

MAP

What is MAP?

- MAP stands for Measures of Academic Progress. They are computerized adaptive assessments that are aligned to the North Dakota curriculum Standards. Currently, WFPS assesses students in grades 3-11 in the areas of mathematics, reading, and language. The assessments are typically given in the fall and spring. Some schools assess students in the winter as well in order to get a mid-year look at student progress. The assessments provide accurate, useful information for students, parents and teachers that reflect the instructional level of each student and measure growth over time. More information can be found at www.nwea.org/assessments/map.asp. Information designed specifically for parents is also available. ParentToolkit.pdf.

Will I be evaluated based on student performance on MAP?

- No, MAP assessment data is intended to drive your instruction. It is a way to measure student progress. Goal 2011 states all students will show growth for two consecutive years as measured by standardized assessments. MAP is a standardized assessment tool which identifies student instructional levels in math, reading, and language. This data should be analyzed and instruction should be designed for students accordingly. Teachers should work to become increasingly savvy with interpreting the data and implementing instructional ideas to meet the needs of the individual learners.

My child is performing below grade level. What will be done to make sure my child catches up?

- Teachers will work with parents and students to analyze the MAP assessment data, set goals, determine a plan for improvement including reasonable timelines, and determine a method to monitor and report progress regularly. As children mature, they should participate in setting learning goals and monitoring personal progress.

How will I learn to use the data effectively?

- West Fargo Public Schools will be providing extensive in-service during every professional development day during the 2007-2008 school year. (link to professional development plan for 07-08) Included will be data discussions with principals, MAP core teams, and occasionally central office staff. Faculty meetings will also regularly include

activities and discussions about the effective use of data to inform instruction. Teachers will utilize collaboration time to look at student data and discuss appropriate instruction, interventions, and extensions to meet individual needs.

How do we go about setting goals with students?

- First, it is important that students have a good understanding of the MAP assessments, the format in which scores are reported, their purpose, and the content on which they are being assessed. Once students understand this, a teacher/student/parent conference is one way to work with a student to set a reasonable goal for each area of the MAP. Consider using a form such as this (insert link to form) to aid students in goal setting. Note that the form indicates how much students typically grow in a year's time. This is not the final goal, but just information to consider. Also, consider a dialogue about what all of the interested parties will do to help to meet the goal. Be sure to remind the students of their goal before spring testing and review progress with them after the test.

How do we get students involved in understanding the importance of the assessments?

- Developing understanding of the MAP assessments is vital to engaging the students. They are the ones who take the tests and should be the most informed party involved. Students should understand what is being assessed, how the scores are reported, what the meaning of growth is, and what the meaning of expected growth is. All students desire to do well. Acknowledge this fact even if they won't. Help students see what you do with the information and how it can aid you in helping them improve. Work with students to set realistic but challenging goals, differentiate instruction to meet needs, and report progress. Students that see progress will continue to be engaged in their own learning.

Are all decisions based on MAP data?

- Instructional decisions should be made based on multiple sources of data. MAP should be included when it makes sense to do so. If the decision involves instruction, placement, or growth, then the MAP scores should be a factor. Whenever possible, use several years of MAP scores instead of only one.

Why should students try hard on the MAP?

- Everyone wants to be their best. The goal of school is learning. The MAP assessments give students and teachers specific information about individual strengths and weaknesses in math, reading, and language. With this information, all can work together to improve on weaknesses and capitalize on student strengths.

Which is more important, a classroom grade or MAP growth?

- Classroom grades and MAP growth give two perspectives on student learning. MAP growth is a good indicator of whether a student is or is not making progress. Classroom grades should be an indicator of what a student knows and is able to do at a given point in the school year. If the two seem to send different messages, ask the teacher to discuss this with you.

Is placement in advanced classes determined only by one assessment?

- MAP scores are good indicators of what a student understands in math, reading, and language. The scores are particularly telling if you are able to see multiple scores. The MAP should be included in placement decisions but is not typically the only factor. Classroom grades and student, parent, and teacher input should also be included.

Will teachers continue to make instructional decisions?

- The purpose of MAP is to give teachers information about what students know and are able to do. Teachers will continue to make all instructional decisions just as they always have. Teachers' decisions should take into account the MAP data both for individual students and groups of students.

Why are we taking so much instructional time to give the MAP assessments?

- Assessment is simply a part of the cycle of instruction – not separate from it. The cycle is repeated over and over throughout the year. Assess, design instruction, instruct, assess, remediate or enrich.

How can teachers be prepared to help students?

- Teachers make their living helping students. The focus in education has become one of differentiating instruction for each individual student. Of course this is what every teacher would desire, but it can

feel very overwhelming to meet the varying needs of students. The MAP assessment data provides key information that can help identify which students need work on which skills. Students in a classroom typically fall within approximately 4 RIT ranges on a particular topic, so working with small groups of students on the same skills is entirely realistic. Time has also been built into the daily schedule at the elementary, middle school, and Sheyenne for teachers to work with their colleagues to analyze the data, plan for instruction, and work with small groups of students during the school day. Teachers have mastered a variety of instructional strategies. Now, they have good data and the time to use it. Like all professions, teaching is one of practice. Teachers are encouraged to try a strategy with a group of students that share a common need, and then measure their progress. If implementing the strategy made a difference for the students, teachers may use it again! If not, teachers will try something else – they have a plethora of great ideas!

How valid are the MAP scores?

- The MAP assessments have been given to millions of students around the country. The Northwest Evaluation Association is a non-profit organization partnering with schools to help all kids learn. NWEA is a respected organization and has good statistical processes in place to design valid items and assessments. Feel free to locate more information related to validity and other topics on their website. www.nwea.org

Who looks at a teacher's MAP scores?

