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Monument Academy School Board, Dec. 10

Board hears assessment report, COVID-19 impacts

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met on Dec. 10 to hear what assessments reveal about the impact of COVID-19 interruptions, and to hear how the Level Red designation and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) quarantine changes may impact the school.

Assessment report

Assistant Principal and Assessment Coordinator Marty Venticinque reported to the board on the results of Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments. He prefaced his report by saying that the big question was going to be the impact on achievement of COVID-19 interruptions last spring. Schools were not able to get NWEA or Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) results from last spring. MA normally compares results spring to spring or fall to spring. Also, NWEA released a new version of its norms based on

nationwide data from the past five years. So, he recalculated previous years to compare data. He felt the best approach was to look at percentile rankings rather than raw scores.

Venticinque stated that most of the prognostication was that the disruption would have a greater impact on math, which he confirmed. Impacts were also apparent in reading and language arts, primarily for younger kids. Science scores stayed stable. At MA, there was a drop of 10 percentile points in math. MA was already implementing interventions that should show results in the spring. In elementary school, fifth grade was, like middle school, seeing only a slight drop in reading and language. In lower grades, there was more of a reading/language drop as confirmed by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) testing. Math scores were hit more heavily in lower grade levels as expected by educators and assessment providers. Despite this, most kids are at or above the benchmarks.

Board President Melanie Strop asked how much time was lost and how much time it would take to get back in the game with math. Venticinque replied that no one really knows as this hasn't happened before. We just want to see kids grow, he said, it doesn't matter how much. He pointed out that MA did well in growth metrics comparing fall to fall and that we are comparing to norms taken in a normal year. It's more important, Venticinque asserted, to have interventions like the Math Accelerator Program they already have in place.

Board member Megghan St. Aubyn asked if the NWEA tests were changed to align more with Common Core and if that might have affected results. Venticinque said that the only changes were to break up the math scores in groupings of kindergarten through second grade, second through fifth, and sixth and up. The overlap in second grade reflects the assumption that kids can better read and explain the math in the second semester. NWEA also recalibrated and lowered the benchmark by looking at averages around the nation.

Impact of COVID-19 Level Red designation

Chief Operating Officer Christianna Herrera said she was thrilled to have students back on campus after doing a reset by having an extra week of distance learning after the Thanksgiving break. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CD-PHE) had moved El Paso County to Level Red (severe risk) on the state's dial framework effective Friday, Nov. 27 at 5 p.m. She also noted that the CDC was revising its guidance by shortening the quarantine times for schools, allowing those affected to return after seven days with a negative test result or, otherwise, after 10 days instead of 14. She said MA is approaching this change with caution because test results are taking at least four days. She said that the change reflects that the most contagious time is after five to seven days when symptoms start to show; after 10 days there



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