

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Progress Monitoring Report (Grade 3 English Language Arts)

September 2022

Introduction – What is Being Monitored

The focus of this progress monitoring summary is Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) performance. The Board's Grade 3 ELA goal is to increase the percent of Black and Hispanic 3rd grade students combined who score at the College and Career Ready (CCR) level -- a Level 4 or 5 -- in English Language Arts (ELA) from **15.9%** in October 2021 to **50.0%** by October 2024. The target for the 2022-23 school year is **36.0%**.

Two (2) different metrics are shared in this monitoring report:

- Target College and Career Ready (CCR) Rates, and
- Actual College and Career Ready (CCR) Rates on the Grade 3 End-of-Grade (EOG) exam.

Results reported here are for students in the aggregate (all students), as well as for Black and Hispanic students combined.

It should be noted that results are not reported for 2019-20 school year. End-of-Year testing across the country was cancelled due to the pandemic. End-of-Grade tests were not administered. Consequently, there is a gap in reporting on Graph 1 below for the 2019-20 school year.

Evaluation of Current Performance

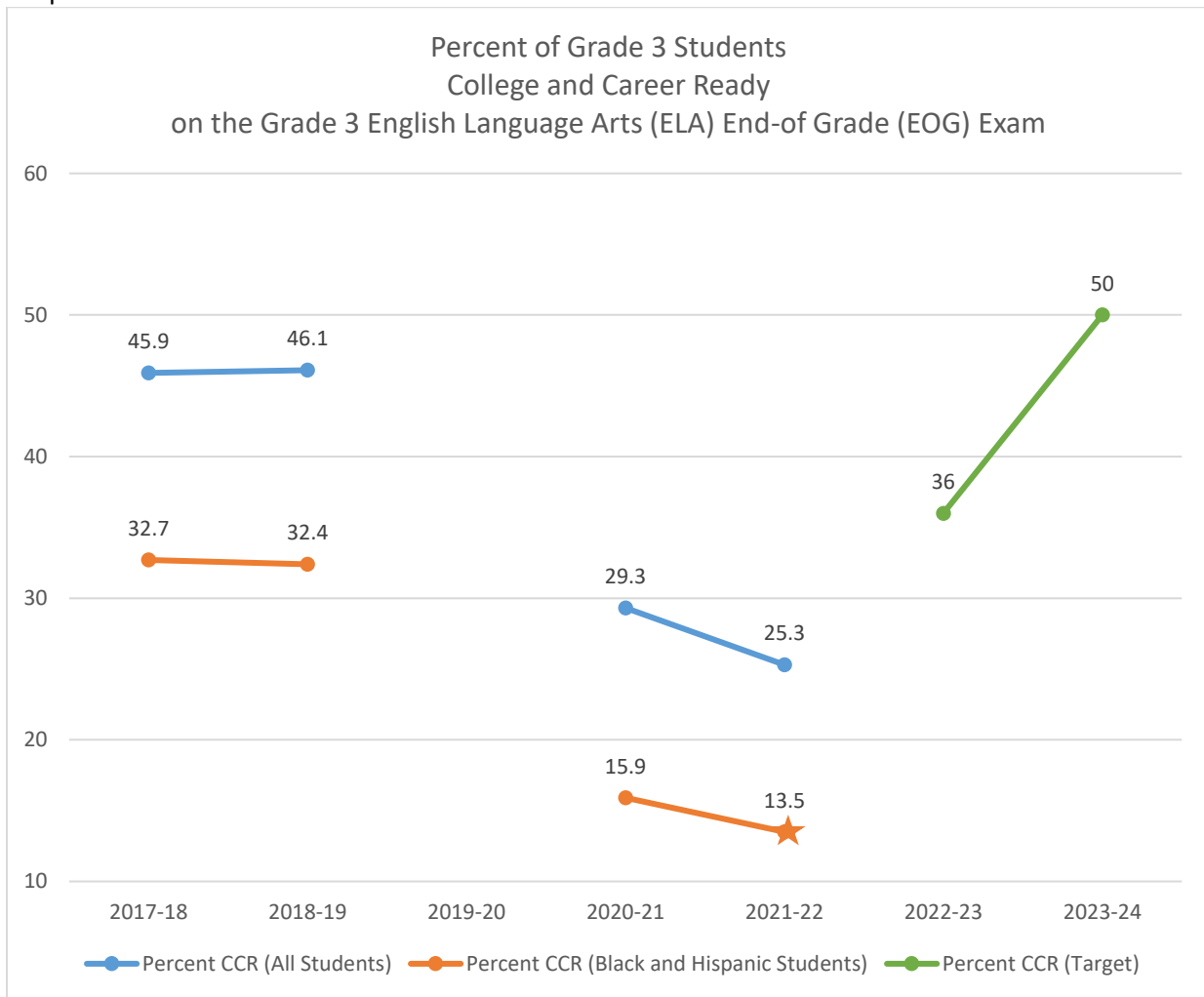
In 2021-22, **13.5%** of the Grade 3 Black and Hispanic students combined attained CCR on the Grade 3 ELA End-of-Grade exam. If that CCR rate does not increase dramatically this school year, we will be **Below Target**. At the conclusion of the 2021-22 school year, we were 1,563 students short of our 2022-23 year-end target.

