

MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT SAU #37

COMMITTEE ON CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

September 27, 2016

6:30 p.m.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Committee Members Avard, Girard, Van Houten

Absent: Committee Members Langton, Freeman

Messrs: D. Ryan, B. Elwell, S. DeVincent, C. Martin

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated at the request of Chair Langton, I am filling in as the chair pro temp tonight.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard advised that the purpose of the public forum is to give the residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the committee on items of concerns affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair. Any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

There was no one present wishing to speak.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. EverFi Critical Skills Courses Overview.
(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action required.)

Mr. David Ryan, Assistant Superintendent, stated just to introduce Mr. Elwell from EverFi. I'm not sure of your title.

Mr. Brett Elwell, EverFi, stated I'm a schools manager for the state of New Hampshire.

Mr. Ryan stated we have been in the district using products from EverFi for a number of years now and we thought it would be appropriate to bring it to the attention of C&I, the growth and the use of the products and allow Mr. Elwell to talk a little bit about what each of them are as we move forward and how we would like to expand at no cost to the district and how we are able to partner and focus in on financial literacy among other topics that are in our schools.

Mr. Elwell stated thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it. It is important to know that when we start out, even when I'm talking to a principal, a teacher, a director of curriculum and instruction that everything I'm going to talk about is actually free. A lot them say what about the cost of you, are there ads? No. Everything is 100% free and we are able to do everything that we do through our partnerships with private sector folks and some new budding relationships with elected officials.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated before you get too deep into this, Mr. Elwell, I have two questions for you. One, do you want us to hold as a committee out questions until you are done or do you want us to ask them along the way?

Mr. Elwell replied I think whatever is more natural for you. If you want to interrupt me please go ahead. That's totally fine.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated second, is the presentation you are putting on the projector the same presentation that we have in our agenda packet?

Mr. Elwell replied I'm not sure.

Mr. Ryan stated it would be whichever one was sent us. What they have in the packet is what was sent to us the last time.

Mr. Elwell asked did I send you PowerPoint slides or anything like that?

Mr. Ryan replied we had asked for them, yes. I'm not certain if that is in the packet. I haven't looked at the packet for tonight.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated that's why I'm asking the question.

Mr. Elwell stated what you are looking at, we sent that out for the 2015-2016 impact report for one of our courses that we pulled together for financial literacy for high school students and elementary school students as well, grades four through six. That is usually just a piece of data, and I'll touch on it a little bit, but that is usually just what we put out to superintendents across the state of New Hampshire and for anybody who really wants to read them, principals to teachers to anyone. I'll touch upon some of the data that is covered in there too.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated just a reminder to the administration that in advance of presentations to the committee they should be on the agenda so we have an advance look. Mr. Elwell, please proceed.

Mr. Elwell stated what we do again is we deliver all of these courses, a good quantity of them to district at scale for free from the generous partnership with private sector folks who underwrite the cost. Our financial literacy platforms come to the state of New Hampshire from the Mass Mutual foundation who has purchased these platforms for the entire country. The NHL in Manchester was a large user of our hockey based STEM course. The NHL and the Boston Bruins are bringing that to us here. Our online digital literacy and responsibility course also brought to New Hampshire and Manchester by the NHL and the Boston Bruins. Those are just

probably some of the sponsors. They come from the Salvation Army to local area banks and credit unions. If you have any questions about that, please let me know. In terms of the 2015-2016 usage, that is a little difficult to see, but I'll just roughly give you a couple of numbers here that I think are pretty great. This is the first year we have had someone completely dedicated to the state of New Hampshire so this last year was done was people splitting the area, which is what we talked about definitely looking to expand. For our STEM course we had 584 students in Manchester use our humanities course about 200; ignition, which is our internet safety course, 618 students with 42 using our math and coding course, 210 using our elementary financial literacy, ten using our financial literacy course and two students for some differentiated instruction and a little bit of a boost using our business course for a total of 1,661 students in Manchester using our programs.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked Mr. Elwell, how are these students accessing your courses? What is your definition of a course? I don't know if you or Mr. Ryan can answer how they are being integrated into the classrooms that they are being access through.

Mr. Elwell replied good question. Our courses are all online based. There is no software or anything like that. Students can access the course wherever they can access a computer and a web browser. We are usually in contact with principals, teachers. We hold meetings, very small trainings, which takes about 20 minutes. We work, or I work, with teachers directly and across the country and in different regions on how they implement their course. It can be anyway they want. Specially on the high school level we find that many schools have advisory periods where they are using some kind of special skills and they complete that course as the teachers see fit. Our courses are very flexible, such that they are broken down into modules. Each module takes anywhere from 20-45 minutes depending on the grade. Teachers aren't even held to finishing the course. If they want to supplement their curriculum the best way they know how since they are themselves the architects, they can use four modules, they can use two modules, as many as they want to supplement.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked are the students accessing this through their advisory periods or are they accessing it in the classrooms that they are actually being taught the subject in?

Mr. Elwell replied either or. I would say for STEM courses it is definitely used in more science and math classes. Financial literacy is interesting because it is so well aligned to seniors to economic standards, social studies standards so we try to get them into the economics courses, business courses, CTE. If they have an overloaded curriculum there, they don't have time, that is when they try to get it into the advisory periods and stuff like that. Usually the best fit is the classroom of course.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked what personal information is required for the student to provide in order to access the course?

Mr. Elwell replied we don't share any kind of information like that. We don't require...

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I didn't ask you if you shared it. I asked you if you required it.

Mr. Elwell stated no. We require a name and a password.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so it can be any name. The kid can call himself Don Quixote and put in Dulcinea as the password.

Mr. Elwell stated I suppose they could if they wanted to. The teacher has complete control over how students register and things like that so they can go in to reset passwords, they can reset user names, anything they like.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Mr. Ryan, the teachers aren't requiring them to use their own personal information?

Mr. Ryan replied not that I'm aware of.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I notice that there are two students listed for venture business. Do students self-select individually to take these courses rather than having them done within the context of a class?

Mr. Elwell replied the teachers do it. In a lot of cases, let's say that students were using financial literacy in a high school course and you had two students who absolutely blew through it, sometimes teachers will contact us and say x student really liked this module, do you have anything else that they can do on their own? Yes, I have this course called venture. It is a business course. They get to make their own food truck and build a business from the ground up. Absolutely, go ahead and add that to the dashboard and I say go ahead, sure. That is why you are seeing two students there that had some fun with venture. We take it very seriously to measure our education impact. We do a lot around assessment data and knowledge gain through assessments and demographic data, attitudinal surveys, teacher and student feedback, program reach and efficacy, things like that. You will notice that in terms of knowledge gain the students in Manchester went everywhere from starting with the savings module with pre-assessments having 52% proficiency in savings and rising it up to 82%; 52% in original scores in banking and rising up to 82%. That is actually all in the packet that you have seen from our summer impact report that details how the student growth and measured preparedness for students there, which we are pretty proud of and which is only increasing over time. We have that data available for financial literacy for high school. That is what we are focused on right now and then to come we are working on a lot of our data platforms around the other courses. What we do. We talk about here is a lot of financial literacy. That is our big one right now, financial literacy and STEM, but we cover a wide range. Financial capability is now available from grades four through 12. We have a brand new six through eight, middle school financial literacy program, that allows us to cover the gamut of financial literacy. STEM readiness is one of our very popular courses, anywhere from the future goals, hockey scholars STEM program to radius, which is sponsored by the American Association of Mechanical Engineers working on math and coding, health and wellness, career leadership and success and also courses on diversity and inclusion. We are always all the time building out new courses. One of the best parts about us being a private

entity is that we place all of our money and everything we do into building out new courses for students, much like the middle school financial literacy program.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated could you take a second, you keep using the term “financial literacy” and as much as I’m a registered investment advisor among other things, I’m curious what you define as financial literacy.

