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**Board Report**  
School-Wide

### From the Senior School Director's Desk

Dr. E. Ward-Jackson

The first quarter of distance learning in the 2020-21 school year is drawing to a close, and the strong remote launch to the school year that we celebrated just weeks ago has been maintained. We have now entered the month of “October.” Often Educators call October a “no-no” word, as it is referenced as a month to skate through as quickly as possible. Many who have studied the month of October in Education have coined the season as the “October Slump” or the “October Blues.” Extensive research has been done on this phenomenon. Educationalist, Adam Brown, wrote an article for ASCD that proposed a way to avoid the “slump.” The first strategy is to set explicit classroom goals, then to provide multiple opportunities for reflection, and finally to give permission for folks to take advantage of weekends for rest and restoration. These three items may seem simple, but the intentional implementation of these strategies over the past several years, in our community, had proven to be highly valuable amidst its simplicity. This year, however, things are different: Around the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September, I found myself making a sharp pivot in response to happenings that were bubbling up within the community—it felt like October. Having never experienced the “October Slump” during a pandemic, we did not quite know what to expect. No one can *fully* anticipate the ebbs and flows of a school year's characteristics in such conditions. Nevertheless, what I do know is how to be responsive to the needs of our community, and how to support our community through difficult seasons. Over the past several weeks, response has looked like:

- 1) Having ***discussions*** with Senior Leaders about self-care and making room for opportunities to share ideas and stories amongst peer leaders.
- 2) Increasing ***communication*** and reminding our faculty and staff to be kind to themselves, flexible with their colleagues, and to ask for support when needed.
- 3) Supporting ***high-level parent meetings***, empathizing with the challenges of supporting distance learning for multiple children at home (and in some cases multiple students with special needs), and working to liaise toward support and resolve.
- 4) Conducting ***virtual home visits*** with bereaving families.
- 5) ***Partnering and collaborating*** tightly with teacher leaders and new administrative leadership roles to effectively change-manage challenges that are exacerbated by working remotely.
- 6) Finding ways to ***celebrate wins, acknowledge successes and growth***, and be as ***present*** and available as possible .

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My intent behind explicitly acknowledging the aforementioned is to highlight some of the efforts taken to foster buoyancy, accountability, and excellence within our community when the day-to-day seems heaviest, overwhelming, and tough. Faculty, administration, and staff are admittedly and noticeably exhausted, overwhelmed, and there are also some substantial health and bereavement associated stressors, but those distresses can be, and often are, abated by a strong sense of community, authentic relationships, excitement about the future of our Wave-Makers, and a deep sense of connection and dedication to our organization as a whole. However, in a time of global pandemic, while facing heightened civil unrest and racial injustice, experiencing the October Blues, AND managing change associated with our new school model, it is critically important to make explicit the conditions and opportunities that support building fortitude to weather the challenging season. That is what we are doing. We are building fortitude while scaling deep and cultivating our community, with fervor and intention, knowing that our ability to weather and thrive through these coming weeks will determine how well we pace through the rest of the school year and any unknowns associated with these unprecedented times.

There is a place that brings consistent joy, reminders of our “why,” and confirmation of the value associated with thriving through challenging times, and that place is within the braided resilience, growth and achievement of our Wave-Makers and the fulfillment of our mission. Like the expectations set with our leaders and teachers, today's Board Report will center on our Wave-Makers' experiences at eight weeks into the virtual school year. Specifically, our Senior Director of Academic Instruction and her team will lead us through what instruction and achievement looks like for some of our most critical student learners, as well as for our most targeted content area for improvement. We will define and explore learning loss, unfinished learning, as well as acceleration in the era of distance learning, from the lens of Math, Intervention, and English Language Development.