Supporting Data

Our community, and thus the Board, has prioritized getting students College and Career Ready on End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) exams. That is the focus. Looking at the percentage of students Grade Level Proficiency (GLP) on these same assessments can provide insight into the district's progress toward goal. In 2021-22, the percentage of Grade 3 Black and Hispanic students combined scoring Grade Level Proficient on the Grade 3 ELA EOG exam increased 4.6 percentage points, rising from 24.5% to 29.1%. This increase can be attributed to both a lower percentage of Black and Hispanic students scoring Level 4, as well as a 4.6 percentage point decrease in the percent of students scoring Not Proficient.

Additional insight can be gained when examining Grade 3 ELA Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) exam performance. In 2020-21, 9.3% of Black and Hispanic 3rd graders scored CCR on the BOG exam, which was administered in September 2020. The year concluded with 15.9% of Black and Hispanic 3rd graders scoring CCR on the EOG exam, which was administered in May 2021, a difference of 6.6 percentage points. In 2021-22, BOG results revealed the severity of the impact of the pandemic on 3rd grade Black and Hispanic students on average. In 2021-22, **3.1%** of Black and Hispanic 3rd graders scored CCR on the BOG exam, which was administered in September 2021. The year concluded with 13.5% of Black and Hispanic 3rd graders scoring CCR on the EOG exam, which was administered in May 2022, a difference of 10.4 percentage points. These BOG and EOG results last school year reveal that a larger proportion of our Black and Hispanic 3rd graders had far to go to achieve CCR performance. Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) results this September will let us know the work before this year.

Graph 1.



Planned Next Steps

Strategies have been identified for the 2022-23 school year that, when enacted, will support the ability of CMS to achieve the goal outlined in this report. The strategies include:

- **English Language Arts (ELA) Core Instruction.** Second- and third-grade teachers leverage district curriculum to implement standards-aligned, culturally responsive instruction in an engaging, affirming and meaningful way, using current student data to inform teacher decisions.
- **Intervention:** Second- and third-grade students are screened to determine if they need interventions (academic, behavior, attendance). Black and Hispanic students in need of intervention will receive it.
- **Highly Effective Teachers:** Second- and third-grade students will have greater access to highly effective teachers.
- **Professional Development:** Targeted PD based on role, school needs and individual growth needs, which includes all second- and third-grade reading teachers, instructional leaders, school and district leaders is provided.

- **Social and Emotional Support:** Second and third grade students will be prioritized for SEL support.
- **Student Engagement:** Identify, prioritize, and direct resources to second and third grade students who have a history or current status of being chronically absent.

It should be noted that these strategies must be implemented with integrity and in concert with each other. Implementing some strategies without others will not produce intended results. Additionally, these strategies together represent fundamental components of ensuring a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for all CMS students.

Monitoring

To support the ability of CMS to effectively and efficiently monitor district progress toward achieving this goal and continuously improve, a comprehensive performance management system has been developed and is being enacted. Leading indicators have been identified to ensure the district's ability to know whether students are making adequate progress toward the goal. Additionally, metrics have been identified to ensure CMS' ability to know if: 1) strategies are being implemented, and 2) strategies are working. A district level monitoring cadence has been established for all performance management metrics.

Every CMS school leader is ensuring that every School Improvement Plan is explicitly aligned to the district goals and applicable in the localized school context. School principals are working with their learning communities to ensure that each school's School Improvement Plan includes: 1) goal-aligned strategies and 2) goal-aligned performance targets based on school-level student achievement.

Communication

Goal-aligned strategies and leading indicators were shared with all school principals, assistant principals, deans and central office leadership at the Summer Leadership Conference June 21, 2022. This same information was shared with school-based instructional leaders (roles including but not limited to academic facilitators, literacy facilitators, math facilitators, multi-classroom leaders, etc) at the Instructional Leader Conference on Aug 2, 2022. Direction regarding how to align the goal-aligned strategies with School Improvement Plans was shared with principals on Aug 2, 2022.

School Support

Learning community superintendents will support schools in implementing goal-aligned strategies and monitoring progress, leveraging and deploying central office support personnel in alignment with individual school needs. Goal-aligned professional learning will be offered across roles by the district, including use of a new Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) platform designed to leverage universal screener and other assessment data to help educators: 1) identify which students need what level of support, 2) understand why they need that support, 3) create support plans, 4) effectively monitor and report on student progress, and 5) efficiently manage the communication and collaboration the work demands. At the direction of and in collaboration with learning community superintendents, central office departments will address any operational barriers, identified by schools, that will hinder our ability to implement the strategies successfully.

