Parent U Transcript – January 24, 2024

Kasey Dolson: Welcome you to our virtual event for our Parent University. This is one of our first events that we had a live session here in person, and now we're transitioning to a video session. Thank you to those of you who are joining us live. And thank you for those of you who are viewing this in a recorded version after tonight's event.

So the first thing I would like to do is introduce those folks who will be presenting to you tonight. As I said, I'm Kasey Dolson, the assistant superintendent. I'll be joined with Dana Ziegler, our executive director of curriculum, as well as Jason Armstrong, our executive director of K-8. I also have with me here are instructional coaches for ELA. Hope Everts and Rachel Korzyp. Additionally, we have our instructional math coaches, Lauren Massa and Lorraine Pascarella. And finally, we have ur instructional coach for ENL, or English as new language, Mrs. Katie Knapp.

I will turn it over to Mr. Armstrong.

Jason Armstrong: Thank you. Again, we just want to welcome everyone and thank you for your commitment to participating, watching, listening, and then connecting with your fellow school district community members. We try to support each other in our effort to help develop more comprehensive conversations with our school staff and with each other about what we can do to close skill gaps, enhance learning, and to meet our strategic goals of our district. The hope is to create a partnership between all the members of the school district community so that we can do the things that we need to do to help our students achieve at the highest rates.

We're hoping that we have people who represent multiple parts of our school district that we can take this message beyond just watching this video, but bringing it into PTO meetings, into parent conferences, and into discussions in the community where families can help each other, look at data, ask questions, and think about things that you can do to support achievement in outside of the classroom, things that you can do at home or with each other

in the community. Maybe even taking advantage of some community resources and events that you know are related and can be looked at as authentic learning opportunities.

We're hoping that you develop some questions that you need answers to and you'll get a chance to submit those questions from a form that we're going to send out. Once we answer those questions, we'll put everything on a document and send it out so that everyone has the option to look through the questions and see if it's similar to something that they had wanted to ask or maybe they were looking for a specific answer to a specific question. You'll have a question answer document as a resource.

We're also going to take all of the slides that you're going to see tonight and share them and post them on our website as well as this recording. So you'll have all of these things as a reference to help you as we try to continue with a series of events to develop our skills in the area of, you know, having these great conversations, asking the right questions, putting together great resources and helping each other, help the students succeed. Thank you.

Dana Ziegler: Good evening. I'm Dana Ziegler, executive director of curriculum, and we're excited about this evening for the folks we just had here in person and all of you virtually with us or who are watching this recording.

Our main goals are to inform you on our two benchmarking tools that we use in kindergarten through eighth grade in our district for both ELA and math to really give you a snapshot of what these assessments look like that your child or children are going through, and really how we use this data within our schools and our classrooms, our multi-tiered systems of support, and give you some ideas for items that you can work on or support, either enrichment or intervention at home as well.

We look forward to our spring Parent U in which we are working on developing parent handbooks. Within these handbooks you will have kind of benchmark data, our priority standards, are big topics that we address in a grade level, how you can work with your child this summer to prepare them both for their social emotional learning, for their readiness, for some of their developmental skills, as well as some of the academic indicators.

As Mr. Armstrong said, we're excited to really be empowering and working together. For us this is the first time with winter benchmarking that we will systematically be sending home across all K-8 classrooms, our data reports for our benchmarking tools. And we can do this because we're in a place with our new quadrant system that we've really developed consistency and capacity with our instructional programing and our instruction across the board.

So this is a great night and we hope you really take away lots of takeaways and have questions for us, for your classroom teachers, and your buildings, and any of our instructional team to continue to grow together. Thank you.

Hope Everts: Hi Liverpool community. I'm Hope Everts, one of the literacy instructional coaches, and I'm here to talk to you a little bit about the data that we collect on your students, your children. We collect many different data points, but tonight we're just going to focus on literacy, AIMS web, and math.

So let me get started right away with AIMS Web benchmarking. So AIMS Web is a tool that all of our teachers and educational staff use to three times a year to benchmark our students. Both the fall, the winter and the spring. It is from our kindergartners all the way up to our high schoolers we use this and basically we want to talk to you about the different ranges so that you have an understanding of what the different levels are when you get the reports home.

You'll see colors on your data sheets. So here you'll see the well below average would be anywhere from the 1 to 10 percentile. Yellow would be somewhere between the 11 and 25th percentile. Average is a large average. We have somewhere between 26% and the 74 percentile. Above average is 75th to 89 percentile, and well above average is your 90 to 99 percentile.

