

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

September 21, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Equity Accountability Framework: Evidence of Learning

**Evidence of Learning**

Today, we share the 2020–2021 Evidence of Learning (EOL) end-of-year performance data for students in Grades 2, 5, 8, and 11. These 2020-2021 data represent our first full year view of academic performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Evidence of Learning Framework employs a multiple measures approach designed to help us answer the questions: *Are our children learning?* and *Are they learning enough?* The end-of-year results are considered readiness performance data. These data allow us to gauge how well our students performed during a year of primarily remote learning and their readiness to advance to the next level: primary to intermediate grades, intermediate grades to middle school, and middle school to high school. Students are considered meeting evidence of learning attainment when they meet two of three categories of measures: classroom, district, and external. The goal is to graduate students who are college and career ready, carrying the credentials necessary to access college credit-bearing courses, and/or transition into a living wage job as they prepare for tomorrow’s complex world and workplace.

The Evidence of Learning Framework consists of a variety of English/Language Arts and mathematics measures each assigned to one of three categories: classroom, district, or external. Some of the multiple measures are better suited to the ‘inform and improve instruction’ aspect, while other assessments provide a more comprehensive summative view of a student’s success with standards-aligned learning. A student must meet at least one measure within two of the categories to be considered ready for the next grade. Strategies for meeting the needs of students who do not meet measures in two of the three categories are determined and monitored in the school improvement planning process. Students who do not meet the required two of three measures will receive support and acceleration.

We will compare the 2018–2019 pre-pandemic end-of-year results to 2020–2021 end-of-year data at the aggregate level, and by students in the focus groups, to provide a preliminary view of the impact of the pandemic on academic ability of students in literacy and mathematics. Data will be presented for the readiness grade levels: elementary school (Grades 2 and 5), middle school (Grade 8), and high school (Grade 11). It is important to note the adjustments made

in instructional approaches and curriculum content implemented during the 2020-2021 school year led to modifications in the number of district measures identified for use in the Evidence of Learning Framework for the readiness grade levels. The following measures were identified for the end-of-year readiness grade levels for the 2020-2021 school year:

|                 | Literacy   |   |   | Mathematics  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|
|                 | Classroom  | District  | External  | Classroom  | District   | External   |
| <b>Grade 2</b>  | End-of-year average class mark <b>or</b> Quarter 4 class mark in Reading <b>OR</b> Writing   | Benchmark Interim Assessment #3   | Spring MAP-Reading Fluency <b>or</b> WIDA ACCESS                                | End-of-year average class mark <b>or</b> Quarter 4 class mark in math  | Eureka Math mid-year <b>or</b> End-of-Year module                                    | Spring MAP-M   |
| <b>Grade 5</b>  | End-of-year average class mark <b>or</b> Quarter 4 Class Mark in Reading <b>OR</b> Writing   | Benchmark Interim Assessment #3   | Spring MAP-R <b>or</b> WIDA ACCESS  | End-of-year average class mark <b>or</b> Quarter 4 class mark in math  | Eureka Math mid-year <b>or</b> End-of-Year module                                    | Spring MAP-M   |
| <b>Grade 8</b>  | Quarter 3 <b>or</b> Quarter 4 Class Marks in English/ESOL courses  | End of Unit 3 and Extended Writing Prompt 4   | Spring MAP-R <b>or</b> WIDA ACCESS  | Quarter 3 <b>or</b> Quarter 4 class mark in mathematics courses  | Math Progress Check Quarter 3  | Spring MAP-M   |
| <b>Grade 11</b> | Semester 1 <b>and</b> Semester 2 class marks in English/ESOL courses <b>or</b> Semester 2 class marks in English/ESOL courses (higher expectation) | English/ESOL District Assessments in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 <b>or</b> Higher expectation in Quarter 4 <b>or</b> AP/IB English Course Participation | WIDA ACCESS <b>or</b> MD College and Career Readiness English/Literacy Measures | Semester 1 and Semester 2 class marks in Algebra 2 or higher courses <b>or</b> Semester 2 class mark in Algebra 2 or higher courses (higher expectation) | Math Progress Check Quarter 3 <b>or</b> Calculus or Higher Math Course Participation | MD College and Career Readiness Mathematics Measures |

### College and Career Readiness

As part of the presentation, we will share the Maryland College and Career Readiness data for the Class of 2021. The *College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013* was designed to increase college and career readiness and degree completion in Maryland. By the end of Grade 11, each student must take an English assessment and a math assessment to determine their readiness for college and careers. Students who do not meet college and career readiness standards by the end of Grade 11 must enroll in a transition course that is typically the next course of study in English or mathematics with additional requirements.

## **Instructional Response Plan**

Evidence of Learning data indicate that virtual instruction in literacy and mathematics during the pandemic had the greatest impact on primary students, and on students in transition grades at the secondary level. In response to the impact on learning and to mitigate learning disruptions, an instructional response plan has been developed that includes six components; School Improvement Planning, Literacy and Mathematics Instructional Foci, Assessment OF and FOR Learning, Acceleration of Learning, Tutoring/Intervention and Professional Learning.