School Bright Spots – Strategy in Action

In a review of Grade 3 ELA performance for Black and Hispanic students, bright spots were sought. Four criteria were used to identify bright spot schools: 1) Both Black and Hispanic subgroups had to see an increase in CCR rates from the previous school year, 2) Each subgroup had to have at least 15 students in Grade 3, 3)

Each subgroup had to increase at least 3 percentage points, and 4) Grade 3 students in the aggregate had to see an increase in CCR rates in ELA from the school previous year. Based on the above criteria, two schools were identified: Berewick Elementary and Paw Creek Elementary. A site visit or phone interview was conducted to learn what each school did to attain the gains demonstrated. Below are shared/common lessons from both elementary schools and their respective Learning Community Superintendents. Specifically, both Berewick and Paw Creek did the following:

1. *Taught the EL Curriculum with Integrity, Not Fidelity*

Both schools spoke to the need to adjust their approach to teaching the EL curriculum early on. They both chose to honor the principles embedded with the curriculum, but had to make changes to allow for their respective approaches to accelerate academic improvement.

2. *Cultivated a Culture of Caring*

A stated priority was creating a culture of safety and caring for students and adults. One school spoke directly to school-wide core values of learning, family and fun. That included student goal setting and celebrations, minimum discipline referrals in Grade 3, and a school focus on equity and anti-racism. Both principals stated a disdain for a “gotcha culture.” They wanted adults to be accountable, but unafraid to do what is right for kids.

3. *Invested Heavily in Teacher Capacity to Explicitly Teach Targeted Skills*

Both schools made a conscious and consistent investment in their teachers. Investments included the following:

- Provision of consistent teacher planning time. One school provided extended planning time (2-3 hours) during the school day after key assessment windows. Classroom coverage was provided by Teaching Assistants.
- Use of an explicit coaching model that utilized either a Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL) or an administrator. Coaching included a regular cadence of observation and feedback (at least every 6 weeks).
- Modeling of instructional practices in the classroom to accelerate instructional improvements.
- Creating a work environment where teachers can admit when they don’t know how to do something and ask for help.
- Support analyzing student performance data in grade-level meetings to inform instructional moves.
- High expectations for professional practice.

4. *Included Flexible Small Groups to Target Instruction as Part of Core Instruction*

Each school embedded small group instruction within daily literacy blocks 3-5 times a week to tailor instruction to students’ specific needs. Students were assigned to flexible small groups where there was a shared learning gap, so that students with common literacy needs could receive the targeted support they needed. One school spoke of weekly small group plans being required from teachers to maximize that small group time.

5. *Made Additional Time for Foundational Skills Instruction Every Week*

Each school supplemented their daily literacy block, which focused on grade-level instruction, with additional skills instruction. Specifically, each school described a robust process in which they provided a second set of small group support 3-5 times a week focused on foundational skills. Again, this was in addition to the daily literacy block and any small group instruction used there with a focus on grade-level standards. Each school built at least 30 additional minutes into their master schedules for the provision of skills-based small group instruction and/or

evidence-based interventions in the area of literacy (most frequently phonics). Targeting the specific literacy needs identified by various assessments (i.e., MAP assessments, mClass assessments, and microphase assessments), without taking away from vital core instructional time, was a vital strategic element.

6. *Utilized and Involved all Instructional Staff*

Both schools spoke explicitly about the involvement of classroom, EC and EL teachers as part of their small group support team. Each was deployed and involved in the process of supporting students. It was an all (instructional) hands on deck approach.

7. *Used the Additional Time Intentionally, Methodically Working to Ensure Students Got What They Needed as Soon as They Knew They Needed It*

Both schools closely monitored small group instruction, prioritized teacher preparation to provide small group instruction and/or interventions, and monitored student progress as part of their regular work. This included the regular review of: a) student assignments to flexible groups, b) the development and of small group plans, and c) the delivery of those plans through small group instruction aligned to the demonstrated needs of students.

8. *Instruction Was a Focus*

Both principals stated directly or indirectly that “instruction was [their] first priority.” Their respective Learning Community Superintendents spoke to the necessity of principal Instructional leadership to: a) create a shared vision, b) galvanize a team to operationalize that vision through systems, structures and procedures, and c) prioritize their time to do the work *with* teachers. One principal stated directly that “there are elements of this work you just can’t delegate.” Unstated was the confidence to take risks in service of student achievement. Neither principal spoke of philosophies or preferences, but focused on student needs. As one principal stated, “students guide all of our decisions.”

The faculty, staff and administrators at Berwick Elementary and Paw Creek Elementary are to be commended. The lessons learned from their gains will inform our strategic efforts moving forward to hopefully duplicate if not eclipse the gains they attained.

Items Needed from Board

Staff asks three things of the Board to support our pursuit of this Grade 3 ELA Goal:

1. Encourage timely **student enrollment** in school and supplemental programs such as Pre-Kindergarten, Extended Day and both out of school and in-school tutoring programs;
2. Advocate for programs and messaging in the community that encourage **student attendance** on a daily basis, reminding stakeholders that attendance requirements have been reinstated this school year;
3. Advocate with NCDPI staff and state legislators for the removal of **human resource barriers** to CMS’ ability to staff CMS schools with skilled teachers; and
4. Encourage the timely enrollment of students in Pre-Kindergarten programs such as the CMS program Bright Beginnings.