Mr. Elwell stated I’ll just speak to the financial literacy course for high schoolers since it is our tried and true one. You start off pretty much on the basics of savings and banking like what does it look like? What is the difference between using a credit card, a debit card? What is the difference between a savings account and a checking account? What is the difference between a savings account and a CD? What does interest look like? What is compound interest look like? Everywhere from making a very basic knowledge around money and going anywhere from here is translating it into supply and demand. There is a great module on financing higher education, what does it look like to take out loans? What is a subsidized loan versus an unsubsidized loan, anything like that is going to be covered in our financial literacy. There are a lot of things in there.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked do you teach things like the rule of 72?

Mr. Elwell replied not that I’m sure of. For our caseload learning platforms a lot of them look like this. For financial literacy we have Vault, which remember the first module for that is defining a want versus a need for a fourth grade student all the way through our financial literacy for 12th grade or nine through 12. Our new one, Future Smart, is six through eighth grade. We have all those covered. STEM courses from ignition and digital citizenship, learning how to be safe on the internet. What does your digital footprint look like? How do you conduct safe research? What does cyberbullying look like? It is a very popular back to school favorite. Radius is a math and coding course from grades eight to ten and hockey scholar is a big one. Last year it did very, very well, hit for fourth through seventh grade teaching STEM concepts and exploring STEM careers through hockey, very fun. Civic engagement, we have Commons. Two hundred students used Commons in Manchester. It is more of a civic engagement course

and then 306, which is African American history from 9-12 grade. We also have Alcohol Edu for 9-12 grades. That is our one course that actually has a price tag associated with it. They keep it very far away from me and we have another contact that deals with that. Most times the payments for that end up coming from grants and things like that. If we always get told that we have someone who is interested in Alcohol Edu, let's direct them to the right people and then they procure that. That is another different course. Venture is of course entrepreneurial skills and things like that. You ask, what does financial literacy for high school look like? What is financial literacy? Real life practice simulations. Talking about filling out a FAFSA, a 1040 EZ, I-9s, anywhere from savings to banking, payment types, understanding credit scores, renting versus owning, investing and consumer protection so things that aren't just transferrable to a four year college degree, but anything that is supplying life skills for students beyond 12th grade, which is something we are very proud of as well. That is about six to eight hours in length split up between certain modules. Again, each module is a stand-alone piece of learning. It is a lesson. Teachers use them out of order. They use them in order, any way that they want to supplement their existing curriculum. The new course is our future smart course. Seven modules, 30 minutes each and the topic areas are pretty great too, financial values and goal setting. What does it look like to create a goal and how do you figure out a budget that aligns to that goal? Opportunity costs get touched on here as well, savings and investing, payment types, risk return and future planning. There is a lot of budget heavy stuff here. It is really great. This one, it is our first narrative driven course so in this course you get to play the mayor and you get to help the community make financial decisions based on needs. We are having a lot of fun with that course. It is going very, very well so far. I'm looking to get it spread a lot more across New Hampshire. Currently we have about two schools up on that in the first three weeks of school. It is going pretty well and I'm getting a lot of good feedback. This course was used, Vault, in the elementary school to understand money by 210 students in Manchester. It did pretty well. This is our introductory financial literacy course. This is a better question for what does financial literacy look like from fourth through sixth grade. Savings plans, setting financial goals. If you want something how do you save money for it? Budgeting, what income looks like. Managing your risk. Investing. What it looks like to borrow money and then your wants versus your needs. Those are the big three for financial literacy and where we have had the most success here in Manchester thus far. I'll stop here for questions if there are any.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated please continue.

Mr. Elwell stated implementation strategies you asked so what does it look like. Who is actually implementing these in the classroom? Right now, at the beginning of the school year is when I meet with most of our principals and figure out where is our need right now and where does it fit. That is where I come into play and we get so much feedback from teachers and this is what we like to explain. We have seen at the high school level time and time again a capstone project. If you have an economics course and you have a half semester to do it, we have teachers who say okay, we are going to be financially certified by the end of the course. However they want to implement that is up to them since it is web-based, depending on the technology resources of the schools they could say that you have to do these modules for homework by the time it ends or they could do it a little bit more structured and it can be a co-curricular capstone such that along with this final essay on this, you have to be financially certified. It is really up to them. They can use it as introduction to new material, any kind of guided practice if they so wish, a review. A lot of elementary school Vault classrooms use it as kind of a flip classroom, they have three computers in the back, students are doing stations. That works pretty well. They gave us some good feedback on that. Any way that teachers want to implement it is up to them and that I show they contact me. I'm always available for meetings and calls and things like that to help them out. I even go into the classroom and do a pretty hands-on approach if they so wish. That is everything. Again, my name is Brett. I'm the schools manager for the entire state of New Hampshire and my contact info is above.

Committee Member Avard asked how many school in Manchester are you currently working with?

Mr. Elwell replied Manchester school last year had in the 20s.

Committee Member Avard stated we have 22 schools overall.

Mr. Elwell asked just in the city?

Committee Member Avard replied yes.

Mr. Elwell replied six.

Committee Member Avard stated the coversheet that we had said that you were in all of our secondary schools, but that's not correct. Is this something that we are looking to, and I don't know if this is a question that goes to the administration, but is this something that we are looking to expand to all of our schools or any level of expansion or are we looking to stay at the six that we have? What is the future plan with this program?

Mr. Ryan replied our goal is to grow based on interest at the schools. We will have Mr. Elwell come in and speak with our principals again and talk with them about the value of the program and have them expand that way.

Committee Member Avard stated so it is principal's choice as to whether or not this is in their building?

Mr. Ryan replied it is. It is actually teacher choice. Principals will share it with teachers. Teachers will have the opportunity to view through the modules and determine what is it they want to use to either supplement what they are doing in the classroom or make available to students who can do the work outside of the classroom as well.

Committee Member Avard stated and this is at no cost to the Manchester School District.

Mr. Ryan stated that's correct.

Committee Member Avard asked where does the funding for this come from?

Mr. Elwell replied good question. In this case, all the financial literacy courses, the funding comes from the Mass Mutual Foundation and that is for the entire country, actually. We have a very large tier one sponsorship with them. All the STEM courses are coming from the NHL, the NHL Players' Association, and the Boston Bruins. If there is a case where we have an unsponsored course like a Venture course, it comes from us. We will sponsor it so if there is any time where we find a little pocket where there is no large sponsor we do it.

Committee Member Avard asked why? What do you get out of sponsoring that?

Mr. Elwell replied that's a good question. For us, the k-12 side of things, EverFi is more than just a k-12 entity. We have entities in higher education, work place training and all that stuff that is for profit. A lot of our dealings with universities deal for profit, Alcohol Edu, we are the largest supplier of alcohol related content for college freshmen. That is where we are getting a lot of revenue. In this case it started with working with a lot of banks and financial institutions around the CRA. Banking institutions have to do a certain amount of reinvestment in community and financial education. They find us a very good way of doing that. We work with a lot of small banks and credit unions and things like that and that is how it started and we have built from there.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Mr. Ryan, what I'm trying to get a handle on is how this material is being integrated into the classroom. Is it supplemental, is it supplanting, is it homework, is it all of the above? Based on what Mr. Elwell has said here about how it can be used, I'm unclear on how it is being used.