- The information on student progress provided by MAP is intended to inform instruction and therefore is most valuable for the individual teacher. Over time, teachers may want to share their results with trusted colleagues to learn and share best instructional practices.

Is the MAP data reliable?

- As with any data, it is important to look for trends. As a district, we have high confidence in the reliability of our district and school results. Individual student results should be looked at in the context of all other data available for a particular student. A student can have a poor, typical, or great testing day. Look for trends.

Why didn't my child make any growth?

- This is a good question, and you should partner with your child and the teacher to discuss it. You might consider asking these questions. Has this been a trend? Are classroom grades indicating similar concerns? Did your child give his/her best effort? What is typical growth for a child with that RIT score? Remember the data doesn't provide the answers, just a basis from which to ask questions.

Is it appropriate for kindergarten students to take online tests?

- There is a special MAP assessment just for primary age students. It is completely auditory and does not require that students can read; only simple computer mouse skills are needed. Bismarck Public Schools, as well as other districts throughout the country, have been using the assessment with kindergarten students. In an interview with Bismarck schools, they indicated that the information is very valuable in addressing student learning needs quickly and effectively, and that students quickly learn the skills necessary to take the assessment online.

Do we have the right equipment and technology to assess all of our students?

- Currently we have sufficient technology to assess in one testing window students in grades 3-11. The Director of Technology is working closely with principals to identify and meet technical needs for using MAP with students in kindergarten, first, and second grades.

How does the MAP score compare with the NDSA score?

- MAP and NDSA measure progress on the same standards, but in different ways, at different times, and with different purposes. MAP assessments are given two to three times a year and scores provide specific information about student instructional levels in math, reading, and language. Specific areas of strength and weakness are identified. The information provided by MAP gives parents, teachers, and students a way to determine individual student progress. The goal is growth. NDSA is given in the fall and assesses the standards from the previous grade level. Scores are provided to teachers, students, and parents in the spring and indicate a proficiency level for math and reading. In other words, students are to achieve a certain score for each grade level. Those that do are considered proficient or advanced. Those who do not are considered novice or partially proficient. The NDSA scores are utilized in our annual AYP report for No Child Left

Behind. There is a positive correlation between the MAP scores and the NDSA proficiency level.

Why are we using MAP?

- MAP assessments have been utilized in the West Fargo School District for multiple years. It is a reliable assessment and it makes sense to maximize our use of this tool for current and historical data rather than consider other options. We will continue to use MAP for the foreseeable future.

Will a MAP score impact a classroom grade?

- The MAP assessment provides the student and their teacher specific valuable information about learning. The scores are not factored into classroom grades.

Are we reducing children to a number?

- A doctor gives a child and their parents factual information about their condition. This may include temperature, weight, height, blood pressure, etc. Often they provide percentiles for the same categories so a parent knows where the child "stands" in comparison to a typical age mate. A teacher should provide the same type of information to parents related to academic learning. A MAP score is one piece of data that should be regularly shared and monitored.

Is it possible for a student to be proficient and yet not make any growth?

- Yes. For example a child could hit the proficiency standard with a score 222 as a 5th grader in reading. The same child could score a 222 again as a 6th grader. The score 222 is also above the proficiency level for both grade five and grade six reading but clearly the child made no growth from 5th to 6th grade.
- It is also possible for a student to make growth but not meet a proficiency mark. A student may score a 202 in the Fall of Grade five. In the spring assessment they score a 211, growth of 9 RIT points. However, the proficiency standard for grade 5 reading is 212, so the child would not be considered proficient. Clearly the student has made progress.
- The goal of school is learning. Therefore, WFPS has placed an emphasis on students making growth, as stated in Goal 2011. Although all students may not meet the same proficiency mark at the

same time, all students should make consistent gains in their learning. NDSA measures proficiency only. The data from MAP indicates both growth and proficiency.

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STRATEGIC PLAN

By 2011 all students will achieve two years of academic growth as measured by standardized assessments.

What is a strategic plan?

- A strategic plan reflects an organization's processes and strategies for achieving its goals and mission and for making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue the strategies, including capital and people.

Why do we need one?

- West Fargo Public Schools have a general fund in excess of \$50 million, serve over 6,000 students in 12 schools, operate 15 facilities, and employ nearly 900 staff. Ours is a complex organization and complexity must be well managed. The strategic plan communicates to our patrons the new and key initiatives planned to make our schools still better places for children.

Why now?

- Our district has successfully faced the challenges of the past, including inadequate funding and significant growth in enrollment. Our challenge and focus now and into the future is learning. We need to be accountable to our public and ourselves as we focus on our core process and product. The reason we exist as an organization, to promote learning, must be front and center.

What is the benefit for our schools?

- A strategic plan brings coherence to the work of the organization; communicates the goal and the work undertaken to accomplish the goal; and builds meaningful collaboration between the organization and its constituents. Coherence, communication, and collaboration

combined will serve to strengthen our schools and our commitment to the work required to advance students' learning.

How are we going to pay for the plan?

- We receive funding through federal, state, and, most significantly, local sources. We will be responsive to our local patrons through responsible rollbacks of our mill levies. In 2007-08 our levies will be reduced from 254.02 to 248.76. We will accomplish this reduction at the same time we continue to add additional staff to serve our everincreasing enrollment and as we open two new schools this year. We anticipate within the time frame covered by this strategic plan to further reduce mills, to ask our public to support bonds to build additional facilities, and to achieve Goal 2011.

How will we know if it is working?

- The strategic plan includes points of measure for each of the strategic initiatives. Each initiative will be monitored and evaluated using the metrics reflected in the plan. Annually we will issue a report outlining accomplishments, future opportunities, and progress toward Goal 2011.

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