

Superintendent's Thoughts September 2016

Greensburg Community Schools will be using a new student assessment for the 2016-2017 school year. NWEA diagnostic testing will be used in grades K-10 to assess student achievement and growth. The assessment will help us differentiate instruction so that Greensburg Schools can address different areas of student academic weakness. NWEA diagnostic testing challenges students and offers opportunities for continuous growth. This assessment will replace a multitude of different tests your child might have been exposed to in the past (i.e. Dibels, Acuity, and Star). NWEA will give us the opportunity to have a standard means of assessing students and allow us to keep year to year data to measure growth for all of our students vertically K-10. We will have meaningful data that can be shared from one building level to the next as student's progress through our schools. Below I have provided a brief overview of the assessment process.

NWEA Testing Overview

NWEA is an achievement diagnostic assessment for Mathematics and Reading that is taken on the computer, with just one question at a time displayed. It automatically adjusts in difficulty, according to student performance on each question answered. This way each test is individualized for each student. Greensburg students will participate in NWEA math and reading assessment three times a year: fall, winter and spring. Students and teachers can set goals for performance growth following each testing session. They can also compare their scores to those of thousands of other students in the nation.

Teachers can analyze test scores in order to...

- plan instruction
- plan collaboration
- set growth targets for students
- monitor student progress
- assess student strengths and weaknesses
- customize "next steps"

Our school district will use a scale called the RIT scale to measure a student's academic growth over time. Like units on a ruler, the scale is divided into equal intervals – called Rasch Units (RIT) – and is independent of grade level. Each subject-area has a unique alignment to the RIT scale; as a result, scores between subject-areas are not equivalent. In reading, a RIT score of 174.7 to 188.7 indicates a performance level of second grade, while a RIT score of 217.2 to 220.1 indicates a performance level of eighth grade. A student who is reading at the tenth-grade level will have a RIT score of 220.4 to 221.2, and so on. Each subject-area is also divided into "strands," which test specific areas of knowledge. Mathematics strands, for example, include real and imaginary numbers, algebra, geometry, and probability. We hope that this new assessment will allow us to track student progress using meaningful data that will enable teachers to differentiate their instruction more effectively. More detailed information will be shared from each building. The tables below give the updated range of test scores:

The norms in the tables below have a very straightforward interpretation. For example, in the status norms for Reading, grade 2 students in the middle of the "begin-year" period had a mean score of 174.7 and a standard deviation of 15.5. To get a sense of how much dispersion there was, the SD 15.5 can be subtracted from the mean and added to the mean to produce a range of about 159–190. Since the norms are based on the bell curve, we know that 68% of all scores are expected to fall between in this range.

2015 READING Student Status Norms						
Grade	Begin-Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	141.0	13.54	151.3	12.73	158.1	12.85
1	160.7	13.08	171.5	13.54	177.5	14.54
2	174.7	15.52	184.2	14.98	188.7	15.21
3	188.3	15.85	195.6	15.14	198.6	15.10
4	198.2	15.53	203.6	14.96	205.9	14.92
5	205.7	15.13	209.8	14.65	211.8	14.72
6	211.0	14.94	214.2	14.53	215.8	14.66
7	214.4	15.31	216.9	14.98	218.2	15.14
8	217.2	15.72	219.1	15.37	220.1	15.73
9	220.2	15.68	221.3	15.54	221.9	16.21
10	220.4	16.85	221.0	16.70	221.2	17.48
11	222.6	16.75	222.7	16.53	222.3	17.68

2015 MATHEMATICS Student Status Norms						
Grade	Begin-Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K	140.0	15.06	151.5	13.95	159.1	13.69
1	162.4	12.87	173.8	12.96	180.8	13.63
2	176.9	13.22	186.4	13.11	192.1	13.54
3	190.4	13.10	198.2	13.29	203.4	13.81
4	201.9	13.76	208.7	14.27	213.5	14.97
5	211.4	14.68	217.2	15.33	221.4	16.18
6	217.6	15.53	222.1	16.00	225.3	16.71
7	222.6	16.59	226.1	17.07	228.6	17.72
8	226.3	17.85	229.1	18.31	230.9	19.11
9	230.3	18.13	232.2	18.62	233.4	19.52
10	230.1	19.60	231.5	20.01	232.4	20.96
11	233.3	19.95	234.4	20.18	235.0	21.30

2015 LANGUAGE USAGE Student Status Norms						
Grade	Begin-Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
2	174.5	16.58	184.9	15.34	189.7	15.47
3	189.4	15.20	196.8	14.24	200.0	14.11
4	198.8	14.66	204.4	13.83	206.7	13.64
5	205.6	13.87	209.7	13.23	211.5	13.19
6	210.7	13.79	213.9	13.30	215.3	13.38
7	214.0	13.82	216.5	13.52	217.6	13.70
8	216.2	14.17	218.1	13.92	219.0	14.26
9	218.4	14.15	219.7	13.98	220.4	14.50
10	218.9	15.04	219.7	14.99	220.1	15.74
11	221.5	14.96	222.1	14.85	222.1	15.80

2015 GENERAL SCIENCE Student Status Norms						
Grade	Begin-Year		Mid-Year		End-Year	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
3	187.5	11.74	192.6	10.92	195.4	11.01
4	194.6	11.16	198.7	10.75	201.0	10.92
5	200.2	11.06	203.7	10.80	205.7	11.07
6	204.3	11.54	207.1	11.40	208.6	11.73
7	207.2	11.92	209.5	11.87	210.9	12.23
8	210.3	12.28	212.3	12.19	213.5	12.63