Katie Knapp: Good evening. My name's Katie Knapp, I'm the English is a new language instructional coach here in Liverpool. Many of our families here in Liverpool are multilingual and we are very lucky to have that diversity here in our community. I wanted to just touch on these color coding reports for some of our families. It may be very alarming to see some of the yellow or the orange graphs coming home, but I want to assure families if your children are learning English, this is very typical. This is their first stages of learning English, and all of these assessments are given in English. So please do not take this little piece of data and get very worried about those scores. Trust that we have them in groups and special services that are going to get them to where they need to be.

Hope Everts: Now, we just want to ground you as to what the expectation or the goal is for students within AIMS web so that you have an understanding when you look at the data that comes home.

So for our ELA goal, we are looking for somewhere around the 45th percentile and above. So that's the typical line that we look at to know whether or not students may need intervention or those who are at the appropriate levels.

Rachel Korzyp: Hi, everyone. Rachel Korzyp, another one of the literacy coaches here in the district. And I just wanted to take a second to outline our different tiers that we're going to be talking about with the composite scores.

So when we look at composite scores, we are going to notice that there are green, yellow and red indicators. Those indicate tier one, two and three. So when you see that, when you're looking at the composite graph that we're going to take a look at in a moment, those are the color coding systems that you will see.

Katie Knapp: So just to reiterate, if your child is learning English as a new language and you see the reports are showing tier two or tier three. The terms risk, high risk, or moderate risk can seem a little scary, but please do not stress if this is the reports that are coming home because your child will continue to make progress towards grade level.

Rachel Korzyp: All right. So now I just wanted to take a minute to give you an overview of some of the AIMS Web subtests that your child will be taking in grades K through two, and their target scores. So when you look at Grade K, you'll see that some of the measures that they are given are the letter words sound fluency, initial sounds, letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation and word reading fluency. Anytime you see that word fluency that tells us that that is a timed test. So just keep in mind that that is something that you're looking for automaticity with and for the students to be able to do that with fluency. We also have outlined the target scores that we hope to see in each one of the benchmark periods - fall, winter, and spring.

And then for first grade, we have our nonsense word fluency, our letter word sound fluency, phoneme segmentation, word reading fluency, and oral reading fluency. You'll notice that sometimes next to each one of those subtests you see fall and winter or winter, spring and so on and so forth. And that's just for you to highlight and recognize that some of the subtests are given during some trimesters. Sorry, some of the fall, winter and spring and not in others. If it's not indicated, that means that simply it's given in every single one of the trimesters.

And for second grade, we also have the oral reading fluency, the reading comprehension and vocabulary. And again, all of the target scores are outlined there for you. So you kind of know what it is that we are looking for. Those, again, are their scores, however as a district, we have set the goal of the 45th percentile.

So you will see that when we look at some of our next charts and graphics in a moment. We also just wanted to take a moment to ground you and tell you what some of the subtests look like.

So as you can see here, these are some examples of some kindergarten subtests that your child will be administered. We have letter naming fluency. We have word reading fluency. We had the letter word sound fluency. We have our... I'm losing my vision here... phoneme segmentation and initial sounds. So those are just some of the assessment tools that we

utilize to make sure that all of the students are, you know, getting a whole picture of their literacy skills.

Next step for first grade, we have our nonsense word fluency, our word reading fluency, our oral reading fluency and again, anything with fluency is timed. So just keep in mind if your student is like anxious or struggles with things being administered in a time setting, that may be an indicator of some of those struggles if you see that.

For second grade, we have our reading comprehension or oral reading fluency and our vocabulary student test page. And those again, are just some examples of what your students will see for each one of those subtests. The reading comprehension student test page you will see there is all administered online, so the students will read a comprehension passage and then they'll be asked some questions that go along with that. The oral reading fluency is a one-on-one assessment. They are asked to read two passages, and those are also timed just to see whether or not they are able to apply those skills that they're learning in the classroom to read those texts.

Something that you will notice on the reports that come home is that there is a section for the subtests, but there is also a section for the composite scores. So when you're looking at the composite scores, these are what they encompass.

So for kindergarten, the composite score is made up of the letter naming fluency and the letter word sound fluency.

For first grade, they're simply looking at their oral reading fluency.

And for second grade, they're looking at their vocabulary, their reading comprehension, and their oral reading fluency.

So now we just wanted to take a moment to give you some examples of what these reports could look like.