Mr. Ryan stated the classroom teachers decide how to best use it and integrate it into whatever it is they are teaching. A lot of it is done in advisory. Some students choose or can do it during study or free time. Some choose to do it after school, but classroom teachers would decide how that is done. It is all of the above.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked is this something that teachers are assigning to students? He said something about as part of an economics class that they may have to get financially certified. Do kids have the ability to opt out of this? I guess I'm trying to figure out is it a lesson assigned by the teacher or is it something that a kid can do if they are looking to do more work because they can or they want to. Is it a way that teachers are trying to differentiate instruction in the classroom?

Mr. Ryan replied it is all of the above. It is a resource that teachers are able to use to improve their instruction in the classroom however they see fit for that individual student that they are working with or the whole classroom.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated if we wanted to, as School Board members, access the curriculum and see what you are actually teaching, how would we do that?

Mr. Elwell replied in that case I would go in and create a demo account, very simple. I would just go in on my end, make sure everything links correctly and I would supply you some kind of generic user name like sample account and then I would give you a password that would just be generated like at-large 123 and that's it. You can go through and poke around any course you would like.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I would like you to do that for me.

Mr. Elwell stated sure. That would be fun. Of course.

Committee Member Avard stated I have seen a lot of comments from the public on social media about what they would like to see us teaching in our school district. Financial literacy is a large part of what they say they would like us to teach so it is good to hear that this is actually rolling into our classrooms, that you are providing the resources for that so thank you very much.

Mr. Elwell stated of course. I think a lot of the things is you get the why as well. We first started off, this was our first course for high school financial literacy and it was just coming from that demand for those niche gaps in instruction and things like that thought no fault of the teachers or curriculum instructors, but there was a demand for it and that's what we have been able to do for fourth through 12th grade.

Committee Member Avard stated just to have young adults show up in my office and try to write a check and they don't know how. Mom and dad gave them a check to pay their co-pay or the deductible and they don't know how to fill it out and I have to instruct them so it is nice to see that the instruction is going on so that young people will have that little bit of knowledge. It is basic knowledge for how to survive in society so it is important that we give them the resources so that's good.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked anything further from members of the committee? Mr. Elwell, thank you very much for being with us tonight.

Mr. Elwell stated thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated and if you wouldn't mind sending me an email when that dummy account is set up I would appreciate it.

Mr. Elwell stated absolutely. That would be great.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Presentation of NWEA Scores and i-Ready data by Sharon DeVincent.
(Note: Provided for informational purposes only; no action required.)

Ms. Sharon DeVincent, Director of Federal Projects and Professional Development, stated I guess I'll start with the history behind the particular report. When I started back in this position in December/January it was the request to share some information on NWEA and i-Ready and how it was going at the time. When I went in to pull the data for those two reports because both programs were both new and the data wasn't consistent, I said that we needed a year of data so we had this whole year, 2015-2016, and now we have this end of year data report. Part of this is to explain both what the programs are because they can get a little confusing. There is some overlap in what they both do, to explain which schools are using the programs and also to talk a little bit about the data that we had from 2015-2016.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked are you putting anything up on the screen?

Ms. DeVincent replied I hadn't planned on it. It is on page 64 on the slide. It says what is a RIT score and the schools that are using NWEA, which are Northwest, McDonough and Parkside, they look at RIT scores. What it is, what the NWEA reports, it is a normed report so it is kind of standardized across the nation. I wanted to give that kind of definition there because that is one of the education terms that we throw around and everyone says huh. It is a normed test. The NWEA itself is meant to be given three times a year. It is strictly for diagnostics so we have our three schools that are using NWEA right now that are assessing. They will assess again mid-year, January, and then they will assess again in May to get this normed data. We are looking at page 64 now. When I ran this report I just highlighted a few things from the data from the three schools. The three schools, once again, McDonough, Northwest and Parkside. All the grades, one through seven, did show some form of growth in reading and math from the fall assessment to the spring assessment, so from beginning of year to end of year. The primary grades, as it is sorted on the chart on page 65, shows that the primary grades, grades one through three, had double digit growth during that time with first grade math showing the strongest evidence of growth. This particular report and product just gives that diagnostic information three times a year. If you look onto page 67 and 68 these are two examples of charts or reports that the schools can use at the classroom level to help drive instruction and to use the data to drive their instruction. The first report, which is on page 67, allows them to group students. If you are giving all the students the diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the year you are able to

group all the students. It sorts them by how they performed in different areas. If you look at the highlighted area, and this is just a generic report because obviously I didn't want to have student data out for the public, you will see that you can break it down into the different areas and then it groups the kids so if a teacher is looking to do small group instruction on a certain thing then they can run this report and see how to best group their kids for that instruction. Obviously it is a guide. They are going to look at other things when they group students. The next report is an area of growth. This is a student specific report so if you wanted to look at where a student was to set goals for that student this would be another report that you can use for that. Once again, it just kind of breaks up the assessment into different areas of instruction so that the teacher and the student can work together on specific skills. That was the NWEA report. Any questions on that?

Committee Member Avard stated when you talk about growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year and you say that in the lower grades you saw double digits, you didn't specify that in the upper grades so I'm assuming it was single digit in the upper grades. Does this give us a tool to just know in this classroom how do we make change or does it give us a tool to say this is where our children fit into the general measurements of society like the other standardized tests that we have? Does it tell us if they are hitting benchmarks or does it just give us something to say, yes, they got a little bit better than they were in the fall? If so, is single digit improvement good enough or does that give us something that we have to look at and say we have to make that double digit or do we need to look for the upper end of double digits? Is there a benchmark in there that this should be guiding us towards?

Ms. DeVincent replied I'm sorry, I went over that a little too quickly. If you go back to page 65 and I guess the answer to the question is a little bit of both. It really helps drive the teacher in the classroom who is working with the students. All students progress at different levels so knowing the growth for one student maybe different than what you would expect for growth for another student, just depending on the student. Everyone is a little bit different. As an educator I tended to notice that when I worked with younger students they tended to show quicker growth because they are learning so much in a small period of time. It is like having the infant that can walk and talk and eat and run and do all that stuff in just a short period of time, that growth. Looking at

the numbers just in and of themselves, I would say with this one report it is one year of data. I'm more interested to see where we at the end of this school year when we have had two years of data so we have a nice flow so we can see if there is a pattern of some kind.

Committee Member Avard asked will this follow the child so you can compare that per child?

Ms. DeVincent replied yes.

Committee Member Avard asked or is it just looking at the same class in a particular school?

Ms. DeVincent replied my understanding is that it follows the child. It groups them based on their growth. We could do student level reports. I don't have them here. This is looking at grade level, but we can get student level reports on that.

Dr. Christine Martin, Assistant Superintendent, stated if I may add to that, I'll use the analogy, Dr. Avard, I'm going to wonder into your world dangerously, when I go to the doctor and get an assessment on some aspect of my health the doctor provides an individual treatment plan for that aspect of my health. There may be a general treatment plan for all 50 year old women of my height, size and so forth, but I have my own individual plan based on my assessments. That's what this kind of data does for us as well. As Ms. DeVincent said, in those primary grades those babies from grade k-2, they might just six, seven, eight reading levels. It is a huge growth span in their instructional life. As we get older, as you know, we learn less and less so there are smaller increments of learning going forward, which may be reflective in why the data shows that they are not making growth by double digits.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Ms. DeVincent, I have a question about how to read page 65.

Ms. DeVincent stated that's where I'm heading to now.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I'm seeing all kinds of negative numbers on the differential.

