Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) Q & A

What are MAPs? *(Originally published in our MAP Info Letter Prior to Parent Meeting)*

MAPs are a personalized assessment in the area of reading and math. They are computerized (StMCS uses laptops or iPads) and the questions presented adapt to your child's level of learning. Questions hover at each student's achievement level, presenting items based on prior responses. This means each student has the same opportunity to feel successful and maintain a positive attitude toward testing. MAP results provide details about your child's current level of performance in reading and math rather than simply giving the number of items correct and incorrect. Over time, the results will show information about individual student growth. StMCS will administer the MAPs to all grades in the fall and spring annually.

An informational meeting was held for parents on Thursday, March 26, 2015
to explain the Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) and how they fit at StMCS.
The meeting was led by Principal Haller in collaboration with Ms. Lynn Lamers of the
Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), and our Support Specialist, Mrs. Mae Paluck.

Questions listed below were asked by parents at the conclusion of the meeting.
Due to time constraints, not every question received a verbal response that evening, however,
they are now answered here along with those that were answered at the meeting.
Questions are in no particular order. Responses reflect information from NWEA and/or StMCS.
This document will be expanded if other questions arise.

Parents are always welcome to stop in, call, or email us questions.
Specific MAP questions are best directed to Mrs. Paluck as her duties include coordination
of all formal assessments. mpaluck@stmcatholicschool.org

1. Could we get a comparison to STMA Middle and High School MAP results?

MAP results are designed for the users within a school and are not required by any entity to be public. STMA can choose whether or not they publish their results, just as we can. If STMA publishes MAP data, we would have the ability to compare.

The purpose we at StMCS administer MAPs is to guide instruction not as a comparison tool.

2. Are there other reports parents can get access to? Can we get a report to identify the areas where students did really well and areas to focus on to support our child's education?

Parents do not have direct access to reports; those will come from our school. The "Student Progress Report" for parents has a section at the bottom showing each strand in a subject and whether the child scored "Low", "Average" or "High" in each area. Those labels are based on national norms, as follows:
Low = Student scored below the 33rd percentile in this area
Avg = Student scored between the 33rd and 66th percentile
High = Student scored above the 66th percentile.

3. When looking at the national average, how many student results make up this number?

There were 5.1 million students in the last norming study. NWEA is in the process of re-norming and that documentation will come out this summer. They are currently testing about 8 million students, so they will have a very large sample size for this study as well.

4. Three similar questions are reflected in this item. The answer addresses all three inquiries.

- ***What are next steps to use data to create enrichment programs during/after school?***
- ***Will after school programs such as Math Super Stars stay open to anyone who signs up even if they are not ready for the advanced topics?***
- ***Is there a consideration for hiring a teacher, such as high potential? or remedial?***

Committed to academic excellence, we desire a curriculum that enriches all. These long-term questions are absolutely a consideration for StMCS. Precise answers to these queries need data over time along with research. With solid data in hand, we can best identify system-wide needs and devise solutions.

May 2015 will present our first full set of MAP data across the grades. Reviewing that data while we are still in the planning stages for 2015-16 will guide our decision-making regarding programs and personnel. Meanwhile, immediate use of results in the classroom by teachers will ideally tailor instruction to best meet each student where they are and help maximize academic growth.

We do have a full-time reading specialist and 6 para-professionals as a part of our educational team who collaborate with our teachers to meet a wide array of student needs. Our middle level "Minds in Motion" period offers both support and enrichment classes in reading and math (and other content areas) three times per week. After school enrichment such as Math SuperStars and Junior Great Books will be evaluated to determine if they are the best-fit programs and if we have the correct expectations in place. We do plan to add an honors math course to grades 7 and 8 in the fall of 2015-16.

5. If a child is at another grade level in a specific area, does that child take that higher level or does the teacher just adjust to challenge the child?

All students will have on grade level work that they are expected to complete to ensure foundational skills are met. Teachers will adjust lessons and/or experiences to challenge students as appropriate.

6. Can we formally request a winter assessment if we want?

Requests for winter assessments will be considered on an individual student basis.

7. Does this test ask any questions about faith? (I understand there are states not taking these tests because there have been moral topics asked and teachers are unable to see those beforehand).

No, there are no faith-based questions on any MAP tests. NWEA puts every item through an intense scrutiny for bias, sensitivity and fairness. They do that both internally and with the help of a third party. NWEA needs to maintain a test appropriate for all users or they simply would not be able to sell the product. The MAP content is mathematics and reading.

8. How many questions per strand to determine the level? (either higher or lower) Does it cap it off? Is there an entry level at every strand?

