

Who's Accountability?

SHARED
ACCOUNTABILITY



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OWL

Hoo's Got Questions? Understanding Changes to the MAP Math Assessment

In this second issue we chat with Owl to help us understand changes that I am sure you have observed with RIT scores and percentiles on the MAP Mathematics assessment. It's not that students are not performing as well. Let's get some wisdom from Owl.

Q: Owl, why are my students performing worse on the MAP M assessment this year?

🦉 Great question! You might have noticed lower-than-expected scores this fall, but don't worry—it's not because students suddenly lost their math skills! NWEA made updates to how test questions are selected, called the Enhanced Item Selection Algorithm (EISA). This change impacted math scores slightly, with lower-than-usual fall results. However, NWEA found that scores tend to rebound by winter and spring, showing increased growth over time.

Q: What is MCPS doing about these score changes?

🦉 To make sure students are being evaluated fairly, the district is using NWEA's concordance tables to adjust fall MAP Math scores. This helps align scores with the previous version of the test, ensuring that placement decisions and other data-driven actions are based on a consistent measure. These scores are now available in Performance Matters.

Q: Will this impact course placements and program identification?

🦉 Yes, but in a way that supports students! We will use adjusted fall, winter, and spring MAP M scores to determine program eligibility and course placement. This aligns with NWEA's recommendation to use concordance tables for these decisions.

Q: How should schools use the updated MAP Growth results?

🦉 You're not alone in figuring this out! The Office of Shared Accountability, the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, and the Office of School Support and Improvement are teaming up to provide guidance on how to use these results for instruction. Stay tuned for updates and support!

Q: Will the concordance table be used next year?

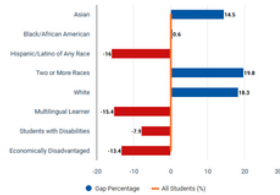
🦉 Maybe! NWEA is conducting more research in early 2025, and we will follow their recommendations. We'll keep you posted as we learn more.

Keep those questions coming—data changes can feel tricky, but together, we'll make sense of it all!

Owl x

From the Director's Desk

In our last issue, we introduced the importance of educational equity and Maryland's new *Measure of Equity*. This month, we dive deeper with insights from a recently prepared research brief, Educational Equity in MCPS: Exploration of Performance in the Maryland School Report Card.





What is Educational Equity?


Educational equity means ensuring that race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or any other sociocultural factor does not predict student success. It involves eliminating disparities in academic achievement, dismantling systemic barriers, and fostering inclusive environments where every student has access to high expectations, cultural competence, and meaningful support.

Key Findings from the Research Brief

The research brief examines performance across student groups using Maryland's equity measure, highlighting critical gaps in student achievement. Key takeaways include:

 **Achievement Gaps Persist** – Data from the Maryland School Report Card show that gaps remain significant, particularly for Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Multilingual Learners, and Students with disabilities.

 **Measuring Equity** – The state's measure compares student groups' performance to their peers, identifying areas where additional support is needed. For example, the performance of Asian students on the Maryland School Report Card is compared to the performance of all other students not identified as Asian.

 **Actionable Steps** – The report provides guiding questions to help schools analyze data, uncover root causes, and take strategic action to close gaps.

Understanding and addressing these gaps is essential to creating an equitable learning environment. Stay tuned for future issues, where we'll explore strategies to turn insights into action!

In this issue you can expect:

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Insights on Accountability with *Dr. Carla McNeal*



Carla McNeal, Ed.D.
Principal, Hallie Wells Middle School

Welcome to *Insights on Accountability*, a monthly feature where we sit down with district leaders to explore how accountability and data-driven decision-making shape our school district. Each month, we'll hear from a different guest, sharing their insights on fostering a culture of continuous improvement and equity.

This month, we are speaking with the strategic, inspirational, and visionary principal of Hallie Wells Middle School. When learning Dr. McNeal was our spotlight this month, Dr. Taylor said, she's "a perfect example of a newish principal knocking it out the park. She's killing it!" Read on to learn how she leverages data in her school to support their earning 4 stars on the Maryland School Report Card.

What inspired you to make data a central focus in decision-making at your school?

