



## Prairie City Case Study

Angela is the Assessment Director for Prairie City School District. She is working with her colleagues to design a re-entry plan for assessment for the schools in her district that provides them with the urgent information they need regarding student learning and is also aligned to best practices for assessment in this unusual school year. In a typical year, Angela is most focused on capturing beginning of year data by administering the following non-summative assessments across the district:

- K-2: use of Acadience Reading K-6 for early literacy assessment
- 3-8: use of MAP Interim for ELA and Math

This year, based on her new learning, she decided to adjust her plans.

### Unit 1 “Pre-Assessments”

Angela shifts her thinking based on her new learning about best practices for assessment for the upcoming year, coupled with the fact that the district is still considering multiple models for re-opening this fall.

Early on, she knows that this year she'll have to partner especially closely with her colleagues who support curriculum and instruction. Together with ESU staff and the Director of Curriculum for the district, she forms an assessment committee that will meet every two weeks starting in mid-June. First, Angela has the committee analyze the most recent system-wide data Prairie City has available- the February 2020 administration of Acadience and the MAP interim. She supports her Curriculum and Instruction teammates to interpret this data in terms of how it can impact teachers' instructional planning for the fall.

Next, she and the team realize that there will be no way for teachers to respond to all of students' unfinished learning at one time. Instead, teachers' first need actionable information about student readiness to help them teach the first units of their curricula. For this reason, she and the committee make a plan to support teachers to develop “Unit 1 Pre-Assessments.” These ungraded assessments, ideally taking 30 minutes or less to administer, will assess students' incoming knowledge of the most important foundational concepts they will need for success in their first instructional unit of the school year. For instance, the 5th grade math curriculum begins the year with a unit focused on place value with multi-digit numbers, including decimals. The 5th grade team looks back at the 4th grade standards and identifies key prerequisites connected to these concepts: specifically, place value of multi-digit whole numbers, as well as an introduction to decimals. They make a plan to assess students' current mastery of those 4th grade standards and begin by identifying tasks aligned to these standards to include on their Unit 1 pre-assessment.



Meanwhile, the 6th grade ELA team begins by unpacking their first unit and determining what knowledge students will need in order to successfully access the anchor text, *Out of the Dust*. The team drafts a few questions to assess students' current knowledge of geography in the southern plains, basic farming practices, as well as the concept of a drought. In addition, the district decides to offer training on Pre-Assessments to high school teachers, even though Prairie City does not administer interims at the high school level.

The committee is able to carve out a half day of time during teachers' remote pre-service sessions in August to guide teachers through the process of developing Pre-Assessments. The Math and ELA specialists from her ESU develop some curriculum-specific guidance and examples to teachers for what the Pre-Assessments might look like, as well as talking points for teachers to share with students about these assessments being ungraded and being designed to "show what students know."

The committee outlines a plan to help school leaders support their teachers to respond to this data. The committee ensures that leaders can help teachers identify strategies to address prior-grade level unfinished learning in the context of the at-grade level unit. Also, they help leaders understand how to leverage resources from the curriculum for intervention and academic support instead of using misaligned supplementary resources. They ask every school leader to watch the recorded [NDE webinars](#) on unfinished learning ELA and Math so that the leaders have foundational knowledge about these challenging concepts.

### **Interim Assessment Planning**

Angela has not forgotten about her interim assessments, but she envisions a slightly different plan for this year. She plans for the administration of MAP to occur for grades K-8 during the third and fourth weeks of school. This is later than the district would typically administer them, but allows her to stay within the 30 school day limit mandated by Nebraska Reads Act for her K-3 students. This delay allows teachers and students time to settle into a new model for teaching and build positive culture, and also allows Angela more time to prepare for the administration of the assessments and respond to the current educational model in place (e.g. in-person, distance learning).

For the administration of the interims this fall, the schools want to ensure the assessments can be administered as efficiently as possible to preserve instructional time. For this reason, they decide to shorten the test by removing the science portion and the language usage test and focus administration on mathematics and reading. Angela provides new guidance to school leaders about how they can support teachers to respond to the data, which will be different than in prior years. Rather than focusing on RIT scores and grouping students for intervention blocks, they will first focus their attention on what the data tells them about their instructional planning for the school year.



- What are the trends saying about the skills and standards in which students will need more help in this year's learning?
  - What impact might this information have on our scope and sequence documents and pacing guides for the rest of this school year, in terms of where to layer in more foundational support to account for prior-grade-level unfinished learning?
    - *Recommend consulting with prior grade level teachers to identify what was taught and what wasn't last year*
- What students are “red flag” students, meaning their performance is considerably lower than others, or they have demonstrated major drops in performance from prior administrations of the assessment?
  - How does student performance on the fall administration this year compare to their performance on the winter administration last year? Or fall to fall?
- How do this year's growth patterns compare to prior years?