### Teaching and Learning

Caitlin Shelburne

#### What?

Education researchers across the country and world are discussing *Learning Loss* due to Distance Learning. School administrators, teachers and curriculum directors are asking: How do we address learning loss in our school community? The state has set guidelines and recommendations that encourage diagnostic testing and strategic intervention to support the district's approach to this question. Interestingly enough, this conversation is not unlike the conversation we have every year in regards to summer slide. *However, we know that learning during Covid presents a unique set of challenges.* We anticipate the national narrative around learning loss to

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eventually include “unfinished learning” and “acceleration”. At Making Waves, our language around learning loss, unfinished learning and acceleration strategically encourages discussion and planning specific to the challenges experienced in remote learning.

- **Learning Loss:** Standards and skills that were taught, learned and *lost* due to summer vacation, and the strain of remote learning.
- **Unfinished Learning:** Standards and Skills that we intentionally did not teach due to the slower pace of learning during Remote Learning last spring.
- **Acceleration:** Future standards and skills that we expose our students to in order to push their learning forward.

### So What?

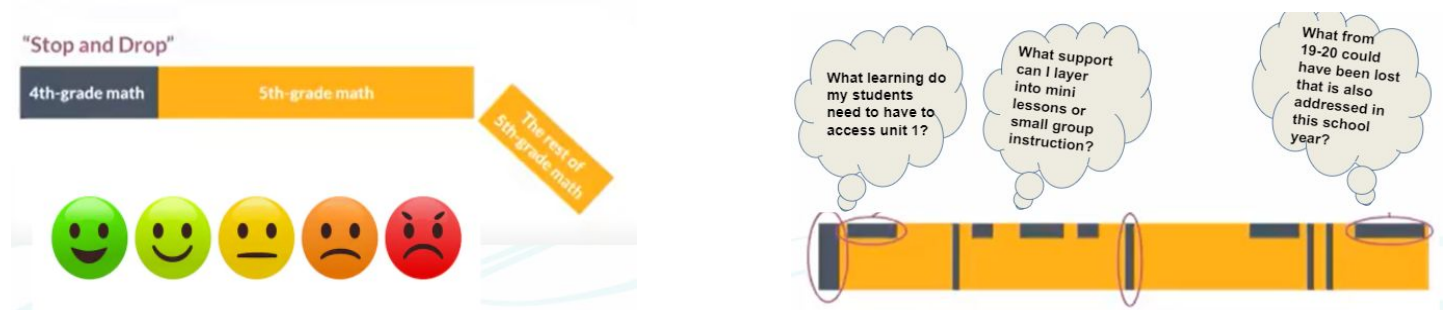
Our team has leveraged our human capital and specific resources to align our practices and programs with the aim of ensuring that our Distance Learning program not only addresses the learning needs of our students but pushes them to deeper understanding. Programmatically, we are utilizing the following internal and external partnerships to inform and guide our work.

Area	Purpose	Participants
<b>Assessments</b> -IXL and STAR -Achievement Network & IAB Testing	Provide diagnostic & interim testing.	Grades 5-12 Teachers and Students
<b>Professional Learning</b> -Achievement Network -Data Wise	Coaching on teacher development, data cycles and instructional leadership	-Directors of Academic Instruction -Director of Academic Support Services -Director of SPED; ELD Coordinator -Director of Applied Technology -Teacher Leaders

Our Academic Instruction Team has worked with our larger community to launch this work starting in August PD. In the seven and a half weeks of school, we have administered Diagnostic Tests in both Math and ELA and have used the data to inform our intervention groups, our Year at a Glance pacing guides and unit/lesson plans. As seen in the diagrams below, we lead with a very specific approach to using Diagnostic Data to inform instruction, rather than drive it. We know that giving our students access to grade level standards is critical for their success in future grade levels and life. As such, we planned our curriculum pacing guides to reflect the scope of grade level standards (orange) and then embedded small or whole group lessons based on what the

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data tells us students still need to master to access grade level content. Moving forward, we plan to share this data with our families during advisory family conferences coming up at the end of the October. Our Academic Instruction Team engages in critical conversations pertaining to our vision, approach and actual implementation. We implement frameworks from professional development facilitated through our Central Office including the Management Center Training and Facilitative Leadership. We have leaders of all functional areas connected to instruction on one team, working towards the same goals.