Ms. DeVincent stated and that's where I was going to get to when you want to look at the data on a more global scale or national scale to see where our students are falling on these diagnostic assessments. It is a normed assessment so it is normed with other students who have taken this test, same grade level, same assessments. If you look at the very last column, I think it will be vest to start from there, it shows the difference in how our students performed in the spring versus how the norm, what the normed expectation was. If you go back from that very last column...

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked would you explain what the normed expectation is please?

Ms. DeVincent asked can you explain norm?

Dr. Martin replied sure. I can help with that. If Donna Crook was here she could really explain what norm is when we are looking at data and that is not a strength of mine, but I'm going to use some laymen's terms to express norm. An end of the year norm would be, again, average students in this grade level, this is where the numbers should do so you can see the difference between the spring and the EOY norm. You see those minus points for students.

Ms. DeVincent stated what it is showing is that our students, compared to all the students who have taken this test that are part of that normed group or that group of averages, that we are below the norm across the nation.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated in other words, the norm is the national average.

Ms. DeVincent stated yes.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated or the average of all those who took the test.

Ms. DeVincent stated yes.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so we are bringing the average down.

Ms. DeVincent stated yes, but what drives instruction and something that is good for us to look at, positive and negative, if you compared what the difference from norm was with the fall assessment which is that middle shaded column to the difference at the spring to the norm you will see that in some areas that difference went down, it shrunk. If you are looking at the primary, the very first row across, the growth mean, their norm was 19.7. That was the total growth. It was 7.5 points less than the national norm, but for the spring it was only four points less so they were slowly closing that gap with that national norm. if you go further down you will see some of the grade levels went the other way, that gap actually grew and that's where we want to start paying attention to what is happening in those grade levels specifically, maybe diving into the student level data a little better or the school level data a little bit more to get a look at that. That is what is going to start driving us with these reports. We didn't have the norms to look at and compare because we didn't have enough data mid-year last year, but now we have a full year and then we will test again in January so we will look at this again in February and see where we are at that point too. We can pull the data different ways so if there are questions we see here that we are kind of curious about, which is the first part of looking at data, to come up with questions, we can pull reports that will answer those questions.

Committee Member Van Houten stated typically do we do these tests early on, within the first.... When I was at Parkside last week they were very pleased to have completed the NWEA early on. Is that typically when we do them or if we wait later in the fall we are really getting a false starting score because instruction and review, which I think it critically important for youngsters who have not been in school for a few months, have already taken place. I know I have given you layers of questions. I apologize.

Ms. DeVincent responded there is a window to test within that stays within that standard or that expectation. They are within that window. They do like to test early so that they can start running these reports and grouping students for instruction and intervention, making sure that students are in the right classes, that sort of thing. My understanding is that McDonough and Northwest are doing their assessments now and getting the students through the computer lab. Plus, once the assessments are done and they can run these reports they have that data so they can start planning instruction and then they have a longer window to instruct before they do the midyear assessment so that is kind of where they are going.

Committee Member Van Houten asked how long does it take to administer the test?

Ms. DeVincent replied this test varies a little bit. I haven't given it in a long time, but I want to say it is about 30 minutes. I can find out for you.

Committee Member Van Houten stated so it is a quick snapshot.

Ms. DeVincent stated yes. It is not a long test. It is not like Smarter Balanced or something that goes hours. It is real quick in the lab and then they are finished. Then it guides instruction from there. Now I'm going to switch over to the i-Ready data on page 69. To kind of explain i-Ready, I just took a snapshot from their website and the difference between i-Ready and NWEA is that i-Ready includes an instructional component so with the i-Ready the students are able to do a diagnostic assessment three times a year. What the diagnostic assessment does with i-Ready is it drives the instructional piece of i-Ready. We have eight schools using this right now. The students will go onto the computer and take a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the year. Just like any beginning of the year assessment it just sets that baseline data for the year, where is the student at at this point in time. What i-Ready does at that point, based on how the student performs, it sets up an instructional path for them inside the i-Ready program and the students work through that. It monitors their progress and stuff like that and then mid-year they can take a midyear diagnostic and then an end of year diagnostic. There are two different programs. Whereas the NWEA is very normed data, that is why the three schools really like to use it because it is that national standard compared to the standard of all. i-Ready offers that

other piece of it where it includes that instructional component. Schools use it in different ways. I was reaching out to schools this week to see how some of them were using it, especially some that were more successful. Some use this simply for enrichment so while the students who need direct, intensive interventions are receiving very small group instruction from teachers, the other students can be working on here and building and strengthening some of those math and literacy skills. It is used a little bit differently. If you go to page 71 and 72, these are the numbers for the i-Ready reading and this is, once again, just a snapshot of the district here on page 71. It is looking at the School District as a whole and I'll explain. When I first saw this chart I didn't quite understand what that target 100% meant. Basically, 100% means that the students made the growth that was kind of expected based on the diagnostic that they took in the fall. It said that the student should make x amount of growth. What is it saying for the target of 100% and then it shows 101%, it means that everyone made growth or more. You had some students who made above average growth, maybe some were less, but it averaged over 100%. Say you have a group of ten students taking the diagnostic in the fall and then at the end of the school year. You will have some students who meet their target growth, the amount of growth they are expected to make and then some so you will have those that do better than expected. You will have some that do a little less. This is that average of that for the whole district. Is that a little better? If you go down and look at grade levels, you will see how it varies by grade level as well. I do want to caution, if you look at kindergarten, grade k, if you go all the way over to the end, you will see that this only accounted for 69 of our kindergarteners out of the 650 that were in our system to take this assessment. This wasn't used with a lot of kindergarteners. Kindergarteners on computers, it wasn't the best fit for them.

Committee Member Avard asked is that 650 kindergarten students throughout the whole district or just in the schools that are using this program?

Ms. DeVincet replied I'll have to check on that. I believe it is the ones that are taking this. Those are the ones that they upload into the system because that is how we subscribe services to them, by school.

Committee Member Avard stated the column that really concerns me is the third column from the right, especially when you look at district wide, it says number of students on or above grade level, 19%. If that's a real representation of where our students are, we are in trouble.

Dr. Martin asked how many schools, Ms. DeVincent, are involved in the i-Ready assessments and units?

Ms. DeVincent replied eight of our Title I schools so it is all of them except Jewett and Weston.

Dr. Martin stated so this is not representative of all 14 elementary schools.

Committee Member Avard stated but even among those schools, I would hope to see much higher numbers than 19% being at or above grade level. We have been saying it for years that we don't anybody moving on to a different grade until they are at or above grade level. I could see being a low number in the kindergarten, first grade, even second grade, but by the time we hit third grade, we should be seeing significantly higher, close to 100%, if what we have been asking for was accomplished in the lower grades. Why are they being advanced to additional grades? How does an entire class move on? If I look here and I see that third grade is hitting a 20% mark for at or above grade level, only 20% should be moving on to fourth grade, but yet we are moving close to 100% of those kids. Maybe one will stay back, two throughout the district and that, to me, is unacceptable because if we are putting them into third grade and they are not at second grade level and we are putting them into fourth grade, they are not at third grade level, how can get ever catch up? Then we move them eventually into middle school and there is no way they are going to pass that assessment tests.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated and before you answer, just to follow on to Committee Member Avard's point, you have 20% in grade three at grade level, 16% in grade four, 11% in grade five so the higher the grade goes the fewer kids we actually have on grade level.

Committee Member Avard stated and it should be the other way around.

Dr. Martin stated I think Ms. DeVincent wanted to respond first. I'm happy to follow up to that.

