Pilot of the Northwest Evaluation Association / Measures of Academic Progress Assessment Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Report: To update the School Board on the pilot of the Northwest Evaluation Association/Measure of Academic Progress (NWEA-MAP) Pilot assessment.

The Sioux Falls School District is piloting the NWEA-MAP assessment in various buildings as a means to consolidate assessments, appropriately place students in programs and provide more useful immediate feedback for students and teachers.

The District is piloting the assessment in all fifth grade classrooms this school year as a computer-adaptive replacement to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) test. All students at the District’s three focus schools are also participating in the assessments this year. The NWEA-MAP results can be tracked by student throughout the year and into consecutive years. Results are used to appropriately place students as they enter middle school and can predict how students will perform on Smarter Balanced assessments and even the ACT in high school. Results are delivered immediately to teachers who can see content and skill level strengths and weaknesses by class or by individual student. In addition to the testing resources, the District provided three days of on-site professional development to train principals, teachers and instructional coaches on student results and customizing reports.

Based on feedback from teachers, principals and instructional coaches, District administration is recommending expanding the use of the NWEA-MAP assessment for grades K-6 through the FY18 budget process.

Administrative Recommendation to School Board: Acknowledge the update on the pilot of the NWEA-MAP assessment.
Pilot of the Northwest Evaluation Association / Measures of Academic Progress Assessment Report

Purpose of Report: To update the School Board on the pilot of the Northwest Evaluation Association/Measures of Academic Progress Pilot (NWEA-MAP) assessment.

District Priority Area: Student Outcomes

Priority Statement 2: SFSD will continue to foster an environment of high expectations combined with focused interventions and support in order to meet the learning needs of all students.

Strategic Initiative 1.2-1a: Evaluate the NWEA MAP as a tool to measure student academic growth and inform the focus of interventions and support.

Explanation:

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), produced by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), is a computer adaptive assessment piloted in all fifth grade classrooms across the Sioux Falls School District (SFSD) in 2016-17. In its pilot phase, the NWEA-MAP has replaced the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) achievement test, previously given once during the fall to every fifth grader in the District. The MAP assessment is administered three times during the academic year, each time during a 3-week testing window, and students immediately receive a RIT (Rasch Unit) score for each subtest. As opposed to previous District assessments that only allowed for achievement results once during the year, the NWEA-MAP gives classroom teachers and school leadership a norm-referenced method to measure and chart student growth within a school year. Additionally, the immediate response time of student results allows teachers to create interventions in areas of weakness and enrichment in the areas of academic strength.

Although the NWEA-MAP was initially implemented this year to measure reading, language usage and mathematics achievement, the District added the science assessment to the winter and spring testing windows after the announcement that the SD Department of Education will not be reporting individual scores on the SD State Science Assessment for the next one to two years. Fifth grade science achievement scores are used to assist in the science registration of incoming sixth grade students across the District.

In addition to the pilot of the NWEA-MAP at the fifth grade level across the District, all students attending one of the three Focus Schools in the District are participating in an NWEA assessment during 2016-17. Students at Laura B. Anderson Elementary, Hawthorne Elementary and Hayward Elementary in grades kindergarten through second are taking the MAP for Primary Grades (NWEA-MPG) assessment and students in third, fourth and fifth grade are taking the NWEA-MAP. Leadership teams in these Focus Schools are able to use the data from these assessments to measure the effectiveness of improvement strategies implemented as part of each building’s School Improvement Plan.

Summer Climb, a K-2 intervention program for students identified as below grade level in the areas of math and reading, began in the summer of 2016 at each of the Focus Schools. The
NWEA-MPG was used as one piece of data in qualifying students for this opportunity. Students that completed Summer Climb took the NWEA-MPG as the program ended last summer and their achievement results continue to be monitored throughout the 2016-17 school year. The SFSD will monitor these scores to determine the impact the program has on students’ ability to make growth in reading and math with the ultimate goal of reaching grade level.

After each testing window closes, the SFSD has immediate access to individual student data, class data, grade level data and school data on student achievement and student growth. In addition to the array of student performance reports that can be customized to teacher, coach and administrator preference, NWEA has also published an alignment of student scores to Smarter Balanced and ACT performance. Teachers can use these prediction alignments to have conversations with students and parents about the direction their child is headed and interventions that might be necessary to alter that pathway.

The table below is an example of norms and predictions for students testing in the fall window on the mathematics portion of the MPG and the MAP.
The report below is an example of the report provided to parents of 5th graders at fall and spring conferences following the fall and winter testing windows. Results of the spring testing window will be sent home with final report cards at the end of the year. With this individual student progress report, students are being taught how to track their growth, set growth goals and identify skills where they need improvement.
One additional report that teachers, coaches and principals are using to track growth and identify areas of strength and weakness, at the content and skill level, is the Class Breakdown by RIT/Goal. From the example below, it is easy to see how the results group the students within a class based on their achievement levels within different skills. Aligned with our goals to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students, teachers can use this report alongside the learning continuum resource provided by NWEA to identify needed interventions for specific groups of students.
In addition to digital resources, the SFSD has purchased three days of on-site Professional Development from NWEA to train principals, coaches and teachers on interpreting student results, customizing reports and using the data to collaborate on instructional decisions.

Moving forward, for those schools and grade levels where the NWEA-MPG or NWEA-MAP is administered, the amount of current district-required assessments will be reduced. In an attempt to return time to the classroom teacher, the DRA, Work Analysis, Reading Inventory(RI)/Phonics Inventory (PI), Add+Vantage Math Recovery (AVMR) and Pearson Online Assessments are all current assessments that be reduced as the MAP/MPG will serve as a screener. The result of the MAP/MPG will be used to identify smaller groups of students who may still benefit from the information these assessments.

Currently in our Focus schools, where multiple grades have student results, there is a wider use of the data during collaboration and for intervention purposes. Based on the feedback from teachers, instructional coaches and principals and observations by District leadership at various collaboration meetings, it is recommended that NWEA-MPG and NWEA-MAP assessments be expanded to grade K-6 across the District. Three different options were explored to expand the use of the NWEA-MPG and NWEA-MAP for the 2017-18 school year. The recommendation below was proposed through the budget expansion process:

**Recommended Expansion**

14,035 licenses
MPG for grades K-2
MAP for grades 3-4 (Math, Reading and Language Usage)
MAP for grade 5 (Math, Reading, Language Usage and Science)
MAP for grade 6 (Math, Reading and Language Usage)

Cost: $145,436.25 (Bulk purchase savings of $23,136.25)

Funding for the NWEA-MAP will come forward as a part of the FY18 budget process.

**Costs:** $22,562.50 for the 5th Grade Assessment in 2016-17

**Committee Participation:** Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Elementary and Middle School Curriculum Coordinators, Director of Assessment, Coordinator of Assessment, Focus School Principals, Summer Climb Principal, All Elementary Principals, All Middle School Principals, Instructional Coaches, Fifth Grade Classroom Teacher representation.

**Summary:** During this pilot year of the NWEA-MAP for the SFSD, student results have helped teachers and administrators make informed decisions regarding instruction, program placement and interventions all geared at raising the level of student achievement in the areas of math, reading and science. Data provided by this assessment can identify areas of concern from a single student to an entire grade level across the District. In addition to measuring student progress on the learning continuum, results can also be used to measure of success of programs and interventions currently supported by the District.

**Administrative Recommendation to the School Board:** Acknowledge the update on the pilot of the NWEA-MAP assessment.