It varies a bit by test but there is a *minimum* of 7 questions per strand on each test. The test program makes adjustments up and down throughout all the questions in the strand in order to determine a strand score. The very first time a student takes the MAP test, all strands start out at the student's grade level. Thereafter, the program will pick up where the student left off in each strand and continue to adjust from there.

9. What is the timeline to get more comfortable with the tool?

While teachers are continuously learning about the tools and resources offered by NWEA, more extensive professional development will take place during the summer/fall. As with any new tool, a learning curve is expected as the teachers implement the technology of the assessments, explore what reports are available, how to use them and then offer resources to students and parents.

10. What examples are available about the first 2 bullets on the blue handout? ("Differentiate instruction to meet students at their present level" and "Design instruction for individuals and/or flexible groups of students")

Differentiation example for math:
The class is learning about telling time – once the basic concepts are taught to the full group, individual or small group practice may be designed to students' proximal zone of development. For instance, one group of students could be telling time to the nearest hour using clocks while others may be working on elapsed time using a more abstract problem-solving method.

Example of instructional design for meeting the needs of flexible groups:
When planning instruction for literature study based on a survival theme, one group may be reading a Box Car Children book that lends itself to some inference questions with most information presented in a concrete manner. Other students may read at a higher Lexile range and be assigned, Gary Paulson's "Hatchet" where the story line requires the reader to infer events based on information that is not nearly as obvious. Within each book, a variety of questioning could be presented to meet students at their level, challenging them to increasingly higher level skills.

11. When will we be able to see RIT growth charts and projection information on our child?

Assuming a student participates in our spring 2015 window and again in our fall 2015 window, we will have our first growth report on students at the close of the fall 2015 assessment window. Our best growth projection will be after our Spring 2016 assessment, when we have had a full 6 months of school days not broken up by summer break.

Research indicates that students are often prone to a "summer slide" if they do not maintain an active practice of reading and maintaining math skills. Parents can support that growth by ensuring that students keep learning moving throughout the summer. (See #16 for resources.)

12. How will teachers be able to utilize all the data without "analysis paralysis"?

Although the MAP reports offer much useful data, teachers will not consider every aspect of the data at once. For instance, if a math teacher is preparing to teach a lesson in area and perimeter, she will be able to use the MAP Learning Continuum to zero in on the over all class knowledge and each students' level of understanding on that topic alone. Use of the data supports efficient use of class time through carefully selected activities.

13. Can we possibly teach 25 students to their grade level if we're already overwhelmed?

Without proper assessment tools, determining student readiness for the next level of learning can be overwhelming. MAP data will help identify a baseline for every student in reading and math and the specific skills within. MAP data identifies a starting point for each child and offers a goal tailored to each student. Students will still receive like instruction in grade level material to ensure solid understanding, however, group work, assignments and activities may adjust to best match student readiness.

14. What is the price of the assessment (per test/per class/per school)?

We pay $12.50 per student per year. When we test twice a year, in two subjects (reading and math), that breaks down to about $3.00/test. This year we paid half that because we are beginning with the spring window. There is no additional cost for the winter assessments. The cost per class or for the school depends on enrollment. As with any annual cost, we will only renew if we believe we are getting value for our investment.

15. What would be a reason why a parent would want to remove MAPs results from our child's file before they transfer to another school? (as indicated on the blue sheet)

As a school, we value the data and believe your childs' next school would as well. Any MAP results shared from our school to another will be in paper form only. Some parents have expressed concern about data being shared for personal reasons.

16. Does the program give parents tools for home to further what they cover in future years?

There are tools for at-home use, which were previewed at the meeting:

- ➔ RIT to Resource – www.rittoresource.org
- ➔ Khan Academy link - http://support.nwea.org/node/19753
- ➔ Lexile: www.lexile.com
- ➔ South Washington County MAP Resources – Created by Minnesota teachers to help parents and teachers assist their students.
  MAP Math - http://www.sowashco.k12.mn.us/ro/pages/studentlinks/map/
  MAP Reading - http://www.sowashco.k12.mn.us/ro/pages/studentlinks/map/reading.htm

17. Once data is collected, what is the next step?

Reports are generated within 3-4 hours of students finishing their tests. Teachers go into their reports and start planning how to target instruction to the needs of their students. See other answers as to projected uses within our school.

18. Will the spring test results determine the students who will be in class together next year based on their level?

No. Classes are not created by level of performance and definitely not by ONE snapshot of a student at our school. MAP could be used to help identify 7-8th graders that are prepared to take on a faster pace in mathematics.