Ms. DeVincent stated I was just going to say that this is one snapshot. This is grade level according to i-Ready and the i-Ready assessments. It is not necessarily all the data we look at when we look at a student on grade level. It is just one tool to give us some data. We also have our Fountas and Pinnell running records, we have our district assessments. It should be alarming and it is, and this does bring to light things that we definitely need to start looking into an addressing and pulling out an monitoring very closely. It is a snapshot and it is not necessarily... This is based on instructional goals laid out by i-Ready program. It is not necessarily what our grade level promotional requirements are.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked are we not using something that is aligned to our standards and expectations? If so, why would we do that?

Dr. Martin replied in the world of assessment we liken assessment to a phot album, an old thing that we might have had when we were children, not anymore, we have electronic phot albums, but if you look at a picture of a child you can't say that that is just who that child is in that one picture. You want to see that child in a number of setting and you see that child making growth in their pictures as they grow. That is a picture all together of who that child is. In the world of assessment, i-Ready for example, is one tool we might use, as Ms. DeVincent has mentioned, we might use our running records. There are other situations. Remember, this assessment would have been given one day. It is a moment in time type of assessment. The other thing that we find sometimes interferes with student progress, one of our schools last year, in talking with the principal, running record data and other types of one to one assessments with the child showed higher data than the NWEA data because in that particular school the computer skills were interfering with the child's progress moving forward with NWEA. It would be like saying someone SAT scores are an indication of whether or not they are going to be an honor's student in college. We think that they have the skill set to do well in college, but it is not going to be the determining factor or the only assessment that we use.

Committee Member Avard asked is there any way that the administration can get us a report of our students districtwide and what percentage of them at each grade level are at or above grade level for reading, for writing and for math? Based on the assessments we are doing districtwide, is there a database that you have that would tell you where are our children overall, at least based on our evaluations?

Dr. Martin replied we can certainly provide you with some general data without identifying students, but we also need to remember that we have students who are second language learners. We also have students with identified learning disabilities who may never be on grade level in the area of reading or mathematics.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated they can be removed from the statistics and set aside as a subset. They need not be added to the whole and then been made as an excuse why the whole isn't show a very good picture.

Dr. Martin stated we are certainly not providing excuses, but in the i-Ready data here also, this includes all of our students, not just our students who don't have challenges in their learning as well.

Committee Member Avard stated but if only 20% of our students didn't fit or were not one of those other subsets, I would accept that, but knowing that the subsets are probably 20%, then we should see closer to 80% of our students at or above grade level and we are not seeing that.

Dr. Martin stated through this one lens at one point in time.

Committee Member Avard stated and that is why I want to know, if you want to give me a dozen different assessments and where they stand, I'm willing to look at the big picture, but I want to be able to stand out there and talk to my constituents and say we are getting kids ready. By the time they leave fifth grade and they go to middle school they are ready, they are literate, they can count, they can do everything that they need to do to be successful in middle school. The middle school teachers can make them ready to be successful in high school. If we are not

sending them to middle school ready to be successful, that is a huge job we are asking of our middle school teachers. That is what I want to make sure of, by the time those children leave their elementary school they are on grade level, they are ready to go, hit the ground running when they hit middle school. That is what I want to see in the assessments.

Dr. Martin stated if you would give the administration some time to take a look at what kind of presentation we can do for you to show. It is all about growth for us. The child walks through that door and today I'm going to make them a better student than they were yesterday. We are going to see more growth than we saw yesterday. That is how we address student progress. We will put that together for you to show you the variety of assessments we use to determine student growth.

Committee Member Avard stated but the board has been very clear over the years that I have been on the board, no more social advancement. If they are not on grade level they are not to be moving forward. It has been said over and over and over again. I know it started when Mayor Gatsas came on so we are talking seven years there. It has been something that we have been very firm about saying, we don't want to see children advance just because they are being kept with their social group or because they hit a certain age. They need to be ready before they move on. If that means retaining them, then retain them. I don't know that we are seeing that happen. That is what I want to be sure of.

Committee Member Van Houten stated you gentlemen have actually touched on many of the things that I wanted to ask about. However, how long have we been doing the i-Ready assessments? In other words, do we have year by year comparisons that we can use to see if there is a trend, say the last three or four years, or whether this is an anomaly?

Ms. DeVincent replied when I came aboard and was pulling the data when I first started to see what we had, 15-16 was the first year that we really had solid data for the whole year for most of those eight schools. We did have one school, Bakersville, that was still having technical difficulties so they didn't really use it a lot, that sort of stuff. This is the year that all eight schools are using it, we are going to monitor it pretty closely and we will have some pretty solid

data. The end of this year is really going to tell me a lot, as far as this one program, but we also have the other stuff, our benchmark running records, our district diagnostics and stuff like that.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated what I'm hearing is that while the i-Ready assessment is providing some data it really shouldn't be taken seriously because it is only one snapshot in time of the student, but when I take a look at the NWEA data I see that our students are not up to norm and in at least seven categories, by the end of the year they are going backwards versus where they were earlier in the year. We are doing running records in some schools, I don't know where. We are doing NWEA in three schools. We are doing i-Ready in eight schools. There are two schools in i-Ready that are also doing NWEA. I don't know if there is any overlap with running records. Then we have the district assessments. We have the Smarter Balanced Assessment. It seems to me that we are using a whole bunch of different assessment tools and a whole bunch of different areas which, to me, is not presenting a very unified picture of how students are doing across the district. I don't know how to reconcile what i-Ready is saying about one school versus NWEA saying about another school. It is almost like, you will forgive me for saying this, but it is almost like we are throwing stuff up on the wall to hope some of it sticks or makes sense and then I don't know what we are doing to assess our non-Title I schools, although I'm sure the district assessments, which, by the way, I have heard a number of complaints about from principals, are being used in those schools and then we have the Smarter Balanced test. We are a mess of tests and every time we question the data we are told we can't actually use that data as an accurate picture of the student's performance, but when I look at these i-Ready things when I notice is that with the exception of going from kindergarten to grade one, where the students at or above grade level actually go up from 23% to 27% every successive year from grade one to grade five it falls and it falls from 27% to 11%. That might be a statistical snapshot in time, but what it is telling me is that snapshot is as these kids progress through the system, at least according to i-Ready, they are faring worse with every passing year. Why shouldn't I take a look at that and say, as Committee Member Avard has, that we have problems here that we need to understand and get to the heart of?

Dr. Martin replied as a researcher, one of the things that I was taught was the importance of triangulating data. What that expression means is the idea that I don't use one data source to prove a theory or have themes emerge from that data. I'm looking for themes or patterns of students' behavior looking at at least three data sources. That informs how that student is making progress. If you think about, for example, from a classroom teacher's standpoint, as a principal evaluating a teacher, I would look for a number of different types of assessments in that teacher's rank book to say is that teacher using a number of different tools to draw the picture of what this child truly looks like. That is a form of data triangulation so we are not relying on one data source. That is the purpose of using NWEA and i-Ready and our running record benchmark assessments, which is only an elementary tool. Our Title I schools have the privilege of having more tools available to them because of the funding source, namely NWEA and i-Ready. In our non-Title I elementary schools we are using the district wide assessments and the running record data, which is reading.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked what are running records?

Dr. Martin asked would you explain that in your reading teaching voice?

