

Overview

Background

Pursuant to Public Act 149 of 2020, each district is required to administer benchmark assessments that comply with the following:

- Be one of the most commonly administered benchmark assessments in Michigan.
- Be aligned to the content standards of Michigan.
- Complement the State's summative assessment system.
- Be internet-delivered and include a standards-based assessment that used a computer adaptive model to target the instructional level of each pupil.
- Provide information on pupil achievement with regard to learning content required in a given year or grade span.
- Provide immediate feedback to pupils and teachers.
- Be nationally normed.
- Provide multiple measures of growth and provide for multiple testing opportunities.

Goals

1. Maintain education both face-to-face and virtual as an option for families.
2. Achieve students growth that exceeds the national average on the NWEA Reading and Math benchmark assessments. This assessment has been approved by the State of Michigan Department of Education, is aligned to state standards, and will be administered to students both onsite and virtually at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.
3. Use the Empower Learning Management System to track student progress to the standards set by the State of Michigan.

According to these goals, the Armada Area School District has been successfully able to maintain in person and virtual learning options for all students throughout the year except for when the Michigan Department of Public Health mandated high schools to close from November 17, 2020 - January 1, 2021. During that time we maintained a full in person learning option for our middle and elementary students - the only district in the county to do so.

Approximately, 80% of students chose face-to-face instruction during our first trimester, and 85% chose face-to-face during the second and third trimesters.

We have used the MDE approved NWEA MAP assessments in order to monitor student progress (as we have for the past decade). The test administration was different this year as NWEA provided an online option for virtual students to complete. In past years, the assessments were only administered onsite and under standardized testing procedures.

Lastly, the District has adopted Empower as its learning management system and uses that to monitor daily student work as tied to the state and national standards. We chose this platform based on its alignment to the principles of competency-based education and due to the overwhelming desire of our community to have one platform for student use.

Structure of this Report

This report is organized so that first the data is discussed in aggregate. Then the data is broken down by grade level. The legislation mandates data be provided for grade K-8, but this report will include grade K-10 since that is the District's standard assessment protocol. Likewise, the legislation requires the data to be broken down by sub-group. The MDE definition of sub-group is any group (ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, English Language Learner, etc.) that has at least 30 students. Due to the small size of our district, no sub-groups exist.

Limitations on Data

Due to the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are several limitations to any conclusions that can be drawn from the data. First of all, the assessments as mentioned were provided both in person and online. Secondly, the norms provided by NWEA have been developed through in person assessment only. Lastly, in order to meet the deadline, the winter testing window had to be moved up and not all testing could be completed. Whereas, a minimum of 98% of each grade was assessed during the first trimester, most grades during the second trimester have only completed approximately 90% of their assessments as of the completion of this report.

District Overview

Overall, the students did surprisingly well on the NWEA MAP Assessment. Each grade has made significant growth and improvement considering that much of the past year has seen a significant string of disruptions in instruction. From school buildings being closed to class movement being restricted, the past year has been unlike any other in the history of education.

In math, each grade exceeds the national average for proficiency with the lowest grade being grade 6 which has a mean score right at the national average of 50th percentile. The rest of the grades exceeded that with Kindergarten, Grade 5, and Grade 9 all exceeding the 90th percentile.

Math: Math K-12

Grade (Spring 2021)	Growth Count†	Comparison Periods							Growth	
		Fall 2020			Spring 2021					
		Mean RIT	SD	Percentile	Mean RIT	SD	Percentile	Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	
PK	0	**			**			**		
K	115	149.5	13.5	97	163.9	11.7	91	14	1.0	
1	102	161.6	10.4	60	180.9	11.0	77	19	0.6	
2	110	175.8	12.0	55	193.2	9.5	73	17	0.8	
3	118	191.2	10.5	68	205.9	9.6	77	15	0.6	
4	99	201.7	12.7	63	215.7	13.1	76	14	0.9	
5	121	214.1	11.3	75	229.9	11.3	91	16	0.7	
6	125	215.9	14.5	56	222.9	17.3	50	7	0.6	
7	136	225.7	12.8	74	233.1	14.3	75	7	0.6	
8	127	230.8	15.7	73	235.3	15.7	69	5	0.6	
9	123	239.1	14.2	90	242.8	16.3	90	4	0.6	
10	155	234.8	16.3	71	237.6	18.6	69	3	0.7	

A similar story is shown for reading. Each grade exceeds the national average for proficiency with the smallest being grade 6 at .89 points and the largest being Kindergarten at 8.92 points. This translates into growth above fall NWEA MAP scores in all grades ranging from .6 points in grades 10 and 11 up to 10.8 points in grade 2.