## **School Improvement Planning Process**

The school improvement planning (SIP) process has been refined to align with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Strategic Initiatives using data from the All-In Equity and Achievement Framework (Evidence of Learning, Equity Accountability Model, and Equitable Access to Resources). The SIP process recognizes the full return to school after the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting accelerated learning while acknowledging the social and emotional support needed as a priority for students, staff, and families. The SIP process is focused on all students through data-driven analysis.

The SIP Action Plan helps schools document and monitor the specific actions and strategies that will support accelerated learning in literacy and math and elevates the student experience by focusing on wellbeing and school climate. The SIP Action Plan reflects the collaborative work between central office staff and school staff.

## **Literacy and Mathematics Instructional Focus**

The literacy focus at the elementary level will address learning disruptions by increasing the number of teaching minutes at the primary level to enhance reading skills for decoding, encoding, and word study, increasing the use of decodable texts, providing small group instruction with targeted and differentiated strategies to increase student literacy skills and knowledge, and with professional learning for staff. At the secondary level, the literacy focus will include a reduction in number of common tasks in high school and units in middle school to allow for greater depth in instruction, while maintaining the required standards within the curriculum; frequent evidence-based discussion and writing about complex texts; an increase in structures for small group discussion; and support and regular close reading of a range of complex texts and responding to text-dependent questions to elevate critical thinking skills.

The focus for both elementary and secondary mathematics will address unfinished learning from the 2020-2021 school year due to the limitations of virtual instructional schedules. At the elementary level, foundational days have been built into instruction to provide unfinished learning teaching opportunities. Additionally, staff in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs has developed guidance documents that directly meet the foundational standards that were adjusted to ensure adequate pacing of lessons. At the secondary level, pacing guides have been provided that include opportunities to address prerequisite learning needs. Finally, as schools

are in their third year of curriculum implementation at the elementary and middle school levels, there will be a targeted focus on ensuring fidelity of implementation.

### **Assessment OF and FOR Learning**

In order to mitigate the learning disruptions caused by the pandemic, it is more critical than ever that schools use assessment data to drive their instructional decisions. Assessment OF Learning measures how much students have learned or progressed in meeting grade level expectations. Assessment FOR Learning embeds assessment processes throughout teaching and learning. This allows teachers to constantly adjust their daily instructional goals. Teachers are encouraged to use formative assessment tools such as exit tickets, conferencing, peer and self-evaluations and diagnostic tools to inform what students know and where they should begin instruction the following day.

### **Acceleration of Learning**

While students returning to the school building may have experienced learning disruptions that have caused a decline in Evidence of Learning performance data, schools are instructed to accelerate student learning, not remediate student learning. Acceleration of student learning is moving forward with grade-level content and only addressing prerequisite skills and concepts from the previous grade as necessary, when they are needed to work with grade-level content. While teachers begin with grade level content for all students, they will use assessment data to determine where prerequisite skills must be taught for individual students. Additionally, the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs provided teachers with instructional guidance documents that outline what content or standards were adjusted or removed last school year. The Office of Teaching, Learning and Schools will continue to support school leaders and teachers with content study, planning, instructional delivery, and data analysis, in an effort to move students toward grade level or above performance levels.

### **Tutoring and Intervention**

As a result of the evolving circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, MCPS elementary, middle, and high schools will offer tutoring opportunities in an online model. The tutoring and intervention funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 is \$17,092,458, and is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds – Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring Grant Program FY 2022. The funding will support general education and special education part-time salaries and employee related benefits, contractual services, and supplies and materials. The goal of the tutoring program is to maximize student engagement, address learning recovery needs, and accelerate learning to achieve grade level standards. Research has shown that the rate of learning gain can be improved with intensive tutoring and that intensive tutoring will mitigate learning disruptions.

In order to best address academic loss and support student engagement and well-being during this time, our goal is for students to access tutoring through their local school. However,

if this is not possible, schools may offer programs in partnership with other schools in their cluster/region. These tutoring programs will be designed as all-virtual and at no cost to families. The tutoring support program will include a mathematics and an English Language Arts (ELA) focus using the MCPS elementary and secondary curricula; Eureka Mathematics, Benchmark Advanced, LearnZillion, and StudySync.

For those students requiring more intensive support, five literacy interventions will be available before, during, or after school. Some of the interventions include: Orton-Gillingham and Really Great Reading at the elementary level; and System 44 Program, Read 180, and iLit at the secondary level. For mathematics, the interventions include iReady Math and Math 180.

