



LAKE BLUFF SCHOOLS DISTRICT 65

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TO: Dr. Lisa Leali and Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Jackie Tivador, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Impact

DATE: April 28, 2026

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Updating Assessment Tools

Recommendation:

The Lake Bluff Administrative Team recommends a phased approach to reviewing and updating the district's assessment system, including:

- A transition from AIMSweb to Renaissance FastBridge for progress monitoring and Tier 2 screening beginning in the 2026–2027 school year
- A shift from AIMSweb to Renaissance STAR as the universal benchmarking assessment for all students grades K–1 (administered three times per year)
- Continued use of NWEA MAP as the district's benchmarking assessment in grades 2–8
- Continued use of AIMSweb for writing assessment tools

Background:

As part of the district's ongoing commitment to providing a balanced, coherent, and effective assessment system, an Assessment Committee was convened to review current practices and tools. The committee included representation from across grade levels and roles and engaged in a structured process to evaluate the strengths, challenges, and future needs of our system.

Currently, the district utilizes:

- NWEA MAP for universal benchmarking in grades 2–8
- AIMSweb for K–1 universal screening and K–8 progress monitoring
- A variety of teacher-created and program-based formative assessments
- State-mandated assessments including IAR and ACCESS

This review comes at a key moment for the following reasons:

1. Year 2 of AIMSweb as a K/1 Benchmarking tool and Year 3 of AIMSweb as a Progress Monitoring Tool
2. Recent changes in assessment providers, including the acquisition of NWEA by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
3. The district's adoption of a new K-4 ELA curricular resource, prompting a need to ensure alignment of assessment needs

Process:

The Assessment Committee has:

- Conducted a full review of the current assessment landscape
- Engaged in a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges)

- Identified key decision-making needs for assessment data (e.g., MTSS, instructional planning, growth monitoring)
- Hosted vendor presentations (i-Ready, Renaissance)
- Collected feedback from staff using an evaluation tool aligned to district priorities

Key findings from this process include:

- **Strengths:** Strong historical MAP data, alignment to core content areas, and a well-established MTSS framework
- **Challenges:** AIMSweb's limited diagnostic capabilities, time demands, and misalignment with instructional needs; gaps in deeper comprehension data
- **Opportunities:** Improved alignment across Tier 1 and intervention, enhanced data literacy, and more actionable assessment tools

Recommendation Rationale:

Based on committee feedback and analysis, AIMSweb is not consistently meeting the district's needs for progress monitoring and intervention support. The Renaissance FastBridge platform emerged as a preferred alternative due to its stronger alignment to instructional decision-making, more actionable data, and broader functionality.

At the same time, maintaining stability in the system is an important consideration. With the implementation of a new ELA curriculum, the administration recommends limiting the number of simultaneous system changes. NWEA MAP continues to provide valuable longitudinal benchmarking data, and additional time is needed to evaluate both its future under new ownership and potential alternatives.

Proposed Next Steps:

- **Pilot Renaissance FastBridge** in Spring 2026 to build familiarity and evaluate implementation
- **Provide professional learning** for staff to support effective use of the platform
- **Transition from AIMSweb to FastBridge** for progress monitoring and Tier 2 screening beginning in 2026–2027
- **Transition from AIMSweb to STAR** for Kindergarten and 1st Grade benchmarking beginning in 2026–2027
- **Continue evaluation of 2nd through 8th grade benchmarking tools** over the next 1–2 years, including potential future consideration of replacing MAP

Financial Impact

There is an initial PD and implementation cost for the first year that will not exceed \$4,000.

Conclusion:

This phased approach allows the district to address immediate needs in progress monitoring and intervention while maintaining stability in benchmarking practices. It also ensures that future decisions are informed by thoughtful piloting, staff feedback, and alignment to instructional priorities. The administration will continue to update the Board as this work progresses and will bring forward any future recommendations for approval as needed.

In partnership,

/s/ Jackie Tivador

Jackie Tivador

Director of Teaching, Learning, and Impact