Ms. DeVincent responded running records is a benchmark assessment that we use. Basically we have students that we sit down, I'm sure if you have had little kids in the district you have heard about their reading level. In kindergarten they are on A, B, C. That's beginning reading. The students read a passage and while they are reading a passage that is where we think their instructional level is at, we are kind of marking mistakes and seeing how their fluency is and seeing where their errors are. Sometimes you pick up on things that need work. Sometimes students drop endings when they read or they skip over certain words. It is a very good diagnostic tool in that measure. BY giving a couple of those, reading a couple quick passages with them, we can determine what their reading level is and that guides their instruction so there is a chart, there are a couple of different versions out there, Fountas and Pinnell has one, to say that a student is reading at level C and that's on grade level for kindergarten. If they are reading at level F or G that might be on grade level for first grade so if the student is reading a grade level below that then you know that you need to work on that. If they are reading above that

then you know that they are above where they need to be for their grade level and you try to give them more enriching activities, that sort of thing. It is just another type of assessment, but it is more of a one to one so somebody literally sits with the student and listens to them read and then documents that reading.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated what I understand is the only measure we have that can assess where all of our kids are at in all of the elementary schools are the district assessments that the district requires each of the schools to participate in. Is that correct?

Ms. DeVincent replied the district assessments and the running records because all of our elementary schools do the running records. Running records also does how they are reading and you ask them comprehension questions about what they are reading so that drives how much they are actually comprehending what they are reading.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked is that data that can be provided to the committee at the next meeting, the running records?

Dr. Martin replied it is early in the year. I'm not sure if they are all entered in performance plus at this time.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I would be happy to get last year's as a starting point so I have something to compare to.

Dr. Martin stated I'm not sure that we can retrieve last year's from performance plus, the state system, but we will endeavor to do our best to get that. If it is possible we will get it.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated perhaps it would be instructive for this committee to understand exactly what the district assessments are and how they work and what they are designed to measure and how the schools are faring on those assessments.

Dr. Martin stated certainly. Remember, it is all about growth. I want to caution the committee on that.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated Doctor, I understand that it is all about growth and I can see in reading the data that there is some growth. However, I, like Committee Member Avar, have a great deal of difficulty looking at statistics that show the number of kids on grade level falls precipitously with every increase in grade level. I don't know how you go from one grade level to the next, lose double digit percentages of the number of kids who are on grade level and then come to us and talk about individual growth. It seems to me they have to be going backwards if fewer and fewer of them are on grade level the higher they get.

Dr. Martin stated we could talk about this extensively because data certainly informs our instruction, but I'll tell you that as a principal, when disaggregating data or taking apart our data, what was most important to me was for teachers to look at their individual student growth: where is the student right now, what aspects of their learning are deficient and what can we do about our instruction to support that student in moving forward.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated let me ask the question this way, Dr. Martin. How can there be satisfactory individual student growth if fewer and fewer students are on grade level with each successive grade?

Dr. Martin replied I will not argue the point that our students do not have places to go in their learning and growth that needs to happen. I won't argue that point.

Committee Member Avar stated going a step further on that, I guess my problem with it is why did they move to the next grade, even if they had growth, if that growth didn't bring them to the benchmark of being on grade level? If they are no on grade level I don't understand how we can move them ahead.

Dr. Martin stated I think that this is a topic perhaps for another Curriculum and Instruction meeting where we talk about looking at the big picture of that child as a whole and why that child might be promoted or not. It is definitely worth a conversation, but requires more than me just sitting here going off the cuff.

Committee Member Avard stated and that's why I asked for the data. I want to know how many of our students districtwide at each grade level are on grade level and then I guess the question comes down to, why are those that are moving forward, why are they moving forward if they are not ready. I want to have that conversation. I think it is very important. Like I said, for years, the board as a whole has been saying no more social advancement. We don't want to hear and I'm really tired of hearing stories of kids that are not under severe special needs reaching high school and not reading at a third grade level. That should never happen in this district. We have too much going on to allow that to happen. I would rather see that student be retained in first grade or second grade when there is still a chance to get them up to speed. If, by the time that child gets to second grade they are reading on a second grade level now that second grade teacher has a chance to make sure they are on grade level before they get to third grade. If the third grader is getting someone that is not reading at a first grade level, growth yes, but can that teacher get enough growth. Who are we hurting? We are hurting the child. I think for the sake of the child we retain in the early grades if they are not hitting those benchmarks. That's the conversation I want to have.

Dr. Martin stated we can certainly provide you with some information about what contributes to a child not making growth moving forward. There are a number of factors.

Committee Member Avard stated and I understand that, but are we doing a disservice if we don't do something to mitigate those factors and get that child on grade level? It is one thing to say we understand why they didn't grow, I get that. Just like when I look at my patients, you used the analogy of my office, I have certain techniques that are my standard techniques and that's what I use, but if I'm not getting the results I'm looking for in a particular patient, even if they are getting better, but they are not getting better the way I want them to get better, I'm going to go find some different techniques. I'm not going to call my job done until that patient gets the

results that we are looking for. If we can't get the results that we are looking for, I have to be honest with that patient and say I can't do it. It is time for someone else to come into the picture. Sometimes that happens. Sometimes I have to surrender and give up and say I need to bring in an orthopedist or a neurologist or someone else into the picture because your needs are greater than what I can handle. I certainly understand that no two people are exactly alike, no two people respond the same way, but I'm not going to tell this patient that I got what I'm looking to get until I get it, not we got something. Once we get what we are looking for, then we can move to the next level. It is the same thing with education. Once we get that child where we need to get them, then we can move them to the next level and then that teacher has a wonderful starting point to go to the next level. That is what I want to see. Again, as a board, we have said it over and over again, that is what we want to see happening in this district. Otherwise, if you have someone who is getting into the middle school years and they are not reading up to speed with their peers, how are they going to catch up? If they can't catch up then that is when we are going to see behavioral issues come in, that is our potential dropout population and I don't want to see that happen anymore.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated as we move on from this discussion I will just note that the number of kids tested versus the number of students in the grade is more than a statistically relevant sample. We are talking about significant percentages here.

Committee Member Van Houten stated just one quick question. I know that we have begun to pilot blended classrooms. Will that begin to address this kind of issue do you think, where grades one and two are blended and a youngster moves more at an individual pace rather than being labeled as a second grader, for instance?

Dr. Martin replied we will use this concept of growth once again that I move along at my pace of instruction based on the data that is presented by my work. The reason that we come to Curriculum and Instruction with new initiatives or change initiatives or modify what we are doing because as Dr. Avarad just said, we recognize that what we were doing was not effective and it needs to be changed. We look at what are best practices in the area of particular instructional areas and try to implement those strategies. The blended classroom is absolutely a

strategy that may work very well for some students and not for others. It is more like life. Not everyone in this room is on the same level, yet we are working together on the same initiatives. I'm absolutely an advocate. I think the conversation is a big conversation about what happens to a child when they are regressing in their learning? Your patients show up in your office, not all of our patients show up every day. That is a factor.

Committee Member Avard stated not everyone shows up. There are a lot of missed appointments. Sometimes you are chasing them down. In my situation, sometimes you just let them go. I know we can't do that with a child. You can only offer services so much, refusal of services, especially at the older grade levels. It is a reality that even the state recognizes.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated moving along.

Dr. Martin stated I think you are up to page 75, using data to drive interventions.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated if we are up to page 75, I have questions about page 72. This is the i-Ready reading student growth. One question I have is about Northwest Elementary School, which failed to meet its target. Were they using that pilot program or the program that they pilot, that close reading thing?

Ms. DeVincent replied they spent the first part of the year doing professional development and then fifth grade started trying it in January and then the other two grades started trying it right after that, third and fourth. They didn't use it for all their grade levels and most of the year was professional development on it. It was toward the end of the year when they implemented it.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked when was the spring test taken versus when they started using that pilot program?

Ms. DeVincent replied the spring test was in May and the fall test, which this is a comparison of...

