

Charter School Review Committee

Proposed Changes to the CSRC Educational Monitoring Practices and Expectations for the City of Milwaukee–Chartered Schools Effective: 2015–16 Academic Year¹

In light of the 2014–15 changes to the PALS and local measures sections of the pilot scorecard, as well as changes to DPI standardized testing, CRC recommends the following changes to the CSRC Educational Monitoring Practices and Expectations for the City of Milwaukee–chartered schools, effective in the 2015–16 academic year. Proposed additions are highlighted below; stricken text indicates a proposed deletion of a policy.

I. Monitoring Practices and Policies That Apply to All Schools

A. General reporting requirements for standardized tests:

1. The Children’s Research Center (CRC) will not report standardized test scores for groups of fewer than 10 students.
2. Standardized test results will be reported for all students at each grade level.
 - For standardized tests that are administered twice during the year (in fall and spring), results will be reported for students who take both the fall and spring assessments.
 - For standardized tests that are administered only one time (during the spring semester), results will be reported for students who were enrolled at that school since the third Friday in September.

In addition to electronic data submission, schools must provide CRC with the official printouts of their standardized test results for individual students and for the school, unless CRC has direct access to the data from the test publisher.

3. When available and as appropriate, year-to-year results will be reported for students who have completed the spring assessment in consecutive years at the same school.
4. All data must be reported in electronic format that is ready for analysis, such as a database or spreadsheet.

B. Attendance:

¹ If at any time after the adoption of these policies and expectations, DPI changes any assessment requirements, each school is expected to comply with those new or revised requirements.

1. CRC will break down attendance data to include excused absences, unexcused absences, days suspended (in-school and/or out-of-school), and expulsions.
 2. Each school's definition of "present" will be included in that school's charter school learning memo for each academic year.
- C. Annual retention and return rates: CRC will report annual retention rates (i.e., the percentage of students who start the year and remain in the school for the entire year) in addition to the student return rate (i.e., the percentage of students enrolled at the end of the previous school year who are enrolled on the third Friday in September of the current school year).
- D. Teacher retention and return information: CRC will report teacher retention and return information. The return rate will be the percentage of teachers who are eligible to return who actually return the subsequent year. A teacher is not eligible to return if the teacher moves out of the state due to a transfer of a family member or if the school does not offer the teacher a continuing contract. The retention rate will be the percentage of eligible teachers who begin the school year (i.e., are present on the first day of school) who remain at the school through the last day of student attendance. Teachers whose contracts are terminated during the school year are not considered eligible for retention.
- E. Definition of a student's last day of enrollment when a student stops attending a school: If the student does not attend a school for 30 consecutive calendar days, the student's termination date is the last date the student actually attended the school prior to the 30 consecutive days of absence. Reasons for withdrawal from a school will be gathered and reported to CRC with the annual attendance data.
- F. Valid/reliable measures of reading and mathematics: To improve the adoption of appropriate local measures, CSRC will instruct CRC to discuss which assessments are considered valid and reliable measures of reading and math progress (e.g., Measures of Academic Progress [MAP] tests for elementary programs, STAR reading/math tests for high school programs, etc.) for new school applicants upon request. Use of these measures is not mandated.
- G. Trend data: Trend data regarding several outcomes are included in each school's report, typically as appendices. These outcomes include, but are not limited to, attendance, assessment results, and teacher and student return/retention rates.
- H. CSRC scorecard and DPI report card:² Information regarding each school's performance will be included in the body of the report and/or as an appendix to the annual monitoring report.

² Legislation prohibited DPI from creating school/district report cards for the 2014–15 school year. If DPI resumes creating school/district report cards in any subsequent school years, these results will be incorporated into each school's annual report.

- I. Planning for students at or above grade level: CSRC requires schools to plan and provide higher-level plans/activities for students who are at or above grade level in the acquisition of basic skills.
- II. Elementary School Policies and Expectations
 - A. Each school is required to maintain local measures demonstrating student growth in the following areas: reading, writing, math, and individualized education programs (IEP).
 - B. DPI-required tests:
 1. The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)³ will be administered to all K4 through second-grade students in the fall and spring of the 2015–16 school year within the timeframe required by DPI.