### Now What?

Now that our approach is launched and understood, it is time to monitor fidelity and continue to provide coaching for all community members. We plan to track GPA data and diagnostic data, as well as administer our first interim assessment in November as a checkpoint in grade level standards mastery. Our systems are launched and now it is about teaming to tighten instructional practices across departments and grade levels by honing in to professional learning for interventionists, faculty, coordinators and directors. Our work has just begun.

### Math

Priscilla Mendez, Director of Academic Instruction (Math/Science/Visual & Performing Arts)

### What?

Math is a focal point across MWA, the state and the nation. As such, we have re-aligned our instructional teams and the work we intend to accomplish in pursuit of math excellence across MWA. The next step in this process was to adopt a diagnostic and instructional tool that allowed us to:

- be **responsive** to student needs
- **build out** support systems
- **enhance relevance** of mathematical concepts
- **promote understanding** of mathematics language
- **strengthen** teacher practices

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During August PD, we leveraged the expertise of an *IXL* representative, who led a professional development session outlining ways to utilize the platform as a diagnostic tool as well as an instructional resource. Before the diagnostic week, during a Friday PD session, we reviewed, as a team, how to launch the *IXL* platform in a cohesive, strong, and unified way with students. During our diagnostic week, students “stepped into the arena” and were able to receive both targeted overall levels as well as individual strand levels of the tool. Each level refers to the grade that most closely aligns with their performance (i.e. 800=8th Grade).



**92%** of middle school students **have completed the diagnostic**. Another 6% of students are active on the platform and have entered the arena, answered math questions, etc. A remaining 2% of students appear to be inactive on *IXL* with no documented activity as of yet.

**87%** of upper school students **have completed the diagnostic**. An additional 2% of students are active on the platform and have entered the arena, answered math questions, etc. A remaining 11% of students appear to be inactive on *IXL* with no documented activity as of yet.

For students who were unable to complete the diagnostic during the dedicated testing window for various reasons, supports were put into place:

- phone calls home
- office hours for students to complete diagnostic
- advisory time dedicated to supporting advisees in the completion of the diagnostic
- teachers discussing students during content team meetings to determine additional

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messaging/supports to put in place

We are catching them up in small increments in their math classes.

### **So What?**

The diagnostic data received from the *IXL* platform has been integral in data conversations across the math, science, and visual & performing arts departments. Teachers were able to share observations and wonderings with colleagues across departments and grade levels. The discussions then transitioned to content team specific collaboration regarding ways to incorporate *IXL* “trouble spots” into their current unit plans. These were shared out to discuss how targeted and just-in-time interventions can be incorporated in all classrooms, not just math.

In order to ground ourselves in the “all-in” approach, we needed to make agreements regarding curricular and instructional pacing. While the “stop and drop” method of simply re-teaching prior year’s content before starting grade level work may seem appropriate and necessary, especially given the inevitable learning loss and unfinished learning that has occurred during the school closures and pandemic, it has been shown to impede access to current grade level learning.

By planning targeted lessons or supports that are directly connected to the prerequisite skills/knowledge students must have in order to access grade-level content, teachers can plan engaging lessons and units that are rigorous but remain equitable and accessible for all. This approach allows us to address unfinished learning and learning loss, but more importantly, acceleration. In order to ensure students can maximize learning, teachers must be hyper-focused on the coherence mapping of standards. *IXL* is a pivotal tool that can be leveraged in order to identify gaps in student understanding as well as a roadmap for how to sure up those gaps.

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### Now What?

In order to ensure the *IXL* platform is utilized to support our approach to learning, there will be a continuation of trainings and “data dives” that occur throughout the school year. Additionally, we have multiple diagnostic weeks embedded in the master calendar to ensure real-time data is continuously collected and acted upon by students, families and faculty.