### **MCPS Approved – Evidence Based Interventions**

- *Orton-Gillingham Methodology*: Orton-Gillingham Methodology utilizes ongoing diagnostics to individualize instruction that includes systematic phonics instruction, applied linguistics, and integrative practices that involve reading, spelling, and writing together.
- *Really Great Reading*: Really Great Reading provides [professional development](#), [diagnostics](#), [grouping](#), [interventions](#) and [preventions](#) to teach foundational skills to students to build strong decoding skills and fluent reading.
- *System 44*: System 44 combines adaptive technology and teacher-led instruction to build reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills.
- *iLit for ELL*: iLit for ELL accelerates English language development while supporting the development of grade-level reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through strategic scaffolding, interactive content, visual aids, academic vocabulary support, and home language help.
- *Imagine Language & Literacy by Imagine Learning*: Imagine Language & Literacy is a personalized and adaptive learning approach that explicitly teaches the skills that are critical to reading comprehension and language proficiency and includes strategic scaffolding for English Learners.
- *Rosetta Stone English*: Rosetta Stone English helps English Learners build language proficiency as a supplement to classroom instruction through learning activities and live conversation.
- *iREADY Math*: iReady Math is a personalized instruction-based program that utilizes differentiation, real-world problems, and ongoing monitoring of progress to support student mastery of mathematics skills.
- *Math 180*: Math 180 is a flexible, blended learning model that builds foundational skills to close skills gaps and to successfully transition English Learners to Algebra.

Evidence of Learning data measures will be used to select students to participate in these programs. Student groups will be determined in collaboration with principals and classroom teachers. Identified students will work in small groups in order to best address academic loss and support student engagement and well-being.

School administrators will select their teachers or paraeducators to serve as tutors and staff who will utilize the approved math and reading intervention programs to instruct students. Each intervention has a diagnostic tool that will be used in conjunction with classroom data to determine if it is an appropriate intervention and for which students it will be used. Progress monitoring will be implemented to assess a student’s academic performance; to quantify their rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction; and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

After each semester, the tutoring program will be evaluated for its effectiveness by analyzing classroom measures (report card data) and external assessment data (e.g., Measure of Academic Progress) of those students who received tutoring services. The effectiveness of the evidence-based interventions will be determined by the pre- and post-assessments that accompany the intervention. Additionally, interventionists will monitor whether or not students achieved their identified intervention goals in the Performance Matters platform. Further, an evaluation summary of the impact of the tutoring on the performance of participants will be conducted by the Office of Shared Accountability.

|           | <b><u>High Dosage Tutoring</u></b>  | <b><u>Evidence Based Interventions</u></b>   |
|-----------|---|--|
| Purpose   | To help identified students accelerate their learning with grade level or above content   | To enable identified students to successfully complete a specific learning goal  |
| Resources | <p><b>MCPS Literacy Curriculum:</b><br/>Benchmark Advanced<br/>StudySync</p> <p>MCPS Mathematics Curriculum<br/>Eureka Mathematics<br/>LearnZillion</p> | <p><b>Elementary</b><br/>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orton-Gillingham Methodology</li> <li>• Really Great Reading</li> <li>• iLit for ELL</li> <li>• Imagine Language &amp; Literacy by Imagine Learning</li> <li>• Two-Way Immersion                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Benchmark Soluciones (K-2, K-3)</li> <li>○ Benchmark Rigor (4-5)</li> <li>○ iStation (K-5)</li> <li>○ Valley Speech Lectura y Lenguaje (K)</li> <li>○ Valley Speech Esperanza (1-2)</li> <li>○ Valley Speech Wells (2-3)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rosetta Stone English</li> </ul> <p>Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• iREADY Math</li> </ul> <p>Math 180EOLecondary</p> |

|                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
|                        |   | <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orton-Gillingham Methodologies</li> <li>• iLit</li> <li>• Read 180</li> <li>• System 44</li> </ul> <p>Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• iREADY Math</li> <li>• Math 180 Program</li> </ul> |
| Student Identification | Schools will use EOL measures to identify students at the school level  |   |
| Frequency              | 3-5 times per week<br>60-90 minutes sessions  | Intervention dependent  |
| Duration               | <p>Session 1: October -December*</p> <p>Session 2: January -February</p> <p>Session 3: February -April</p> <p>Session 4: May - June</p> <p>*Some schools are ready to begin earlier</p> | Intervention dependent  |
| Student/Teacher Ratio  | Small groups of up to 6 students: 1 tutor   | Based on guidance from specific intervention  |
| Method of delivery     | <p>In-Person during school day</p> <p>Virtual outside school day (in-person may be re-assessed at a later date)</p>   |   |
| Staffing/ Providers    | <p>Provided by a MCPS staff member or selected external partners</p> <p><i>Note: All MCPS teachers and paraeducators must be given first opportunity</i></p>                            | Provided by a MCPS staff member trained in the specific intervention  |

### Professional Development

Staff in the Office of Teaching, Learning and Schools has collaborated with the assistant chief of professional learning to design professional development focused on the acceleration of learning, including assessment for learning, with the use of informal assessment to inform differentiated instruction at the classroom level. With this districtwide focus, training will

be offered to principals, teacher leaders, and central office staff with the goal of supporting teachers as they collaboratively analyze student data and plan for their next instructional moves. A cross office core team will develop the macro learning plan for the district, that directly is related to the interim superintendent's vision for mitigating learning disruptions. A larger team will modify the macro learning plan to directly align to the work occurring within their school or office. This will allow for a more coordinated and systematic approach to professional learning throughout the district.

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