District 39 will pilot NWEA MAP with a select number of classes in the spring. This trial run would provide opportunities to learn how best to approach full administration of the assessment in the fall of 2017.

Recommended for presentation to the Board of Education,


Raymond E. Lechner, Ph.D., Superintendent