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so they were using it for five months in grades three, four and five.

Ms. DeVincent stated they were starting it. Whenever you start a new program it takes a little while to get the wheels turning with it. I would say that our mid-year data will tell us if it has been effective because now they have had a good, solid amount of time that they have been using it with third, fourth and fifth. I would say that looking at May when they just started implementing back in January, there are kinks whenever you start implementing stuff. You have to go back and retrain yourself, get more information, try it, that sort of stuff.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated my point in bringing that up is, at the time we were discussing expanding this to all of the schools and I asked specifically whether or not there was any data that showed it was a program that should be shared with the rest of the district and I believe the answer was pretty much no, but the excitement of the kids let them to conclude it was a successful program and now we get these i-Ready scores that include several months of them actually using that program. The school missed its targets. Looking at this, I would want to know what Gossler Park, Henry Wilson, Hallsville and Parker Varney were doing. I would want to know what those schools were doing because they exceeded their targets. It would seem to me that if we are going to expand something in the district that is successful we would find the schools that are producing the results that show that they are meeting or exceeding their targets and figure out what they are doing and how that can be replicated rather than taking a program from a school that missed them by 12 points and pushing that one through.

Ms. DeVincent stated and you did ask me that question so I did look into that. Northwest was using i-Ready a little differently than the other schools. They were using it in the classroom versus a lab. When you have the students coming to a lab and using a product or using a program you get more consistency because they are in there for that specific reason, there is that set amount of time, there are less distractions or interruptions that typically happen in a regular classroom just by the nature of being in a classroom and things happening. I checked with Hallsville. They were using it strictly with their at or above students and they were giving direct

interventions to the students that were performing below average so not all of their students were using it.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked what do you mean by their at or above students?

Ms. DeVincent replied students that were at grade level or above grade level were using it for enrichment while they were working in small groups with their students needing interventions.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I'm looking at the data here, percent of students on grade level or above for Hallsville School is 25%; number of students in the summary are 189 and then number of students in the school are 333.

Ms. DeVincent stated that is where we talk about this being one data point and that on grade level is the term for i-Ready. When they talk about grade level and how they grouping their kids they were looking at their running record scores when we talk about multiple pictures. That is why it is a piece of a puzzle. I love the idea that Dr. Avarad had of giving you guys a list of all the assessments, what they are for, how they are being used and what the data is for those specific assessments so that we can do a comparative. Looking at this data point, that is how they use it in the schools. They don't use it as a standalone. It is one piece of evidence that they use to drive their interventions.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated but now you are telling me that they are using, and this is even more concerning to me, you are telling the committee that Hallsville used something else that said these kids were at or above grade level to put through the i-Ready program and the i-Ready program said nice try, but only a quarter of these kids are at grade level. You have one benchmark saying they are up here, you have another benchmark saying they are down here and that seems to be now an excuse for why the i-Ready scores shouldn't be paid attention to because there was another benchmark that said they were at or above when this one is saying clearly they are nowhere close.

Dr. Martin stated it is interesting to me, and this is not a tool that I used as a principal, as I was not the principal at a Title I school nor have I been involved in the use of this product. I'm told that Hallsville is using this with only their at or above grade level students. We don't know what Ms. Skogsholm set for their targeted growth number.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated she just said they were using the running records for the basis of determining whether or not they were at or above grade level.

Dr. Martin stated correct. I don't know what they did.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked are you telling me the principal gets to determine what is at or above grade level?

Dr. Martin replied no. We are looking here at what percentage... Maybe my targeted growth, the school said... I don't know because I don't use this tool, but if I'm looking at this data, we want to see students make 40% growth from their current status. That would mean that the percentage of students that hit that target, 100% of students hitting that target.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so are you saying the principal gets to determine what the growth target is.

Dr. Martin stated I don't know that. That is what I'm saying. We don't have that information for you this evening with this product.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked who determines what the growth target is? Is it set by the school? Or is it set for each individual kid?

Dr. Martin asked grade level performance are you speaking to?

Chairman Pro Temp Girard replied I'm talking about what is on this sheet where it tells me whether or not they are achieving their growth targets.

Dr. Martin stated I don't know the answer to that.

Ms. DeVincent stated for the i-Ready program it is whatever the default is in the program. We can go in and set it and that will be something we might be looking at this year so that we get all of our on grade levels lined up. That may be something we discuss.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated wait a minute. Are you telling me that different schools have different growth targets? They can determine what their growth target is?

Ms. DeVincent replied no. We are using the default one in the i-Ready system.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so there is a default one in the i-Ready system.

Committee Member Avard asked that is standardized across all fifth grades?

Dr. Martin replied yes, in the eight schools using the product. Again, what is really important when you look at data is how you are using that data. The purpose of using this data is not to say this student should be promoted or should not be promoted. It is looking at a specific skill set on a computerized program as one point of data in all the points of data that we put together to paint the picture of the child's progress.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I don't dispute that, but I would add to that, Doctor, that you have to know what the data you are collecting is. What is the basis of the data for you to start connecting dots? It seems to me, if I can have a school... Take this for what it is worth and, again, forgive me if it comes out wrong, but if what you are telling me is Hallsville School exceeded its target by a substantial amount, 118% of target. When I first brought this up the answer to that was well they only tested kids that were at or above grade level and then it turned out that it was based on another set of data. If a school can tell me that they are going to cherry pick the kids who take the test and then run around and say oh look we exceeded our goals then

what they are doing is they are cooking the books. They are skewing the data because they are not doing it in a universal way that allows us to assess the overall condition of the grade.

Dr. Martin stated but that is not the purpose of this data. The purpose of this data...

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked what is the purpose of this data?

Dr. Martin stated the purpose of this data is not to rank a school or compare a school, it is to inform instruction and it is how they set up their interventions for students. They were looking for a way to assess students at or above grade level and set up interventions for them. I'm going to suspect that if there are students that are below grade level that they are looking at other tools to set up interventions. That's the purpose of the data.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated well if this is how well they students they believe are on grade level are doing, how are they measuring what they need to do with the kids that aren't on grade level because I'm looking at this now with what you are telling me and saying that Hallsville is presenting a very skewed picture of what is happening within the four walls of that building. They are leaving out a significant number of kids who they have deemed not on grade level.

Dr. Martin stated remember that the purpose of our presentation this evening was to show you the functioning of the NWEA and the i-Ready, not to rank schools or to compare schools.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I'm not trying to rank or compare them, but whatever you bring forward any data it naturally is going to beg a question of why do we have certain schools that appear, based on the data, to be doing better than other schools in the process. You can't merely bring forward data and say we are doing this as a tutorial to help you understand what the data is and not expect you are going to get questions about what the data means.

Dr. Martin stated sure, but if you are looking for us to present as clear a picture for you of how we assess students across the district in our elementary schools we can do that. That is not what this presentation is about. It is about the functioning of the NWEA and i-Ready.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked did Henry Wilson, Parker Varney, or Gossler Park similarly cherry pick their students for this i-Ready thing?

Ms. DeVincent replied no.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked so what are they doing that they are exceeding their targets?