Additionally, *IXL* triangulated with *PowerSchool*, *ANet* and *IAB* data will lead to ongoing data conversations that reinforce the need for intentional and data-informed shifts in lesson, unit, and yearly plans as well as pacing. Data conversations will continue to center around student performance, unfinished learning, and most importantly grade-level rigor. Coaching on data conversation facilitation will occur for teacher leaders in partnership with our Director of Data & Assessment. My own professional development in data-informed decision making to mitigate existing achievement gaps through the *edX Data Wise* course, as well as targeted *ANet* coaching regarding high-quality math tasks, will work in tandem to ensure I am effectively implementing and assessing the comprehensive vision and plan to improve student outcomes.



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### Intervention

Micah Stilwell - Director of Academic Support Services

#### What?

The academic supports provided to Wave-Makers by the Intervention Services Team are designed to provide supplemental (Tier 2) or targeted and intensive (Tier 3) programming for students requiring academic intervention, *in addition to and beyond* the Tier 1-3 instructional supports provided to Wave-Makers during both synchronous and asynchronous instruction. As such, the Intervention Services team collaborates closely with both content and grade level teams to ensure student groupings and instructional priorities support the real-time and anticipated academic needs of Wave-Makers.

In order to support the team's ability to effectively engage in such dynamic work, the Intervention Services Team participates in biweekly, intervention-specific, math professional development led by Gail Standiford, RTF, Inc. math coach. The team is scheduled to begin an English Language Arts professional development series, facilitated by Kassandre Harper-Cotton, Director of Academic Instruction for Humanities to correlate with the launch of ELA intervention.

#### So What?

In response to the increased demand for instructional support in the spring, the Intervention Services Team restructured the way services are provided to students during distance learning. Interventionists shifted from case-managing small groups of students toward co-teaching mini lessons, based on prerequisite skills, during asynchronous learning time and hosting math workshops for high priority students at the end of the school day.

During distance learning, the Intervention Services team will use the following indicators to prioritize students to participate in small group math and ELA workshops.

One outcome of the indicators used to prioritize students for support was the department's ability to explicitly highlight and respond to the increased correlation between our emerging 7th and 8th grade English Language Learners and an increased need for math support (shown below).

#### Students Prioritized for Intervention Services during DL

English Language Learners  
ELD Proficiency Band: Emerging (ELPAC Level 1-2)

Black/African American Students  
MS: S2 GPA below a 2.0 GPA (AY19/20)  
US: All Black/African American Students

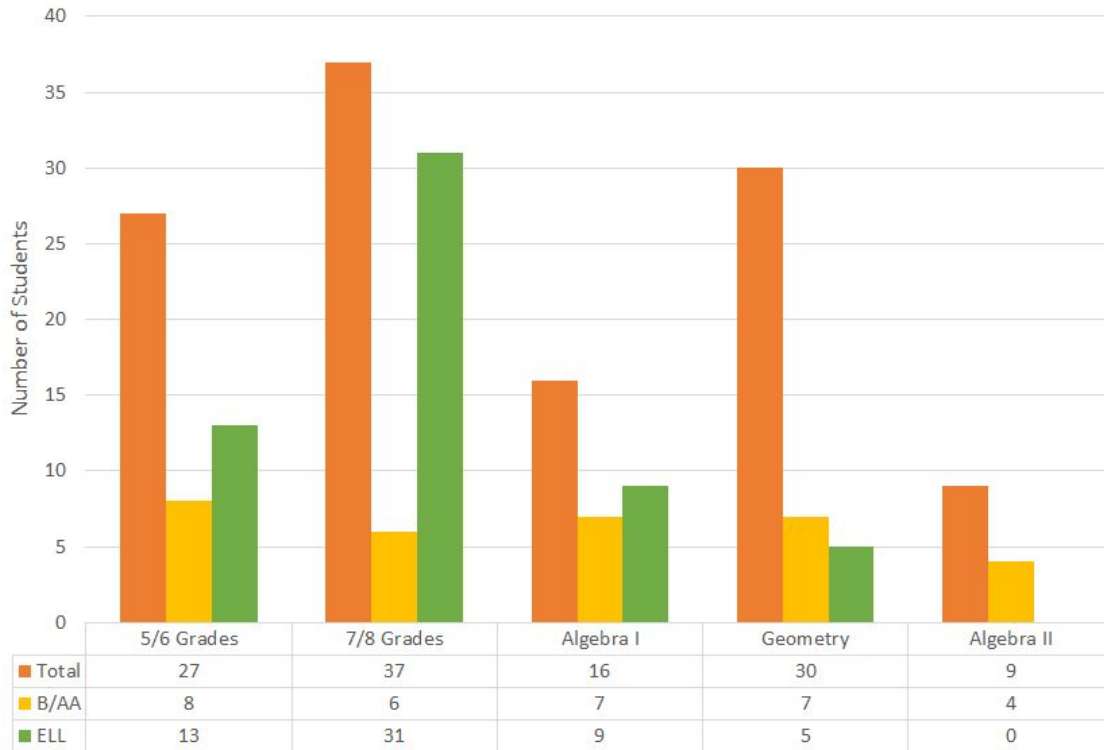
STAR Reading score 3+ years behind current GL (ELA only)

