

USD 248 State Assessment Review for Budget Considerations

USD 248 Board President: Roger Breneman

Date: 8/12/22

248 Girard District Summary

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

There are a number of challenges that should be considered when evaluating student success in a district. Some of the key barriers that impact our School District include, but are not limited to the following:

- High percentage/number of free and reduced students and increased poverty rate compared to past years.
- High or increased levels of homeless students and foster care families.
- Declining enrollment that reduces funding and access to additional services and supports for students.
- High levels or increased levels of student trauma (Adverse Childhood Experiences, ACE Study).
- The Special Education funding shortfall has limited support for our highest need students. This specifically limits the hiring of support staff due to noncompetitive wages.
- Lack of instructional time and changes in instructional opportunities throughout the COVID pandemic created learning loss in almost all students.
- High or increasing numbers of single parent families.
- An increasing level of social emotional challenges and needs of students.
- It is difficult to motivate a student to perform their best on an assessment that does not impact their future.
- Difficulties in engaging parents in the educational process.
- Diminishing local control limits our ability to provide supports and services specific to our student and community population.
- We often do not receive disaggregated and approved state assessment scores until the next school year. This significantly limits the amount of time teachers and administrators have to make adjustments to both curriculum and instruction.
- We believe using one assessment score is not an accurate measure of student success, especially because assessments are written in a way to avoid 100% success for every assessment participant. An opportunity to test again and show growth would be greatly preferred.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

Our students face a growing number of barriers to success and our district continually works to support them. Current budget constraints that impact our ability to successfully remove barriers for our students include:

- Increased salary to recruit and retain high quality certified and classified staff
- Increased funding to expand extended school year and summer school programs for students
- Maintain low teacher/pupil ratio for greater individualized instruction
- Increase funding for Pre-K programs
- Allocating budget to focus on prevention, identification, and intervention concerning trauma and mental health issues

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

While our board of education, administration, and staff work tirelessly to meet the academic and emotional needs of all of our students, too many outside factors come into play. These factors do not allow us to assess when all students will be at a certain level. Some of those factors include:

- Our ever-changing and transient student population brings a varying degree of cognitive abilities and disabilities which precludes us from being able to guarantee a date when all students will meet a singular level of proficiency.
- The current and future levels of school funding have a significant impact on student learning and any increases or decreases have an effect on student success.
- Lack of constitutional funding of special education continues to impact our ability to fully meet the needs of all students.
- While assessment scores are one measure, our district does not believe that student assessment scores should be the sole measure of student proficiency or tied to funding.
- Similar to how other professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, etc, cannot ensure 100% success due to a variety of factors and obstacles, we will be unable to achieve 100% proficiency. Expecting 100% of students to meet a target goal in a specific time frame is mathematically impossible.
- Many of the factors that affect student success, such as trauma, poverty, mental health and student disabilities, are out of the local board's control, so giving a time estimate on things that consistently change, or are under the control of other agencies, is not a realistic practice of a local school board.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 248 Girard

School: RVH Elementary

Building Number: 1258

Grades Served: PreK - 5

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

All students do not come to school with a level playing field when it comes to being prepared to learn. One of the very first barriers is having the time to learn about each student's background and individual needs. Many factors go into a child being fully ready to learn. Educators have to ensure all of the student's basic needs are being met before learning can begin. One of the first barriers is Time. Teachers need time to get to know each student and what their exact needs are emotionally, socially, and educationally. The second barrier is training. All staff need adequate training on how to identify student needs and help them to be ready to learn. Staff need to be aware of all of the resources available in their community to support each child's needs as they arise. The third barrier in this area is proper parent training in how to parent and support their child not only at school, but at home. No longer do all students come to school with all of their basic needs met, such as food, hygiene, and love. Teachers now play this role more than ever. Once students are ready to learn, which can change from day to day, the teachers must focus on each child's learning challenges, learning styles, and what type of learning environment they need. All teachers need proper training on assessments and how to use that data to drive their instruction and create an action plan. Students are taught through differentiated instruction to master skills and close the achievement gap with their peers. Other barriers include: transient students, lack of foundational skills, and student effort.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

The top priority as a budget action item is to bring in additional staff that will help build meaningful and personal relationships with each of our students. Utilizing the ESSER funds to hire additional staff has been beneficial. However, it will be difficult to continue these positions once the additional funding is removed. These individuals provide students with additional opportunities to read, practice phonics, review spelling words, work on fluency skills, practice math facts, etc. This also provides our certified staff coverage in the classroom so they can work 1:1 with their students on their specific skill areas that need improvement. We've also utilized ESSER funding to purchase phonics supplementals, differentiated resources, and additional materials to ensure student academic and social/emotional needs are being met. Funding for explicit and

effective training for staff is also a priority. Throughout the school year, it would be beneficial for an outside speaker to join our building and train/review practices to address/support trauma, positive mindset, child development, and offer mental health and well-being strategies to support our youth. Another use of funding would focus on parent/guardian training and resources to support families at home. We live in a time where kids are shuffled from one parent/grandparent to another, their little worlds can be hectic and sometimes lead to anxiety at home, which can carry into their school day. Providing families within our community the resources they need to effectively support their children is a priority.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