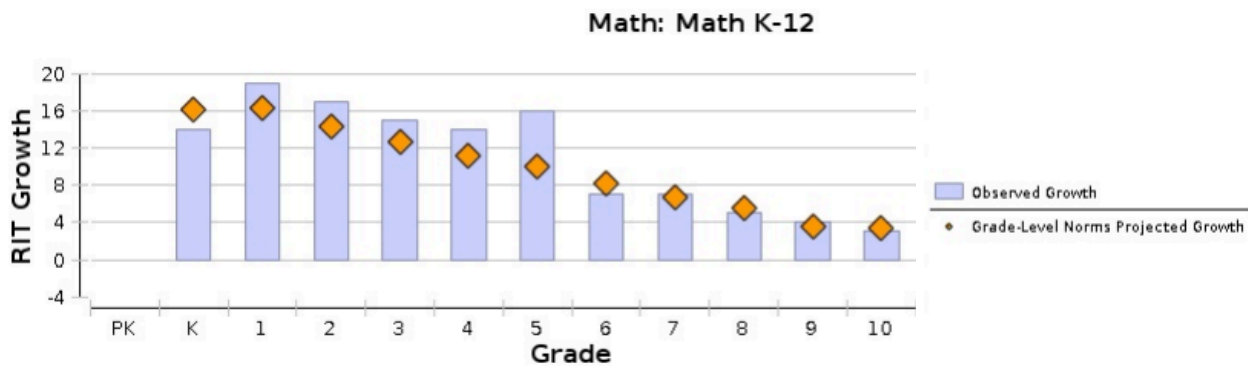
Language Arts: Reading

Grade (Spring 2021)	Growth Count†	Comparison Periods							Growth	
		Fall 2020			Spring 2021					
		Mean RIT	SD	Percentile	Mean RIT	SD	Percentile	Observed Growth	Observed Growth SE	
PK	0	**			**			**		
K	119	148.1	17.3	99	159.7	11.0	89	12	1.2	
1	102	158.0	10.0	65	175.6	10.9	74	18	0.8	
2	110	175.8	15.9	70	193.8	14.0	88	18	1.1	
3	117	194.3	14.0	86	204.9	12.1	86	11	0.9	
4	98	202.2	13.5	78	212.4	12.3	86	10	0.9	
5	119	210.6	13.4	81	220.7	10.3	92	10	0.7	
6	124	211.8	13.7	59	214.5	13.1	45	3	0.8	
7	135	219.4	13.9	76	222.7	13.6	73	3	0.7	
8	136	223.1	13.7	74	227.5	12.4	77	5	0.6	
9	126	225.9	12.9	77	227.3	13.8	74	1	0.7	
10	152	224.2	14.8	63	223.8	16.8	51	0	1.0	

Overall Growth 2020-21

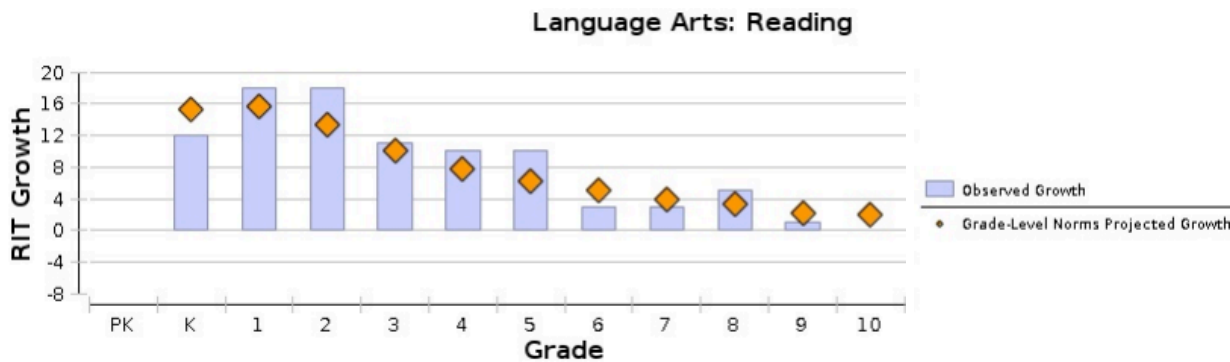
Math

As one can see by the chart below, all grade levels were within their projected growth for math except for Kindergarten. We have strong evidence that suggests this is mainly due to the fact that when the school year started and approximately 20% of our students were still working virtually, parents who oversaw the administration of the NWEA at home were “assisting” their students with the questions. Once almost all the students returned to in person instruction, the scores regressed back to a level consistent with previous grades. While the kindergarten group shows growth, thanks to the “assist” they had at the beginning of the year, they did not reach their projected proficiency.



Reading

Likewise, in reading, as one can see by the chart below, all grade levels were within their projected growth for math except for Kindergarten and grade 6. The sixth graders median reading score placed them in the 45th percentile nationwide. Our thoughts are that since they were transitioning to the secondary level, the normal adjustment students go through was a greater challenge due to COVID restrictions and related issues. We have added additional student supports for next year in order to more closely support students who did not show growth during this year.



Summary

Overall, the students scored fairly closely aligned with the NWEA Norms even though they have seen significant disruption to the amount of time in school and the structure of their school day. As a group, they outpaced the national average in both growth and achievement. It is important to point out that as a district, we have maintained a full in person option for all of our students all year long. 80-85% of our students have been receiving in person instruction outside of mandated shutdowns.

We are proud that we are one of the few districts that was able to maintain in person instruction throughout the year and are proud of our student growth and performance in this most difficult and unprecedented years.