Absent a DPI-required reading achievement test for first- and second-grade students, the CSRC will determine an appropriate assessment for reading with input from the school leaders and CRC.
 2. The DPI-required achievement tests for third through eighth grades and tenth grade will be administered in the spring of the school year, during the timeframe indicated by DPI.
 - C. Year-to-year achievement measurement:⁴
 1. CRC will report the DPI-required assessment results in each school’s annual report. When new assessments are implemented, data from the first year will be used by CSRC as baseline data in order to set expectations for performance in subsequent years. When possible, CRC will report year-to-year progress for students who completed the assessments in consecutive school years at the same school. When year-to-year data are available, CSRC will set its expectations for student progress; these expectations will be effective for all subsequent years.
 2. CRC reported PALS results in the 2014–15 annual school reports. Based on the spring 2015 PALS results, the CSRC expectation for students maintaining reading readiness is:

³ Students who meet the summed score benchmark have achieved a level of minimum competency and can be expected to show growth given regular classroom literacy instruction. It does not guarantee that the student is at grade level. (Information taken from DPI website.)

⁴ CSRC will not have year-to-year achievement measurements for students in K4 through first grade. Limited year-to-year results will be available for second-grade students who were at a school for first grade and completed the spring PALS assessment in both years. DPI will not require the use of PALS after the 2015–16 school year.

At least 75% of the first graders who met the summed score benchmark in the spring will remain at or above the second-grade summed score benchmark in the spring of the subsequent year.

- D. CRC will gather and report information regarding each elementary school's counseling activities regarding high school, information about high school enrollment at the end of eighth grade, and plans for follow-up after a student leaves the elementary school.

E. Elementary scorecard changes:

1. In 2014–15, the CSRC piloted a revised scorecard. The revised elementary (K-8) scorecard includes measures related to the Badger Exam, which was administered for one school year, in 2014–15. Even though the Badger Exam will be replaced with a different DPI-required academic assessment for the 2015–16 school year, CRC recommends that the CSRC continue to pilot the revised scorecard for the 2015–16 academic year.

2. The essential changes for the elementary scorecard include:

- PALS for first-grade students: First-grade point-in-time results will be worth four possible points.
- PALS for second-grade students: The PALS measure for second-grade students will be based on year-to-year results, rather than point-in-time results. The year-to-year measure for second-grade students who took the test in two consecutive years at the same school, and maintained a summed score at or above the benchmark, will be worth six possible points.
- The percentage of local measure points will increase from 15% to 25% of the total possible scorecard score. Each individual local measure will be worth 6.25 possible points, rather than 3.75 possible points, per measure. The increase in possible local measure points reflects a reduction in the possible point values attached to the DPI assessment sections in reading and mathematics.

III. High School Policies and Expectations

- A. As soon as possible, but no later than 60 calendar days after the student's first day of attendance, each new student must be assessed in reading and mathematics to ascertain the student's literacy and math capabilities.
- B. Each school is required to maintain local measures demonstrating student growth in the following areas: literacy, mathematics, writing, and IEP goals. Additional local measures are encouraged. Local measures need to be designed as running records of student progress to inform teachers' decisions at the instructional level throughout the academic year. The school is responsible for setting an annual standard of performance based on their choice of tool. The school will report actual student performance against that standard.

- C. Each student shall have a written annual plan for graduation that includes the following:
1. Evidence of parent/guardian involvement;
 2. Information regarding the student's post-secondary plans; and
 3. A schedule reflecting plans for completion of four years of English; three years each of college-preparatory mathematics, science, and social studies; and two years of a foreign language.
- D. Required standardized tests and expectations:⁵
1. Required standardized tests: In addition to reporting ongoing student progress as demonstrated by the local measures, schools will administer the following tests to prepare all students for post-secondary programs.
 - a. Ninth-grade students: All ninth-grade students are required to take all subtests⁶ of the ACT Aspire, which assesses progress toward ACT readiness,⁷ in the **fall and spring** of the school year as required by the DPI timeframe.
 - b. Tenth-grade students: All tenth-grade students are required to take the DPI-required **social studies** assessment in the **spring** of the school year in the timeframe identified by DPI.

All tenth-grade students are required to take all subtests⁸ of the ACT Aspire, which assesses progress toward ACT readiness, in the spring of the school year as required by the DPI timeframe.
 - c. Eleventh-grade students: All eleventh-grade students are required to take all subtests of the ACT Plus Writing and the ACT WorkKeys in the spring of the school year as required by the DPI timeframe.

