KEVIN B. UPTON – DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

OCTOBER 3, 2016

Lincoln Consolidated Schools

Curriculum Department Newsletter

UNDERSTANDING NWEA TEACHER REPORTS

Why is it important to know how to read my NWEA reports?

The whole purpose of giving the NWEA assessments is to receive data that you can use to make a difference for the students in your class. Teachers who can read and interpret their reports are better prepared to use the data to influence instruction, create flexible groupings, adjust time spent on certain topics, etc.

The goal is to have teachers use NWEA data any time instructional decisions are being made about changes in instructional methodology, placement of students into instructional programs, implementation of a new program, or textbook adoption. As you begin to understand the NWEA data, you will begin to think about ways to share resources in your building and constantly look at the best ways to help all students learn and grow. Reading and interpreting your reports can be one of the keys to unlocking student growth.

Special points of interest:

Teacher Reports are available within 24 hours of uploading the data to NWEA.

Use score ranges, rather than RIT scores, in making placement considerations.

Standard deviation indicates how "spread out" the instructional level is for a group of students.

Teachers can identify the number one goal to work on for their class each year.

When and how do I get my reports?

Teacher Reports are available within 24 hours of uploading the data to NWEA. Go to NWEA and login with your LCS credentials. Once logged in, you will be able to access your Teacher Reports from the navigation menu on the left-hand side of the screen. There will be reports for all subjects in which your class has been tested. You can check back if your class completes testing in other subjects at a later time.

What is a RIT score?

RIT stands for Rasch unIT, which is a unit of measure that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement. RIT scores create an equal-interval scale. Equal interval means that the difference between scores is the same regardless of whether a student is at the top, bottom, or middle of the RIT scale; it has the same meaning regardless of grade level.

The RIT scale is used to measure how "tall" a student is on the curriculum scale and scores can be compared to tell how much growth a student has made, similar to measuring height on a yard-stick. It is important to remember that the RIT score is one of the most important pieces of information on the whole report. This score is independent of the age or grade of the student, and reflects the instructional level at which the student is currently performing. Teachers have used RIT score data to track growth and differentiate instruction. NWEA data has also been used to create targeted SMART goals for school improvement plans.

Why are there score ranges? How should I use them?

It is very important to remember that scores from any test are estimates of performance. No score should ever be treated as absolute. Score ranges indicate the range of measurement error around a particular score (score ranges include one standard error above and below the RIT score). We would expect that if a student took the test again relatively soon, his or her score would fall within this range most of the time. Students performing within the same score range have similar instructional needs.

Any time a placement decision is being made for a student, the score range rather than a single RIT score should be used to help make the determination of whether the student falls above or below established criteria. Furthermore, no less than three points of data should ever be used to make important decisions.

What is the difference between percentile and percent correct?

A percentile ranking represents how well a student performs compared to other students in a nationwide norm sample for their grade. A student scoring at the 35th percentile scored as well as, or

better than, 35 percent of students in the same grade in the norm group. It also means that 65 percent of the students exceeded this score.
A common mistake is for people to think this means that the student got 35 percent of the items correct. Percentile is not related to the percent of correct answers a student gets on a test.
The percentile is not a good method for measuring growth in students. Students who achieve typical growth will remain at approximately the same percentile score over time.

How do I use the summary data on the reports?

The class average (mean) is the average score received by the class. It is very sensitive to extreme scores at either end of the scale. For example, a student who performs significantly better than other students (an "outlier") tends to skew the average.
The class median is the middle score received by the class. This is the point at which half the scores are above and half the scores are below. The median is not affected by extreme scores.
You can compare this number to the Normative Data: Monitoring Growth in Student Achievement document to determine how the class performed as a whole as compared to the norm for that grade level for that time of year.
The standard deviation indicates how "spread out" the instructional level is for a group of students. The higher the number, the more diverse the instructional levels are within your group; the lower the number, the more your students are alike. This number can help you determine how effective whole group instruction might be with your class. If all the scores were the same, the standard deviation would be zero.

How do I help students set goals?

A great way to engage students in their own learning is to set goals with them. Have each student choose one goal that they will work extra hard on this year. Encourage them to choose one of the goals that is an area of concern for them.
Log the student's chosen goal in your grade book or another convenient place so you can check on their progress and remind them periodically as you are working on that skill as a class. Let them know they will be accountable for this throughout the year.
When students test again the next season, bring this goal to the forefront once more and have the students compare their scores from one testing term to the next, to check for growth. NWEA's RIT Point Growth Norms will show you what typical growth is for each of your students. They should also record their overall score and set a realistic growth target with your help.

What do I need to know to share with parents?

When parents come in for conference, you won't want to spend much more than five minutes talking about NWEA test scores. You should let the parents know how the student is performing in relation

to the district scores for that grade. For example, you could say "Your student is performing at a very high level for a typical 6th grader". You should also share your class goal with the parents as well as the student's own goal. Then give them a couple of ways they can help their child at home on the student's chosen goal. Make sure they are simple, but effective, strategies the parents can use.

If parents want to know a reference for where other students are performing, show them. You can use the RIT Reference Chart to show parents where their child is performing and where the rest of the class is performing. You can say, "Children in our district typically perform around here. Your child is performing here". You can use the medians from the NWEA norms or from our district norms as the reference.

Use your class reports to take a quiz to check your understanding.

1. Which student has the highest score? Where is this child performing related to the norms?
2. Which student has the lowest score? Where is this child performing related to the norms?
3. Which student has the median score? Where is this child performing related to the norms?
4. Which goal has the highest mean?
5. Which goal has the lowest standard deviation?
6. Which goal would work the best for whole class instruction?
7. Which goal would best be taught by using some flexible groupings or differentiated instruction?
8. Which goal should be chosen as your class goal?
9. How should a score range be used?
10. Get with your grade level team and compare results. Who can you go to for other needed resources? How can you best arrange yourselves to create growth for all students?