So this is a kindergarten below grade level example. You'll notice how the colors that Hope had outlined for you are predominantly yellow and orange. That tells us that that student is well below or below grade level. However, I just want you to note also that we have a plan in place for those students. They are getting intensive interventions. We are working on closing those gaps with your children, so nothing to stress about. We are looking for growth in those students and we are also progress monitoring them. So if you get a report sent home that looks something like that, we're going to give you some questions that you can ask your child's teacher that will help to guide and help you to support them moving forward.

All the way to the right hand side, you'll see that early composite score and you'll see that that's red. That indicates that that is a tier three student. However, again, I don't want you to be too nervous about that because there is a plan in place for those students.

Next, we have an example of an on grade level student and where their scores fell, both on each of the subtests, which are all outlined on the bottom. And if you notice, the numbers next to the subtests are at top of the subtests, those are the percentiles that they found. And again, remember that our goal for those is the 45th percentile and above.

Over to the right, you'll see the early literacy composite. That's yellow because that is a tier two student, but they're almost there to that tier three level. So again, just something to celebrate.

Here is an above grade level example for kindergarten with all those subtests once again. I'm going to go through the next ones a little bit more quickly because it's very similar. The format is exactly the same, just the subtests change in the grade level changes.

So here is a first grade below grade level example, on grade level example, and above grade level example.

And here is our second grade below, on and above.

This is helpful.

Hope Everts: Okay. I'm going to walk you through grades three through five and then also six through eight. Our subtests.

So on this slide, what you'll see is the continuation of what's expected, which is our 45th percentile, but also the target scores. So again, you'll see the fall score, the winter and the spring score for each of the grade levels.

The subtests that we focus on… yes, all the tests are given… is the oral reading fluency to help indicate whether or not the student may need a more intensive intervention.

Here is the chart for our six through eight students in the district.

For our sixth graders, they are still given oral reading fluency, so we focus the scores on that particular subtest, although they still take all the other subtests.

Seventh and eighth grade students, we focus more on their silent reading fluency and I'll show you what that subtest looks like. And if they score below the 45th percentile on the silent reading fluency, then we go ahead and administer the oral reading fluency so that we have a better understanding of what their needs might be and many other subtests as well.

I'm just going to go over a little bit of the examples of what the subtests are. This is an example of what our vocabulary assessment looks like through AIMS Web. Students basically are seeing a quick, short sentence and they're supposed to pick the specific word that it means for the vocabulary. I explain to all the parents and to the teachers that this is not testing the student's ability to read the words, but more about their knowledge of the words. So this is the one subtest that they can listen to so it can be read to them if they choose. So I promote that teachers to have everybody have their headphones on and click on it if they need to listen to it, because that can help eliminate any misunderstandings if they can hear it. So that's that subtest.

Next I know Rachel mentioned the reading comprehension portion. This is what I like to tell everyone is very similar in make up of our New York State test. So it's a long passage, comprehension questions, up to 2 to 3 questions of that reading, and the student can always refer back to the reading. And this is not timed. They can have as much time as they like to go back and refer to the reading to be able to answer their comprehension questions.

The second thing that I want to mention, this year, for the first time in the district, we are given the choice to be able to have the not a fixed form but also an adaptive form. So basically our students can once they've answered a question, if they are not performing at the appropriate grade level on the left side, all of the reading will decrease with this question will stay within the standard that's being asked of the students.

The second piece that I like to mention about our comprehension piece is that it is technology enhanced, which means there are some questions where students will just have to click and drag. It's not always a multiple choice, but again, they can have an opportunity to practice something that they will be asked to do on the New York State test.

Silent reading fluency that I mentioned. This is grade starts at grades four and goes all the way up. Once past the fourth grade, they have to take this subtest on their computer. And you can see an example here. It's a very short passage. It's one paragraph at most and a very quick grammar comprehension question based off that passage. This is, as Rachel had mentioned earlier, anything with fluency is timed. So they are timed. How long they have to answer the 12 questions and read the 12 short passages. So if they are not reading at an appropriate rate and accurately answering the questions, this is an indicator or a red flag that lets us know that maybe there's something going on with either their decoding needs. And so we would have to dig a little bit deeper.

For this slide, you're just going to have an opportunity to see all the subtests and the grades that they're given. I do want to point out at that last column of this slide, you'll see something that says p m that represents progress monitoring. So anything with a fluency within AIMS web AIMS web we can progress monitor our students. So any student that's getting an

intervention or on a watch list that we're a little bit worried about to make sure that they're progressing in the right direction, teachers can progress monitor them and keep track on whether or not the intervention or their Tier one exposure is getting them what they need.