Initially, I was inspired to look deeper when I noticed disparities in student performance and proficiency between the multiple assessment measures. It appeared that students' classroom grades were high, but performance on MAP and MCAP did not match. We engaged in an RCA [Root Cause Analysis] to determine why and found that we needed to focus more on first instruction and less on reteaching and reassessment. We also needed to engage with and deliver the curricula to students as designed in order to ensure our students had access to standards-based instruction. From there, our focus on improved student outcomes continued and drove us to focus on data driven decision making in other ways. Using current relevant data often and consistently helps us to identify students who need extra support before they fall too far behind. By analyzing data, our teachers can adapt the teaching strategies they use with our students.

Can you share a specific example of how data has positively impacted student outcomes or improved a school process?

We have weekly ACT meetings (administrator, counselor, and team leader) where the team looks at a variety of different data points to identify students who are struggling whether behaviorally or academically. These data points include referrals, attendance, Ds/Es, and any abnormal slides in grades that are unexplainable. We take the outcomes of these ACT discussions to our grade-level teams to discuss different strategies that teachers may want to use with these students.

Additionally, we used MCAP strands to identify areas of need in Math and English. We pulled specific strands that students struggled with so that all teachers can focus on some of the specific skills needed for students to be successful in these areas.

Focusing on both the well-being and academic success of students has allowed us to be very strategic and laser-focused in our approach to improving learning outcomes for students. To lead with the standards and students' grasp of the standards will be a regular component of our data review process as it was very eye-opening for us.

How do you engage your staff and ensure they feel confident and empowered to use data effectively?

As principal, I clearly communicate how data insights contribute to our school's goals and how individual contributions make a difference. We encourage our content specialists to work with their department members during cohort and PLC planning to review multiple data sources that are available in Performance Matters Unify and the student dashboard. We utilize data to develop our weekly Professional Learning sessions so teachers can become more comfortable and knowledgeable with data. We promote data literacy during this time by providing resources to help staff understand data concepts to include analyses and interpretation. We encourage them to ask questions and acknowledge what they notice in the data that may give them pause

What challenges have you encountered in building a data-driven culture, and how have you addressed them?

Data has to be recent and relevant for it to be most effective. We often have lagging data which doesn't always help. So teachers must be comfortable collecting data on their own or utilizing what is current and available so they can address student needs quickly.

Additionally, we have to build staff's capacity in engaging with the data and that starts with access. When addressing the needs of students who need the most support, we are looking to build an in-house data spreadsheet for next year that combines all of the data in one location so that they are easily accessible. I feel that once staff become more comfortable and know that they can find the data easily, that will remove some of the negative feelings sometimes associated with data and analysis.

What advice would you give to other school leaders looking to integrate data into their school's decision-making processes?


While "gut instincts" about student needs are often helpful, data is the only way to be sure that what your teachers are focused on will lead to improved student outcomes. Analyzing data can help teachers identify teaching strategies that are proven and professional learning can be tailored to areas where teachers need the most support.


Additionally, the utilization of data cannot be the onus of leadership. School leaders must impress upon any staff member involved with improving student outcomes the importance of leading with the data. School improvement goals tell us where we need to go. The implementation and application of data analysis is the vehicle we use to get there.




Wise Learning: Resources to Strengthen Your Data Skills

Who's ready to grow? *Whoo's Accountability* is here to help you build confidence in using data to drive student success! Whether you're looking to deepen your understanding of assessments, enhance your data literacy, or explore powerful tools like Performance Matters, our district offers a variety of professional learning supports.

 **Performance Matters Training** – Access on-demand and live training sessions to help you navigate and utilize Performance Matters effectively. Learn how to analyze student and school performance data, create custom reports, and make data-informed instructional decisions. Visit the Assessment and Data Management [Professional Development](#) page to get started!

 **State Assessments & Data Interpretation** – Need support understanding state assessments and student performance data? The Testing Team Supervisor, Donna Blaney, is available to help you interpret results and apply insights to instruction. [Contact the Testing Team Supervisor](#) for more details!

 **Building Data Literacy for Instructional Leadership** – Strengthen your school's or office's data-driven decision-making with customized professional learning for Instructional Leadership Teams and Core Teams. Contact the Director of Shared Accountability, [Dr. Kecia L. Addison](#), to schedule a session designed to enhance your team's skills in data analysis and strategic action planning.

Stay curious, keep learning, and remember—wise educators make wise decisions with data!

Thank you for reading!