It is difficult to place a timeline on achieving grade level proficiency. Students learn differently from one another, the way they respond to interventions varies, it takes a lot of time and dedication to discover the best support for each individual child. Our goal is to monitor data closely and ensure student trend lines continue to move forward and toward the benchmark. With each new data point, we evaluate and review student growth, making adjustments as needed. We cannot put a definite time frame into this process, each child is different and, as educators, we have to be reflective and adjust our instruction daily. Students need to conference with their teacher often to reflect on their progress toward the goal, discussing their role as the student and what they need to also be doing to continue growth. We, as educators, can determine what is needed for each child to be successful and work toward proficiency. However, it is difficult to place a specific amount of time on reaching proficiency for each child. Many factors play a part in student success. We need to focus on differentiating to meet their needs, support them in all areas (academic, mental health, behavior) and ensure students are moving toward the goal.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 248 Girard

School: Girard Middle School

Building Number: 1260

Grades Served: 6-8

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

Learning barriers for each student vary, and cannot be narrowed down to just one simple solution. Each student has different needs and abilities. Some factors that make it difficult for students to achieve at grade level include socioeconomic status, mental health concerns, home life, anxiety, stress, test anxiety, lack of academic abilities, lack of motivation and lack of focus. These are a few factors that may make it difficult for all students to achieve grade level efficiency.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

Money to retain qualified staff is key to removing barriers to educational success. Qualified staff work daily with students, and have more impact educationally and socially than any other school employee. Additional funds would allow for key personnel such as At-Risk teachers, mental health support staff, and nurses. These key personnel provide support for students who are At-Risk. Fully funding special education is key to providing a quality education for all students. By fully funding special education, we can retain and recruit highly qualified special education teachers, as well as paras.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

We would anticipate that it will be a continued work in progress to see that all students achieve at grade level proficiency. Many factors can contribute to a poor test score, including having a bad morning before school, not getting enough sleep at home, as well as other factors beyond

the scope of school. Because of so many factors, many outside the control of school, we do not know how long it would take for all students to achieve grade level proficiency. It is difficult to place a timeline on achieving grade level proficiency. Students learn differently from one another, the way they respond to interventions varies. It takes a lot of time and dedication to discover the best support for each individual child. Our goal is to monitor data closely and ensure student trend lines continue to move forward and toward the benchmark. With each new data point, we evaluate and review student growth, making adjustments as needed. I cannot put a definite time frame into this process, each child is different and, as educators, we have to be reflective and adjust our instruction daily. Students need to conference with their teacher often to reflect on their progress toward the goal, discussing their role as the student and what they need to also be doing to continue growth. We, as educators, can determine what is needed for each child to be successful and work toward proficiency. However, it is difficult to place a specific amount of time on reaching proficiency for each child. Many factors play a part in student success. We will focus on differentiating to meet their needs, support them in all areas (academic, mental health, behavior) and ensure students are moving toward the goal.

Building State Assessment Review

District: 248 Girard

School: Girard High School

Building Number: 1262

Grades Served: 9-12

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

Having the support needed and necessary to assist Special Needs Students is our biggest obstacle. The Covid 19 pandemic was negatively impactful for all our students academically and socially. Whether it be social or academic needs, more staff members could be used. Quality professional staff is one of the best ways to overcome student proficiency levels. A once a year, one time test is not an accurate measurement of student proficiency. Student growth should factor in significantly more than it does. Many students, who chose to not engage in a college academic pathway should be tested using CTE tests or the Work Keys, as these tests are more accurate indicators of their career readiness.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

Hiring and retention of highly qualified staff members. The best and most effective way to improve ALL students' education process is to have them work with and create relationships with highly effective and qualified staff members. Qualified staff across all curriculums including electives and Special Education help engage and develop students. ESSER money has allowed us to hire and retain an At-Risk teacher, once that funding runs out it will be very difficult to budget for that and many other positions throughout the high school. The largest budget item that should be addressed is for the state to fully fund special education. These students often need more resources and time to achieve their academic goals.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

It is difficult to place a timing on grade level proficiency. Students learn differently from one another, the way they respond to interventions varies, it takes a lot of time and dedication to discover the best support for each individual child. Our goal is to monitor data closely and ensure student trend lines continue to move forward and toward the benchmark. With each new data point, we evaluate and review student growth, making adjustments as needed. We cannot put a definite time frame into this process, each child is different and, as educators, we have to be reflective and adjust our instruction daily. Students need to conference with their teacher often to reflect on their progress toward the goal, discussing their role as the student and what they need to also be doing to continue growth. We, as educators, can determine what is needed for each child to be successful and work toward proficiency. However, it is difficult to place a specific amount of time on reaching proficiency for each child. Many factors play a part in student success. We need to focus on differentiating to meet their needs, support them in all areas (academic, mental health, behavior) and ensure students are moving toward the goal.