Summer credit recovery\* for ELA or math (US only)  
\*Rising 9th criteria: AY19/20 T3 ELA/math and failed S2

Dual identified for ELA/math intervention AY19/20 (MS only)

### Q1 Math Intervention Workshop Enrollment

Student Demographic Breakdown

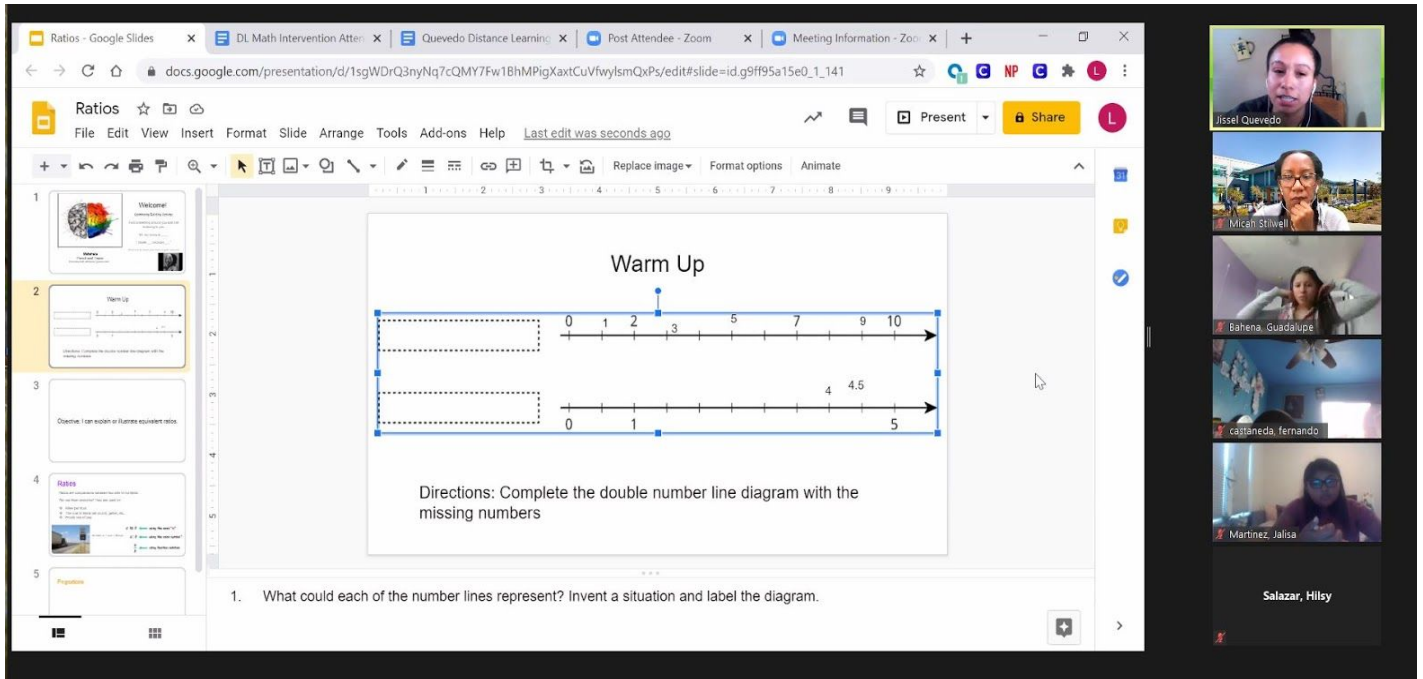


The provided graph illustrates the demographic breakdown of students enrolled in Quarter 1 Intervention Services math workshops. The Intervention Services team uses this demographic data to inform our day to day instructional planning and prioritize additional professional development. For example, the middle school Interventionists will work closely with Mr. Garcia, ELD Coordinator, to ensure lessons provide our English Language Learners ample opportunity to unpack and make meaning of content specific vocabulary.

The Intervention Services scope and sequence is designed to provide targeted and timely support to address the *unfinished learning* Wave-Makers have already experienced and to mitigate additional *learning loss* due to the current instructional landscape. Specifically, our instructional priorities for the quarter are based on student diagnostic data, the math/ELA coherence map, and historical student performance trends.

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## Now What?



[screenshot of a 7th/8th grade math intervention session in Zoom]

### Launch English Language Arts Tier 2 Intervention (Q2)

Targeted mini lessons during the asynchronous block, based on instructional priorities and real-time student data including formative assessments, observations, and teacher requests

### Launch English Language Arts Tier 3 Intervention (Q2)

Intensive content based English workshops designed to build the prerequisite skills required to access Grade Level texts.

Given  $m\angle ABC = 50^\circ$   
 $m\angle BCA = 42^\circ$

$\angle A + \angle B + \angle C = ? 180^\circ$  supplementary  
 $\angle A + 50^\circ + 42^\circ = 180^\circ$

[screenshot of a geometry intervention session in Zoom]

### Expanded Math Tier 2 Intervention (Q2)

Targeted mini lessons during the asynchronous block, based on instructional priorities and real-time student data which include formative assessments, observations, and teacher requests.

### Refine Math Tier 3 Intervention (Q2)

Intensive content based English workshops designed to build prerequisite skills required to access the priority instructional content.

