



Lincoln Public Schools

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To: School Committee
From: Mary Sterling
Re: Report on District Determined Measures
Date: October 3, 2013

One of the strategic priorities in the District Strategic Plan is "Assessment and Data: Refine and pilot our District Determined Measures." As part of the Massachusetts DESE new evaluation system, the state has initiated a pilot this year for District Determined Measures (DDM) that monitor student growth. The results of these measures will eventually be used as data points for evaluating the impact that teachers have on student growth and will be included in the teacher evaluation system.

This report provides some context for the DESE initiative and some key elements in the state's expectations. It describes components of the Lincoln pilot plan that was submitted to the state on September 30, 2013 and discusses our current efforts and next steps in the pilot process.

As stated in an April 2013 memo by Commissioner Chester, "District-determined measures are a critical component of the evaluation system in providing educators in all grades and subjects with data about their students' growth." One key guideline is what the state terms "comparability": The measures must be comparable across grade levels or subject areas district-wide. The state envisions that teachers who teach the same subject or grade level will work together and that "in developing DDMs as collaborative work, educators will be identifying the measures to use in determining their own impact." The Commissioner's memo outlines key points for the pilot in 2013-14 and states that after the pilot, data from two years of these measures will contribute to "impact ratings" of educators in the evaluation system by the close of the 2015-16 school year. At this time, the state has not issued guidelines on a process for using the data to determine impact, but we anticipate that will be forthcoming.

Two deadlines frame the work of this pilot year. First, each district was expected to submit a pilot plan on September 30, describing at least one measure to be piloted this year in curriculum areas deemed high priority by the state. Additional pilot measures were also encouraged to be included in this plan. The second deadline is June 1, 2014 when all districts are expected to submit a plan to the state describing two district-determined measures for every educator. The state's expectation is that data from the measures used next year will "count" and will serve in calculating the first "impact rating" for educators. As an administrative team, we decided that it would be best for our district to pilot two measures per educator this year so that everyone would have a chance to weigh in, try out, revise and then determine measures that seemed worthwhile.

In Lincoln, as elsewhere in the state, administrators, curriculum leaders, math and literacy specialists, and teachers are learning about this new initiative and its implications. We are focusing on collaborative decision-making to select measures to pilot with two important considerations:

1. The measure should effectively assess what is most important for students to know and be able to do.
2. The measure should provide valuable information to the educator and the district about student growth.

We have begun by examining our own bank of common assessments with the goal of building on what has been useful and important in monitoring our students' growth. In some areas, we have measures that serve very well and are in place. In other areas, we have assessments that need refinement to serve the twin goals of being useful to us and appropriate for a state DDM. In some cases, new assessments must be purchased or developed.

Curriculum leaders and administrators have begun a conversation about appropriate measures for four groups of educators who have different responsibilities and opportunities to access groups of students for instruction:

1. Grades PreK-5 Classroom Teachers
2. Grades 6-8 Subject Area Teachers
3. Grades PreK-8 Specialists
4. Grades PreK-8 Caseload Educators

Our pilot plans will be taking into account these groups and their responsibilities as we consider what types of measures could produce valid and reliable data about student growth. At the School Committee meeting on October 10, 2013, the discussion of this report will include some details about the draft plans for each group and some of the measurement issues that are coming up in conversations with leaders and educators.