So I'm going to go through some just quick examples, like Rachel did for our third through eighth grade students of what a below grade level would look like. Again, our composite score over to the right is made up of an oral reading fluency, reading comprehension and vocabulary for our third graders, but then again for our fourth grade and up you will see that the silent reading fluency is then included into the composite score. This student you can see below scored below the 45th percentile on the silent reading fluency. So they were given an ORF as well to understand where they're at, but still are falling in the average range.

This is our above grade level. You can see the composite score all the way to the right is high and so that student is getting exactly what they need and being pushed to the next level.

And now Math.

Lauren Massa: Good evening. My name is Lauren Massa, I'm one of the instructional math coaches, and I'm going to run you through what our IReady diagnostic benchmarking tool is. We give the IReady diagnostic three times a year just like AIMS web.

So your child has just completed their second diagnostic for the year. And IReady is an adaptive assessment, so it adjusts questions to suit your student's instructional priorities. A classroom full of fourth graders will essentially start at a very similar question. And based on how they answer that question, IReady will tailor the next question that it gives your student to determine their proficiency level in all four of the domains in mathematics. So, for example, a series of correct answers will result in slightly more complicated questions, and a series of incorrect answers will result in slightly easier questions.

After students complete the diagnostic in IReady, we also use it for individualized instruction. So IReady personalized instruction provide students with lessons based on their individual skill levels and gives every student an opportunity for improvement or enrichment. So your student has the opportunity within the IReady individualized instruction to learn at a pace that is just right for them. When we're talking about the diagnostic, the diagnostic is broken up into four different domains within the math. Within that.

The first domain is algebra and algebraic thinking. Think of this as the math skills related to number patterns. So understanding the meaning of addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, being able to use symbols to write and solve equations.

And the numbers and operations, you can think of it as like your old school arithmetic. Do students know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide? Do they are they able to do that with different kinds of numbers? So in our lower grade levels, they're working on whole

numbers. And as they continue to go up in grade level, working with decimals, fractions, integers, irrational numbers and so forth.

The third domain is geometry. This is all about analyzing 2D and 3D shapes, naming and classifying them using characteristics like symmetry, number of sides, angle measures, congruency, things like that.

And lastly, we have measurement and data. This is all about skills related to collecting data, analyzing data, interpreting data all the way up to statistics and probability in the upper grade levels.

Lorraine Pascarella: Hi everyone, I'm Lorraine Pascarella and I'm the other math instructional coach and we wanted to talk to you about how we use IReady in multiple ways. So the goal of our session this evening, or when you are watching this recording, is to inform you and empower you on how to read your students benchmarking results when they are sent home. But IReady is a little bit different than AIMS Web, where IReady is also adaptive and allows us tools and resources to use instruction only to fill achievement gaps or to accelerate students learning.

So as Lauren just explained once, our diagnostic results are in on a given student and each individual student, I should say I IReady generates a My Path, or a personalized pathway to either address those learning, those learning gaps or the unfinished learning your child would have.

Or if they are testing on grade level, it will actually give them content that they have not yet received in their math instruction by their teacher, but gives them the opportunity to preview some of that next learning that is in their in their grade level to come.

So what you are looking at here on this slide is what students see when they log into already after their benchmarking window. And that green button again, is that My Path. That is their personalized pathway for learning based on that result. But we also use it in different ways instructionally as well. Our teachers can assign specific lessons for students to complete independently, and that can be an on grade level lesson that's aligned to what they're doing in their math class. It could also be something aligned to what their teacher or interventionist is doing during NTSS time. And we also use it as a formative assessment tool, meaning that our students will complete a five or six question quiz at the end of every lesson that is aligned to our report card standards to see how they did in that week's worth of instruction.

Okay, so let's talk about the parent report that you'll receive home. So if you're looking at the screen that's in front of you, when you're looking at the number, the one that has number one labeled that blue bar and the blue bar on the graph and the corresponding placement level is essentially where your student is going to fall within their first diagnostic that they took. So

the report that you're going to get going to get home is going to have two bars. The first bar on the far left will be their first diagnostic that we gave in September, and the second bar would be their most recent diagnostic. What you want to take note of are a couple of things. That green level band that you see that has the number three over it is the grade, the on grade level band of proficiency. So when a student falls within that band, they're falling within that grade level band proficiency.