Continue collaborating with content and grade level teams to ensure tight alignment between our instructional pacing and real-time learning needs. Interventionists will continue to:

- participate in weekly 5th-12th grade observations during synchronous instruction
- attend grade level, math and humanities team meetings
- participate in all data sessions

### English Language Development

Aurelio Garcia- ELD Coordinator

#### What?

This year the ELD Department works directly under Academic Support Services. This shift has allowed for stronger collaboration, and direct support with our English Learners (EL) school-wide. The aligned system benefits our ELs by providing a comprehensive and holistic support to address academic learning needs. This is especially important to address the *learning loss* and *unfinished learning* during distance learning for our EL students. Looking through the frame of *unfinished learning*, *learning loss* and *acceleration* below is where our current ELs stood on the first day of school:

- **Unfinished Learning** - Our EL students did not receive a full years' worth of designated ELD time. The standards and skills taught during those times were lost due to the constraints of distance learning. ELs did not have an opportunity to learn any content or any ELD standards that were not taught during the spring.
- **Learning Loss** - Prior to distance learning, students were engaged in preparing for the ELPAC and SBAC while continuing to progress on core academic content standards and ELD standards. With the school closure, our ELs lost those opportunities. The support given differed during the school closure and was challenging to check for progress of standards, identify what students learned, or spiral in concepts to their lessons. Summative testing, like the ELPAC and SBAC, were not administered. Due to this, we were not able to accurately assess what our ELs mastered.
- **Acceleration** - For our ELs, it is imperative that they have more opportunities to practice their English development. This means developing our teachers to have a greater understanding of the ELD standards. Teacher collaboration is needed to identify best practices during distance learning. The use and practices of critical skills help our students meet core standards and ELD standards. Progress monitoring while triangulating different data sets and analyzing student work will be instrumental.

