Westfield Washington Schools, IN

Indiana district credits NWEA as key to academic performance and culture

The Westfield Washington School District is located above the state capitol in Hamilton County, Indiana. This largely affluent and high-performing community has a K–12 student population of 7,200 with six elementary schools feeding into a single middle school and then high school. Title 1 funding varies per building with some schools between eight and 11 percent and others around 22 percent.

MAP Growth assessments define a district's academic culture

Located in the fastest-growing county in Indiana since 2005, the district has been challenged to reconfigure schools annually to accommodate expansion. They credit NWEA®, a partner in helping kids learn since 2001, as a primary stabilizing force amidst constant change.

Cindy Keever, Director of Student Support, explains, "Thanks to NWEA's adaptive MAP® Growth™ assessments, our principals and teachers understand how to measure growth and support our students in reaching their potential. Because teachers are invested in and truly value the student evaluation measure that MAP Growth testing provides, these good practices are used consistently across the district, from year to year. In fact, they have become our culture."

Since NWEA evaluation practices have become an embedded, integrated system of evaluating, understanding, and educating throughout the past decade, Westfield Washington School educators feel confident about their ability to understand where students are in their learning process, no matter how their buildings, classrooms, or instructional groupings are reconfigured over time.

Why NWEA is the assessment of choice in preparing for ISTEP+

In Westfield Washington Schools, 79 to 87 percent of students pass ISTEP+ every year. Because Acuity is designed to serve a do-not-pass population, it does not help identify or address the growth needs of the sizable student population that is passing.

In contrast, NWEA's equal-interval scale score is a continuum that aligns to the district's K-8 academic standards. The district uses MAP Growth data to evaluate quartiles starting in 2nd grade—and to understand and manage student growth on a continuum throughout their education. Using NWEA predictability tables, the district can project the likelihood of which students will pass ISTEP+ and which will need intervention. At the same time, MAP Growth data enables them to recognize and address the growth needs of the large majority of passing students over time so that they can be challenged appropriately to optimize their learning.

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Making the NWEA growth model a shared value

How did MAP Growth data come to be central to the culture of learning in Westfield Washington Schools? The district made a firm commitment to providing professional learning for teachers and administrators, to help all become more sophisticated users of data. To this end, they have taken all the Professional Learning (PL) workshops offered by NWEA and continue to deepen this practice. They also created buy-in for the NWEA growth model by making sure it was—and continues to be—completely visible to its entire learning community. Every student, teacher, and parent understands that MAP Growth data shows how kids are growing—and that each student knows where he or she can progress further.

To get families invested in data, principals hold NWEA focus nights where they introduce the MAP Growth test—its usage and the reports that come from it. Then, teachers send home growth reports three times per year, and every parent-teacher conference includes a review of a student's MAP Growth report. Students, too, have complete ownership of their growth evaluation. They understand the purpose of testing, and they are excited about striving to meet their growth targets.

Keever believes that this shared appreciation for MAP Growth data even helped her district win a referendum, when many other districts lost theirs. "By providing NWEA data three times per year showing how your kids are growing—that helped us win the referendum. It has helped us build a trust base with our families. They have tangible evidence that their children are learning every day when they come to school. It gives them peace of mind."

Using measurement to drive performance

Westfield Washington sets district and building-level scorecards—and measures three times per year—based on what they value most: growth as reflected and reported by MAP Growth. For example, they set a target that students in grades 2–8 would be at the 90th percentile of meeting growth targets across all grade levels and at the district level. Based on the number of subjects evaluated, there were 21 opportunities to meet that growth target. At the outset, the district met this goal in one of 21 areas. Today, with the support of teachers focused on understanding and empowering student growth, they're at 14 of 21 areas.

Preparing students to be successful for the rest of their lives

Westfield Washington is exploring ways to take its commitment to academic outcomes even farther in the next five years. Adapting its extensive knowledge of MAP Growth data to explore how strong growth in K–8 prepares a student for the rigor of high school—and then college—the district is finding a strong correlation between higher-mean 8th grade RITs and higher PSAT and SAT scores. This confirms the district's belief that MAP Growth can help shape students into lifelong learners, preparing them to maximize opportunities in college, careers, and beyond.

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District Snapshot

WESTFIELD, IN

K–12TH GRADE STUDENTS
7,188

PRODUCT IMPLEMENTATION
IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH IN
2001

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Cindy Keever, Director of student support
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