MAP®
(Measures of Academic Progress®)
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is MAP?

MAP assessments are computer adaptive achievement tests in Mathematics and Reading.

2. What are computer adaptive tests?

The computer adjusts the difficulty of the questions so that each student takes a unique test. The difficulty of each question is based on how well the student has answered previous questions.

3. What tests are available?

Students are assigned to take MAP based on grade level, MAP for Primary Grades (MPG), MAP 2-5, or MAP 6+.

4. What is the purpose of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment?

MAP is a norm-referenced measure of student growth over time. MAP assessments, joined with other data points, provide detailed, actionable data about where each child is on his or her unique learning path. MAP assessments differ from other data sources used by the HCPSS to inform instruction by being nationally normed, by tracking student progress throughout a year and across school years, and by being linked to software tools which can assist teachers and administrators in planning instruction.

5. What are the uses of MAP?

MAP tests are based on a continuum of skills in Mathematics and Reading from low skill levels to high skill levels. MAP assessments help teachers identify the instructional level of the student and also provide context for determining where each student is performing in relation to local or state standards and national norms. MAP reports allow teachers to better target instruction based on students' strengths and needs.

6. In what grades does CSD use MAP?

CSD implements MAP for Grades K-6.

7. What features does Map for Primary Grades (MPG) have that make it a unique kind of assessment?

MPG assessments meet the unique needs of early learners by utilizing advanced technology to display interactive visuals and audio for beginning readers. For example, the computer automatically plays audio instructions to the student, eliminating the challenges of early learners who cannot read. Students are able to use a mouse to perform an action.

8. What is the testing window for CSD?

CSD administers MAP three times a year: namely, in the beginning (Fall), middle (Winter), and end of the school year (Spring). Although the tests are not timed, the typical length of time for the MAP test (Grades 2-8) is 1 hour per content area. MPG K-2 tests take from 15 to 30 minutes to complete. The length of the test varies because of the adaptive nature of the test.

9. How is progress measured?

MAP assessments are used to measure a student's growth in Mathematics and Reading. The Fall assessment gathers baseline. The Winter assessment measures progress. The Spring assessment measures the students' growth to that point. The scale used to measure a student's progress is called the RIT scale, short for Rasch Unit (Rasch unIT). The RIT scale is an equal-interval scale much like inches on a yardstick. It is used to chart a student's academic growth from year to year. The RIT is not a measure of mastery or a grade, rather it provides information about what a student is ready to learn. Based upon the reading RIT score, students see a variety of texts during the assessment, which range in complexity. If students read and understand texts in these levels, a lexile range is calculated based upon their performance. Lexile is one of many ways to measure text complexity.

10. What is a RIT Scale?

The RIT Scale is a curriculum scale that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement. An advantage of the RIT scale is that it can relate the numbers on the scale directly to the difficulty of items on the tests. In addition, the RIT scale is 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, and it has the same meaning regardless of grade level.

11. What is a Lexile measurement?

Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty that is linked to the RIT score. Visit lexile.com to enter Lexile Range and generate appropriate reading lists. Considerations for choosing appropriate text include a child's interests, themes and content of the books, and the purpose for the books. The Lexile scale helps identify reading material that is at an appropriate difficulty level for an individual student. It is important to keep in mind that Lexile does not evaluate genre, theme, content, or interest. Even though a student might be able to read books at a certain Lexile, the content or theme of the text may not be appropriate for that particular student because of his or her age or developmental level.

12. How do teachers use MAP information?

Teachers use formative assessments, state and local assessments, and MAP data to monitor students' progress and screen students for interventions and enrichment. The MAP reports help provide teachers with additional knowledge of where a student's strengths are and if additional support is needed in any specific area. Teachers use this information to help guide instruction in the classroom and create flexible groupings to better differentiate lessons based on content. One CSD goal is to share the information from the MAP reports as routine practice with students as a way to demonstrate progress and motivate further growth.

13. Can MAP be used to identify students who need intervention services?

While a low RIT score and/or lack of growth between administrations may suggest the need for academic intervention, CSd does not use a single test to identify students for academic intervention. MAP help to identify overall patterns of your student performance which can help to identify possible areas of intervention.

14. How accurately does the MAP assess student performance?

Because of many factors, the MAP, like all assessments, might not accurately capture a student's true performance during a single administration. To reflect the influence of variables which might impact a student's performance on a single administration (e.g., illness, lack of sleep, distractions in the test environment), the MAP provides a "RIT Range." If the student took the test again reasonably soon after the administration, one would expect his or her score to fall within the RIT Range at least 68% of the time. The RIT Range therefore provides a good approximation of where a student's true performance lies, in the absence of testing inaccuracies.

15. What if a student's winter administration RIT score is lower than his/her fall assessment score.

As discussed above, all tests suffer from a margin of testing error and no single administration is likely to capture a student's true performance. For that reason, the MAP is designed to be given several times a year, to minimize the effects of testing inaccuracies and provide a better picture of a student's performance by examining the trend of his or her performance over several administrations. An additional source of error for these initial administrations of the MAP is that students were unfamiliar with the test and therefore may have suffered from additional test anxiety and/or did not take the assessment as seriously as they do more familiar tests, such as the MSA and local assessments. A third possible cause for a perceived lack of growth is that the student scored very high on the initial administration and so was more likely to score lower on a second administration, a statistical phenomenon know as "regression to the mean." For all these reasons, MAP data should be used in conjunction with other academic data to develop a comprehensive picture of student achievement.

The MAP tests are designed to assess content normally taught in specific grade bands. Students who are studying content beyond what is assessed by the test may not see improvement. This does not mean that they are not making instructional growth. The MAP assessment may simply not be testing what they have learned.

The final score is an estimate of the student's achievement level relative to a national sample of students at his or her grade level.