#### So What?

Using the data for this school year, we are adjusting our current practices to ensure our faculty are in a position to boost student learning. Included below is data for demographics, attendance, GPA, *STAR* and *IXL* Assessments, and Current Enrollment of ELs:

- **Enrollment:** We have 228 (about 34%) English Learners in the middle school and 66 (about 16%) English Learners in the upper school. About 27% ELs school-wide.

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- Attendance and GPA:**

MWA ELD Students	Attendance Rates Monday-Thursday	Attendance Rates Friday	GPA Q1
MS	98.6%	83.0%	1.45
US	95.4%	79.2%	1.58

- Diagnostic Data:** When reading *IXL* math levels, the leading number indicates grade level. For example 450 means that a student has performed between a 4th and 5th grade level in mathematics.

Diagnostic Data 20/21		
MWA ELD Students	STAR Reading Level Average	IXL Math Level Average
5 <sup>th</sup>	3.6	310
6 <sup>th</sup>	3.5	340
7 <sup>th</sup>	3.6	370
8 <sup>th</sup>	4.8	450
9 <sup>th</sup>	4.8	420
10 <sup>th</sup>	5.2	548
11 <sup>th</sup>	4.4	580
12 <sup>th</sup>	5.9	520

The STAR diagnostic data is showing that at the start of this school year our ELs are reading significantly below grade level. This exemplifies the need for additional reading intervention support and confirms the loss of learning that may have taken place during the school closures.

The *IXL* data reflects similar to the STAR data where our ELs math skills have been assessed to be significantly below grade level. Again, the ELs need additional math support and the loss of learning may also have affected math development.

The data shows that our ELs are attending classes. However several areas of challenge have occurred prior to the first day of school that have persisted and may be affecting current academic progress:

- Internet/wifi access
- Technical issues related to online learning(submitting work online and on time)
- Translation barriers

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- Mental and physical health needs
- Student and family engagement with remote learning

We have taken steps to understand the unique challenges our ELs have experienced and we are continuing to support instruction, holistic services and family engagement. We are consistently collaborating with all stakeholders to meet our ELs needs and provide the necessary information to our families for academic success.

### **Now What?**

Looking at the current data, support for our ELs will require a school-wide effort. Our faculty have been providing rigorous lessons, applying ELD standards in tandem with core standards during synchronous times, and additional support during asynchronous time. Further collaboration must occur to accelerate our ELs student learning. This will require grade level and content level collaboration with additional support from the DAIs, Intervention Services Team, and the Academic Support Team. Vertical alignment within both divisions will be valuable in terms of long range support for our LTELS and matriculating ELs to the Upper School. In support of mental health support, collaboration with the holistic team is planned.

The ELD department is working with the Intervention Services Team, to develop a schedule for all ELs to have designated ELD time within our distance-learning model. This is a great opportunity to involve humanities teachers and bring in our STEM teachers to provide additional designated ELD support. Additional PD is planned for all ELD teachers, supporting interventionists and the ELD coordinator. Coaching and observational cycles will take place throughout the year to further support the development of our ELD teachers.

Parent engagement is essential to the success and acceleration of EL learning. Continuing communication with our parents is important for our students to accelerate their learning. Our monthly ELAC meetings have been supportive in providing information and eliciting recommendations and feedback in support of our ELs. Collaboration with teachers and parents will be ongoing to support student advocacy and inform parents how to check student progress.

We understand that this will take a collaborative and holistic effort. We are looking forward to supporting all our ELs.