

School District of Oconee County, SC



Achieving success in South Carolina by using MAP data to inform instruction

At Tamasee-Salem Elementary School in South Carolina, teacher Anna Durham likes to have data conferences with her third graders. She creates a simple graph of their MAP® Growth™ interim assessment scores with past and current scores, along with a future goal. She believes talking about goals—and how they will get there together—helps to engage students in their own growth.

And that engagement with MAP Growth data yields results. Durham lights up when she tells the story of one student who showed amazing growth from last spring to this winter: “He gained 29 points on winter testing! He just sat here and grinned when he and I were conferencing together.”

Part of the Oconee County School District, Tamasee-Salem Elementary is one of 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools that comprise the district. A MAP Growth partner for more than 10 years, Oconee educators have embraced working with data and supporting their teachers in using MAP Growth to make instructional decisions.

Finding value in growth data

In addition to Durham, plenty of teachers in Oconee schools see the value that data can provide to their instruction. As second grade teacher Allyson McCall says, “You would love to walk into a classroom and realize, ‘Everybody’s on the same page, and this is what I’m teaching today.’ That’s just not how it is. Even with only 16 students this year, I have about four different levels.”

McCall appreciates that MAP Growth gives her the opportunity to know exactly where to teach her students

at all levels of learning. Middle school teacher Alison Poore agrees: “MAP Growth data helps me meet my students’ needs. It tells me what they need to learn and what I need to do to get them to the next level.”

Teachers primarily use their MAP Growth data for small group instruction and differentiated activities. They use class reports to determine each students’ starting point and identify their most at-risk students. Teachers also like the Student Profile report to illustrate growth in goal-setting conversations with students and parents.

Connecting to classroom tools

For Oconee teachers, connecting their data to the next steps in instruction is key. Once they’ve referenced their reports, many head for the learning continuum within MAP Growth to target skills in specific RIT bands.

“I started using the learning continuum to give me direction. I had a number, but it didn’t mean anything to me. I had to have something to break down the different standards and skills to know what I needed to focus my attention on,” Poore explains.

Math interventionist Kristen Vincent agrees: “As a math teacher, I use the learning continuum on a weekly basis to look at the data from my students and then to figure out what skills they need in order to move them up to that next level.”

Some teachers take their MAP Growth scores one step further and connect them to MAP® Skills™, the skills mastery tool which is part of the MAP® Suite of assessments. Vincent explains, “MAP Skills takes it to another level, and it pinpoints exactly what those skills are that the student needs to work on.”

“MAP Growth data helps me meet my students’ needs. It tells me what they need to learn and what I need to do to get them to the next level.”

Alison Poore
Middle school teacher
School District of Oconee County, SC

Math teacher Sara Wright agrees, noting that it helps her see what gaps in math skills might exist when students get to her classroom. “The main benefit of MAP Skills is being able to fill in those gaps for kids,” she says. “It’s really beneficial to my kids and helps improve their MAP Growth scores.”

How did they do it?

Oconee administrators extoll the virtues of professional development workshops from NWEA® in helping to shift the mindset around assessments in their district. As Liza Smith, Director of Applied Data, notes, “One thing we learned is that a lot of our staff had misconceptions about what MAP Growth data meant because it had been so long since we had had any professional development around growth data.”

Josh Wittrock, principal at Orchard Park Elementary and a former teacher in the district adds, “You have to provide professional development—and not just the training but provide the time for the teachers to dive into that data.” Wittrock has started using his weekly faculty meetings to talk about data, rather than everyday topics that can be covered elsewhere.

At the district level, Smith and Lisa Simmons, the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, have also begun a program to create “data leads.” As Simmons explains, “We’ve started incorporating data leads in our schools, so we’re able to use almost a templated approach to looking at data from one school to the next.”

Along with a consistent approach to reviewing results, the data leads provide building-level support to teachers. “We want somebody within each school to be really comfortable with the different programs so that teachers have someone within their building that they can talk to,” Smith says.

Moving students forward with the MAP Suite

Oconee educators and administrators are seeing so much value in their MAP Growth data that they’ve decided to add MAP Growth in high school. This year, they are using end-of-course math tests to help “drive instruction and use some more differentiated strategies in our high school classrooms, too,” Simmons says.

They have also added MAP® Reading Fluency™ in the early grades with the goal of saving time on benchmark testing and returning that time to literacy instruction. In general, they value the MAP Suite of assessments because it’s a one-stop shop for their data, as Simmons notes: “MAP gives us options with looking at our data in different ways.”

As teacher Durham explains, “MAP is the best way to help your kids individually make growth.”



District snapshot

WALHALLA, SC



PRE-K-12 STUDENTS

11,000

ECONOMIC MARKERS

55%

OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR
FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

PRODUCT USE

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH IN

2004

IMPLEMENTED MAP SKILLS IN

2016

IMPLEMENTED MAP READING FLUENCY IN

2018

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