⁵ Information about fee waiver applications and the benefits of taking these tests will be provided to students and their families by the school.

⁶ English, mathematics, reading, and science; and an essay test.

⁷ The Educational Planning and Assessment System developed by the American College Testing Service (ACT) provides a longitudinal, standardized approach to educational and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation. The series includes the ACT Aspire, ACT Plus Writing, and ACT WorkKeys tests. Score ranges from all three tests are linked to *Standards for Transition* statements that describe what students have learned and what they are ready to learn next. The *Standards for Transition*, in turn, are linked to *Pathways* statements that suggest strategies to enhance students' classroom learning. *Standards* and *Pathways* can be used by teachers to evaluate instruction and student progress and advise students on courses of study.

⁸ English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing.

- d. Twelfth-grade students: All twelfth-grade students are required to take all subtests of the ACT or ACT Plus Writing in the fall of the school year. Students who would benefit from retaking the ACT are encouraged to do so. Graduates' achievement on the ACT benchmarks will be monitored and reported annually.

Regarding special needs students: Reasonable testing accommodations, such as extra time or an alternative site, must be provided for students with special needs. If a student's IEP team has determined testing to be inappropriate for that student, potential post-secondary institutions should be contacted to determine entrance requirements. A student whose IEP states that DPI-required assessments are not appropriate will be tested using the DPI-designated alternative assessments.

- 2. Year-to-year achievement expectations:
 - a. **Ninth- to tenth-grade Aspire**: At least 75% of the students at benchmark in any of the subtest areas or the composite score in the spring of ninth grade are expected to maintain that status in the spring of the subsequent year. At least 60% of the students below benchmark in any of the subtest areas or the composite score are expected to reach benchmark or increase their scale score by at least one point the next spring.^{9,10}
 - b. **Tenth-grade Aspire to eleventh-grade ACT Plus Writing**: At least 75% of students at benchmark on any subtest or the composite score in the spring of tenth grade are expected to maintain benchmark status in the spring of the subsequent year on the ACT Plus Writing. Progress from the ACT Aspire to the ACT Plus Writing cannot be measured by comparing an increase in scale scores.¹¹ CRC is examining alternative methods to measure progress for students below benchmark, due to the difference in scale scores used to benchmark the Aspire and the ACT Plus Writing. One of these methods will be selected to report year-to-year progress in the upcoming annual reports.
 - c. **Eleventh to twelfth grade**: There is no measure of progress from eleventh to twelfth grade at this time.

⁹ This expectation is in a pilot phase at this time.

¹⁰ At the time of this memo, it is CRC's understanding that the benchmarks used for the EXPLORE and PLAN tests are comparable to the benchmarks for the ACT Aspire and can be used to measure student progress over time.

¹¹ Aspire scale scores are three digits and ACT Plus Writing scale scores are two digits.

Aspire and ACT Plus Writing benchmarks are described in the following table.¹²

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks for the and ACT Plus Writing			
Subtest	9th Grade Spring Aspire	10th Grade Spring Aspire	11th Grade ACT
English	426	428	18
Math	428	432	22
Reading	425	428	22
Science	430	432	23
Composite	427	430	21

E. High school scorecard changes:

1. In 2014–15, the CSRC piloted a revised scorecard. The revised scorecard included measures reflecting changes to the DPI-required tests for students in ninth through twelfth grade. CRC recommends that the CSRC continue to pilot the revised scorecard for the 2015–16 academic year.
2. The essential changes for the high school scorecard include:
 - The percentage of local measure points will increase from 15% to 25% of the total possible scorecard score. Each individual local measure will be worth 6.25 points, rather than 3.75 possible points, per measure. The increase in possible local measure points reflects a reduction in the possible point values attached to the DPI assessment sections in reading and mathematics.
 - Point-in-time student academic achievement: Point-in-time reading and math measures will be based on the ACT Aspire English and math subtests, rather than on the WKCE reading and math subtests. As noted in the above bullet, the number of possible points for these measures will also be reduced, for a total of 10 possible points.

¹² The Aspire benchmarks are described in the ACT publication *Summative Assessment Technical Bulletin #2: Norms, Scoring, Scaling, and Psychometrics (2014)*. The ACT benchmarks are reported on the ACT website (<http://www.act.org/solutions/college-career-readiness/college-readiness-benchmarks>).