

Elmira City School District, NY



How a New York school district improved achievement by supporting growth

A few years ago, Marnie O. Malone and her team at Elmira City Schools found themselves facing a challenge that's all too common: How can we best support students who we know aren't likely to meet grade-level standards?

To find an answer, they looked to the MAP® Suite of assessments from NWEA®.

Supporting growth at all achievement levels

"We have a lot of students who struggle," she explains. "Kids who aren't at grade-level expectations based on our state testing. MAP® Growth™ shifted our understanding of how to help them, because we can see they're growing, and how they're performing in terms of their skills, and not just in terms of specific lessons."

Malone is the supervisor of academic excellence at Elmira. She and her team used MAP Growth data to help teachers not only measure and track student growth, but also inform their instructional planning. For example, teachers used MAP Growth data to form Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier II instructional groups. This created a way for them to effectively support struggling students while better understanding each individual child's unique path to proficiency.

"MAP Growth gave us the data to create a Tier II instructional program that was instrumental. We used the

learning continuum. We used reports. We found where our biggest target areas for improvement were. And we saw that we really needed to be applying differentiated instruction—but using a single Tier II model that would help us all teach following the same program."

Using MAP Growth data to support a holistic process

After introducing MAP Growth to teachers, they quickly found that both students and teachers were excited to set growth goals, and they were eager to create learning plans together.

"At first, there was a big concern that the data would be connected to teacher evaluation—but we no longer think of it that way. We've gotten to the mindset of what the data means and what we can do with it," Malone said.

At monthly data meetings, grade-level representatives from each school share results—and use the data to answer tough questions.

"Who needs additional reading support? What additional programs are needed? The data from our NWEA assessments is incredibly accurate and tells us both when interventions are necessary, and how we will perform on the New York state test," she added.

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Marnie O. Malone
Supervisor of Academic Excellence
Elmira City School District, NY

Building reading to drive growth

Malone and her team knew that to drive growth across grades and subjects, they needed to build reading skills in their early learners. By using MAP® Reading Fluency™, they quickly saw the literacy areas they needed to tackle—using the same assessment system that let them simultaneously track growth across other subjects—so they could see the ripple effect of their efforts.

“MAP Reading Fluency created a comprehensive picture about our overall literacy performance, which made everyone take a big breath,” Malone explains. “This was really a need we had. We could see it.”

By using their MAP Reading Fluency results to guide their efforts, they’ve established a framework, common goals, and a common language that effectively supports students year-round.

“MAP Reading Fluency is the bridge between the work we’re doing in the classroom and all of our assessment processes. We use it three times a year for monitoring performance versus [grade-level expectations]; we use it to group students for optimal learning; we use it to inform our learning scaffolds. It creates a holistic process—we can see our kids’ trajectories and monitor sub-skills and comprehension throughout the year.”

Conclusion

Now, the Elmira City School District has a growing, bustling community of students, teachers, and families all excited about using data from the MAP Suite. Malone explains, “Now everyone speaks the same language—parents, kids, and teachers. Kids are saying, ‘Not only is this my score, but this is what it means, and this is how I’ve improved.’ When we give MAP tests, our teachers and administrators start pulling the reports right away.”



District snapshot

ELMIRA, NY



PRE-K-12 STUDENTS

6,115

ECONOMIC MARKERS

63%

OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR
FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

PRODUCT USE

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH IN

2013

IMPLEMENTED MAP READING FLUENCY IN

2018



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