



# Fitzgerald Public Schools

## Benchmark Assessment Report

One requirement of the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan is for each district to set mid-year and end of year benchmark assessment goals for students in Grade K-8 in reading and math for this school year. The county collectively decided before these goals could be set that 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 NWEA data analysis conducted at the county level, as well as the national analysis NWEA released in the "Learning during COVID-19: Initial findings on students' reading and math achievement and growth" report, shows student achievement and growth was 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 shows a loss of 5-10 percentile for math. In regards to student growth, the NWEA study answered if students had any learning gains since the school closure. The national NWEA study 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 study didn't share any findings about the percentage of students meeting their growth projections for fall in comparison to previous years.

Both analyses are only the beginning of us knowing the impact of schools closing last spring, coupled with the challenge of school circumstances so far this school year. 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 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 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 provided at the student level is typical growth for a typical year; however this year is not typical, 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 winter and spring will have on student growth, when more students may have had in-person instruction. Since schools did not take the NWEA test in spring 2020, another potential concern is there will not be previous fall to spring, nor winter to spring, growth comparisons available.

NWEA also provides a RIT score, a student achievement indicator, for reading and math, which was used in the published study mentioned above. NWEA provides average Norm RIT scores for each grade level and subject area. These average RIT scores could be compared overtime to provide a way to monitor student achievement. After further analysis at the county level, it appears the average RIT scores are more stable across years than using NWEA growth predictions to monitor student performance.



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### **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 – 8 as measured on NWEA Map 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 Grade K – 8 as measured on NWEA Map 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 average RIT scores compared to our average RIT scores from fall 2020 to winter 2021 in **reading** for students in grade K-8.

In regards to student groups, our Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient, Male, Female, Black or African American, Asian, White, Hispanic, Multi-Race continued to improve their average RIT scores compared to their average RIT from fall 2020 to winter 2021.

Our Students with Disabilities group, maintained their RIT score average in comparison to their average RIT score from fall 2020 to winter 2021.

To increase students' achievement in the areas of reading and math we have instituted a pilot program for our elementary and middle school special education students. Students who were previously educated in a self-contained classroom and received instruction from one or two teachers in all subject areas are now being taught by teachers certified in the core content area and special education. Teachers who understand the materials at a mastery level will help instruct and scaffold supports to allow for better outcomes.

Coaching partnership with MISD/Building/District coaches with goals to:

1. Increase Literacy Achievement in Grades K-5
2. Develop district/building coaches with the Essential Literacy Practices with an emphasis on Essential 3 - small group instruction and Essential 9 - using formative assessment data

We are also starting a grant Partnership with Michigan Dyslexia Institute to train all K-5 teachers in Orton-Gillingham approach.



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### **Goal 2:**

As a district, we were able to improve the average RIT scores compared to our average RIT scores from fall 2020 to winter 2021 in **mathematics** for students in grade K-8.

In regards to student groups, every group; Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient, Male, Female, Black or African American, Asian, White, Hispanic, Multi-Race continued to improve their average RIT scores compared to their average RIT from fall 2020 to winter 2021.

We had no students groups show a drop in their RIT scores in comparison to their average RIT score from fall 2020 to winter 2021.

All of our PK-8 grade math teachers are receiving coaching support and professional learning from Strategic Math Solutions. During these sessions, teachers are building capacity around the gradual release of concrete, representational and abstract. Additionally, we are working on using consistent district language for drawing models in mathematics and providing professional learning for K-5 teachers in math instruction.

Our Middle School teachers are providing students with additional support utilizing Khan Academy by focusing on skills identified as areas of need on their NWEA assessment.