

West Allis—West Milwaukee School District, WI



Using MAP Growth to support personalized learning

For over a century, schools in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District had offered a traditional educational experience, with teachers focused on helping all students master the same curriculum at the same pace. Starting in 2011, the district implemented a new approach that would transform the academic experience for every student and boost their individual success. Central to this effort is the district's use of MAP®Growth™ and MAP Growth K-2.

The shift at West Allis-West Milwaukee was toward a personalized learning model called Next Generation Learning (NxGL). In 2011, at four of the district's K-5 elementary schools, students were placed in multi-age cohorts, and teachers began working together in interdisciplinary teams to serve students' individual learning needs. From the start, MAP Growth test scores were used to gauge individual student growth, and to highlight their areas of strength and opportunity.

With the NxGL dynamic, students may be arranged in groups of first through third graders. Those students will stay in a group of 54 students with three teachers for a period of three years, with all teachers working directly with every student. Johnna Noll, the district's director of

instructional services, says, "They work on personalized learning plans with each student. That's where the MAP Growth data are a key component in terms of looking at the academic needs of the student."

The personalized learning program has expanded each year at West Allis-West Milwaukee. Intermediate schools within the district are transitioning to a combined sixth, seventh, and eighth grade multi-age arrangement.

District high schools use the same basic model, with 125 students in a group, and four core academic teachers for ELA, science, social studies, and math, and a reading support teacher for intervention. "Those five core teachers work together with those 125 students in an interdisciplinary fashion," Noll explains. "They don't follow the traditional bell schedule."

Every student in the NxGL program has a personalized learning plan based on competencies, and MAP Growth data are used to formulate that plan. "The MAP Growth data help us get that baseline point," Noll says. "From there, we're tracking the kids from year to year."

For every grade, from K through 12, personalized learning is based on the same six pillars:

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Graduates have the essential skills to succeed at the next level.

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Learning environments are varied and flexible to accommodate the needs of learners.

COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRESSION

Learners demonstrate evidence of deep learning along a continuum based on Common Core Standards.

STUDENT VOICE IN LEARNING

Learners have significant influence in co-designing their education through goal setting and personal learning paths.

21ST CENTURY SKILL SET

Students will collaborate, communicate, think critically, and problem-solve.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Meaningful relationships with parents and community provide contributions to support student success.

After three and a half years, scalability is happening at a rapid rate. “We have 240 teachers who were either full next generation teachers or launching for next year,” says Paula Kaiser, the district’s Next Generation Learning coordinator. Today all elementary and intermediate schools in the district—14 schools in all—have NxGL programs. 700 high school students are participating, and from an initial group of 34 teachers, 240 are now training actively in NxGL techniques.

Data from the district’s MAP Growth tests are a key driver for expanding the program. In the 2012-13 school year, students in the district’s personalized learning classrooms outperformed all students in reading and math by over 30%. Districtwide, the percentage of overall growth was 199% in reading and 153% in math.

Central to the success, Kaiser notes, is their commitment to incorporating student voice. “While we analyze the data from MAP Growth, we talk to students and ask, ‘What do you know about yourself as a learner? Where do you feel like you need to go?’ Then we set goals with the kids, where they say, ‘Here’s what I would like to do next.’ When they’re able to have a choice, we offer that choice, so they really own that learning.” “MAP Growth really parallels well with competency-based content acquisition,” adds Noll. “So we can recognize where each student is and move them forward.”



District Snapshot

MILWAUKEE, WI



K-12 STUDENTS

10,000

PRODUCT USE

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH, MAP GROWTH K-2, AND MAP SCIENCE IN

2006

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