So you can see on this example for test number one diagnostic number one, the student fell slightly below grade level proficiency and then made increases in their proficiency in the subsequent diagnostics. Number four talks about the National normed percentile. So IReady is a nationally and criterion referenced assessment. So we do get a percentile ranking that you will see. In this example for the first diagnostic that the student took, they scored in the 50th percentile, meaning that they scored better than 50% of a nationally represented group of students. So that's comparing your student against other students in this nationally normed group. And you can see that the student increase in percentile from the 50th percentile to the 66th. So that's something that you can take note of when you get this report home.

The other thing is that IReady is a criterion referenced assessment. This is what our teachers focus on most when we talk about how to make informed decisions on how to appropriately service students to help support their gaps and to enrich them. So when we look at number five, you're going to see an overall score that says approaching grade level or at grade level or needs improvement. The example here has them approaching grade level overall. But if you look at that middle column, you'll see if you follow your eyes all the way down that the geometry domain was one in need of improvement. So I want to highlight this, that when you get your student's report, you might see an overall domain placement, but you will be able to sort of drill down and see if there are areas of strength or areas in need of improvement. Growing edges for your students. So that's something to take note of.

We look at the criterion data to make informed decisions to help strategically place students in intervention and enrichment groups and it gives us a more complete picture of student performance. So again, the criterion referenced assessment is really what your student knows and can do and is able to show that they know on the diagnostic report.

So much like our literacy coaches did, we want to give a couple examples of what a report would look like if a child is on or above grade level. And then we'll take a look at a student who is approaching grade level. So much like Lauren explained to you just a moment ago. When you get your reports on in a few weeks for your children, you will only see two bars that will represent the fall diagnostic report... I'm sorry, the fall diagnostic results and then the winter. So you're going to see the improvement of their scores that you're seeing here. This student, as an example, increased 25 points overall from the fall to the winter. You're also going to see

again that overall placement in the language, if they are on or above grade level, we'll say they are at grade three.

For this example of a third grade student. We just talked about the normed scale, the national percentile, then the criterion we'll get into. But again, that green bar is representing the on grade level band. And up at the top you can see in that top red rectangle the range of the scale scores that are aligned to your child's current grade level. And then finally, is that drill down data where our teachers and... our teachers are able to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement overall, but also by domain. Lastly, a student who is approaching grade level. There is that growth from fall to winter in this report. But we can see that these blue bars are just below that green window that we are looking for for on grade level. So you're going to see the language when we get into that domain report, that criterion report we've discussed, you're going to see language as things approaching grade five, for an example of a fifth grader. You're going to also see language of needs improvement and at grade level.

So the nice thing about this is there's a lot to celebrate here. I'm looking specifically, if you can look at the table where a student needed improvement in algebra and algebraic thinking, but then in their winter data it says that they are now performing at grade five or at grade level. So as a teacher and as a parent, we are celebrating that our student has worked extremely hard in that specific domain. They are now approaching, they are now at grade level in that domain. And it also tells us, as the teacher informs us, that the intervention that was put in place for the student worked and we're going to continue to do that work.

So we've spent a lot of time giving you a lot of information. So when you receive your child's report in the next couple of weeks from their teachers, we have compiled a few questions that you could ask your teacher to continue the conversation at home and from home to school and what can I do with all of this information? So here are some questions you can ask to continue that learning at home and some resources that will be sent out with the recording of this video from Mr. Armstrong. Our instructional team has put together some handouts by band. So you can see here we've separated it from K two and three five, to six eight to reflect our building configurations, but we have handouts of what you can do to support your child at home in ELA and math. And we've also included social emotional learning and tech in these handouts as well.

Jason Armstrong: So in conclusion, those of you who joined us with the live stream or are watching this video, we thank you for your commitment to our efforts to try to strengthen our partnership amongst all of the stakeholders in the school district community so that, again, we can have more comprehensive conversations about what we're doing for and with our students and to help us to achieve our strategic plan goals in the school district, enhance learning and to close skill gaps. Again, you have this video as a resource. We are going to

send all of these slides via ParentSquare. We'll also post them on our website. You're going to get a form to submit questions. We'll analyze those questions, answer them, and we'll share that with the school district community as well so that hopefully we can get everyone's questions answered.

So your homework will be, as families of students in Liverpool, to look for that data report to come to you by February break and then use the slides as a resource to analyze the data report. And then you can start having those comprehensive conversations not only with school staff, but also with each other to talk about things that you guys can do outside of the classroom, to close skill gaps, enhance learning, provide authentic learning experiences, and help us achieve success. So thank you very much.