Ms. DeVincent asked can I back up and just explain how the Title I schools do interventions within the buildings? I was at a couple of these schools so I have a little firsthand knowledge. Typically we look at their benchmark running records, the ones that are given to all students because that is consistent across all 14 schools. The students come in with these running record scores and they can help us determine whether a student is on grade level, below grade level, where they are at and we can look at them specifically to see where the needs are for the students. That helps drive how we group students for intervention. We have, through Title I funding, staff in the buildings to help work with kids in small groups that need supports. What Hallsville did in this case, they know that they have limited hands and we all know that students learn best in the smaller groups that we can get them in, especially when they have a significant need. What they said was that we are looking at our running record scores and we have some students that are where they need to be on running records, I'm working with them in my classroom, I see their performance. They are observing their students, they are looking at the data that all the students in the district take and they say okay, we are going to do our interventions. They call it WIN time. I forget what the acronym stands for. During the WIN time they are taking the kids that have the most needs that really need that one on one or two on one or that very small group literacy instruction and they are working with them in small groups. While they are working with those students in small groups they are giving the other students a chance to get some kind of enriching activity, some kind of growth and that is what they are using i-Ready for so it is not that they are cherry picking. It is not about the diagnostic data. A

student that is using i-Ready takes the i-Ready diagnostic because it informs the program what types of activities to give the student to work on so it assesses the student at the beginning of the year when they first get on the program. It sets the instructional course for the student, assesses them midyear and so on. It is not that they were cherry picking, it was just those are the students that they have using i-Ready because they are working in small group, teacher led direct instruction with the other students. Gossler and Wilson have set up their intervention blocks so Wilson was setting an expectation of 45 minutes a week that students were working on this. That is the optimum that i-Ready likes or recommends for students' time each week. Wilson made an effort to make that happen. They also had their students through the Leader in Me and they are trying to build the student responsibility, having students create goals so they had the students do the diagnostics and look at their diagnostics and say what do you think would be a good goal for you and the student had something to achieve that they had set for themselves. That drives it a little bit. Gossler was similar. They had the students on in 30 minute blocks. It is a little different. Northwest is making changes this year. I asked them what they were doing this year versus last year. Parker Varney was another school that exceeded their target growth here on the i-Ready and Northwest is taking a page from that book. They are going to have all the students using i-Ready in a lab this year versus using it in the classroom so they have that consistency. They will have an interventionist in there when they are on the computer working with kids that need very direct instruction while the other students are on the i-Ready. Intervention shifts. You might have a student who comes in that needs direct instruction. You might have some that perform and grows better on the computer because they are driven by that. It really becomes a student driven decision. It is tough to explain.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated in closing out the discussion on this unless there are other questions or comments from other members of the committee, I will simply note that for the eight schools listed here, the highest school for the percentage of kids at grade level is 25%. You were saying something about page 79.

Ms. DeVincent stated so how are they using the data from this i-Ready report to drive their interventions and their instructions. They can do an intervention screener and not all the schools are using this. I just picked one as a representation of the types of reports that are available through i-Ready. You saw the two on the other page and the school can look at those school specifics so they see classes instead of other schools and classes and grade levels. This is another report that they can run so it just groups the students based on, and right now we are using the default target for i-Ready, but it is something that as a committee or as an administration we can discuss so it aligns more with our stuff, but anyhow they can look at their students based on who is on level, who is above level, who is below level and they can actually click on that button that says number of students. They can click on that number and it will give them those students that are in that category so it helps them see who has the most intense needs based on this particular diagnostic.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated so for example on page 76 51% of the kids at Gossler at below or dangerously below grade level in reading.

Ms. DeVincent responded according to the i-Ready diagnostic and the students that took the i-Ready diagnostic. Once again, I would have to go in and see what that target is and see how it does compare to what we use for our districtwide Fountas and Pinnell benchmark. It hadn't dawned on me to look at that, but I can look at that. It is a default one for the program and it drives how their particular i-Ready program works. I'll look at that and I'll get more specifics on exactly how that number is determined, what sets that target. Another thing to look at is looking at it by grade and this is just, because of the colors, it makes it stand out. The three kindergarten students who happened to take this particular diagnostic, they are all on grade level. They had 100%. They assessed that they were where they needed to be. The next pages, 78 and 79, are just the same reports, but for the math.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated which are a little frightening actually.

Ms. DeVincent stated going over to page 81, these are reports and this breaks it down even smaller. I pulled this, once again, from the i-Ready site because I didn't want to have student data available for the public. This is a student profile so a student goes in and takes that i-Ready diagnostic...

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated excuse me, what do you mean you didn't want to have student data?

Ms. DeVincent replied I wouldn't want a student's name actually on this report on page 81. This is what a student profile would look like. It just shows how it breaks it down. These are some areas in literacy that we always focus on, phonologic awareness, phonics, those sorts of things and how the student performed on the diagnostic, whether they achieved all the expectations in that one area or where they needed to work. Then it breaks down things that students could do. Underneath the bar graph it just explains the things that could be worked on in the area or how the student performed in the areas. You can compare. It directs instruction. If all my students have tested out in phonological awareness and I'm a kindergarten teacher and phonological awareness has to do with the sounds of words and sounds of letters, I won't have to test that. All my students tested out so I can focus on something else. That is kind of how that helps drive it. The next page, which is page 82, is an instructional grouping report so just like the NWEA has the capability to group students based on how they performed on the diagnostic the i-Ready has the same capability. Were I in a classroom, this, personally, would be the tool that would drive my small group instruction because it helps me focus on the kids that have the similar needs so I'm addressing them most effectively.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated and then there is page 83. Any questions from members of the committee? Thank you, Dr. Martin and Ms. DeVincent.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. Title I Priority School Grant Funds
(Note: This item was approved at the 9/19/2016 Finance meeting subject to the approval of the C&I Committee.)

On motion of Committee Member Avard, duly seconded by Committee Member Van Houten, it was voted to approve the item.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated just a note, this was something that we did at the request of the administration to facilitate a more timely disposition of this matter so Finance did it subject to, as you know, the approval of this committee.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard addressed item 8 of the agenda:

8. Discussion regarding the procedure for administering the SAT.
(Note: This item was referred from the BOSC on 3/14/2016.)

Mr. Ryan stated the principals came together and they decided to present a plan that involves the use of MST since it will be not in use the day of the SAT because many schools that would typically be sending students to CTE programs as well as our juniors will be involved in the SAT program. We have looked at using MST as the location for all of our juniors in the city to be bused to, to be taking the exam that day so that the school does not need to be cancelled at any of the other high schools.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked and there is adequate room, obviously, at the School of Technology to take juniors from around the city?

Mr. Ryan replied there are. There are 930 spots. We will require some additional tables so there will be a small investment in terms of tables from a rental facility for tables. Students who need special accommodations or are otherwise relying on special accommodations will remain at their home school.

Committee Member Avard stated the remaining students from MST will just be given the day off, freshmen, sophomores, seniors.

Mr. Ryan stated they are continuing to work out what the students are going to be doing.

Committee Member Van Houten asked will the quad be used for large scale testing?

Mr. Ryan replied I'm not certain. I doubt that they will be using that because that's not good practice.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard stated I don't know what the thoughts on the committee are on this, but I was not all together able, necessarily, to decipher the SAT presentation that you gave at the board. I wonder if the SATs, the scores and what they mean, should be a discussion item here at the committee.

Committee Member Avard stated it is worth putting on in the future.

Chairman Pro Temp Girard asked could we put that on an agenda for a future meeting.

Mr. Ryan replied certainly. We will ask the clerk to talk with the chair and see if that is what she would like to do.

TABLED ITEMS

A motion is in order to remove any items from the table.

9. Update on the PACE Program.
(Note: Additional information is attached. Tabled 2/10/2016.)

This item remained on the table.

10. Curriculum Management Draft Plan.

(Note: A public hearing was held on 3/7/2016. A final document is being prepared.)

This item remained on the table.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Committee Member Avard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Van Houten**, it was voted to adjourn at 7:57 p.m.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Man J. Leahy".

Clerk of Committee