

Assistant Superintendent's Update April 29, 2020

Dear Island Park Families,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy! I am writing to provide an important update on the District's progress monitoring efforts; evidence-based practice and procedures for assessing students' academic performance and evaluating the effectiveness of instruction.

Recently, the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) released a report that predicts that this fall, students will enter school with about 70 percent of the usual reading gains and less than 50 percent of expected achievement in math. The District recognizes that due to a variety of factors, this period of school closure will widen learning gaps for our students. In response, throughout the extended school closure, teachers and administrators use paper and pencil, digital assignments, projects, quizzes, and data from online learning tools such as myON, i-Ready, Nearpod and Google Classroom to closely monitor each child's progress towards the state learning standards.

The Island Park UFSD has developed progress monitoring procedures that guide teachers and administrators in collecting and analyzing data to make instructional decisions that support all students in meeting the essential grade-level knowledge and skills set-forth in the New York State Learning Standards as well as individual students in meeting individual learning targets or annual individualized education program (IEP) goals. Through these progress monitoring practices and procedures, teachers and administrators use the state standards, across all content areas, at the child's specific grade-level, to develop goals that can be measured and tracked, to monitor what each child is expected to learn by the end of the school-year.

In a typical school year, the teachers and administrators in the Island Park UFSD use a variety of progress monitoring tools such as formative and summative assessments (Fountas and Pinnell Running Records and Benchmarks, Teachers College Running Records and Benchmarks, GoMath Unit Assessments, teacher developed assessments, NWEA and the i-Ready Diagnostic Assessment) to monitor student growth and achievement and also to compare each student's growth and achievement with other students across the grade-level, the state and the nation. As a result of the extended school closure, many of these assessments cannot be administered, and the results will not be used to decide how to help your child learn best.

As a result, the District has intentionally set clear expectations for all teaching staff (general education teachers, ESL teachers, special education teachers, instructional/related services providers and special area-teachers) and administrators to hold regularly scheduled planning time together (as virtual meetings). Teachers and administrators have developed a data collection system for the progress monitoring of all students during the school closure including but not limited to, submitted work, photos of work, virtual/audio observations and data from online learning tools such as myON, i-ready, Think Central etc. During virtual meetings, teachers and administrators coordinate specially designed state-standards aligned paper and pencil and/or digital learning assignments and review progress monitoring data made available through the various online learning tools.

Progress monitoring is a valuable tool to use when monitoring and reporting progress on annual goals and attainment of the state standards. Please keep in mind, that in order for our progress monitoring practices to be effective, it is important that you continue to support your child to follow-through with all paper and pencil and/or digital learning assignments. It is this continued commitment to learning and active engagement that are essential to minimizing learning loss during the extended school closure. As a reminder, teachers are available daily for assistive teaching and will continue to communicate with you and your child through audio/video conferencing and telephone calls. Please continue to communicate your child's learning needs, questions or concerns, through email by using the "virtual hand raise" code in the email subject to connect with your child's teacher(s) and principal.

Stay safe and healthy!
Fondly,

Vincent Randazzo
Assistant Superintendent
Island Park UFSD