

# Algebra I: Fall Update

January 20, 2021

## Background

In the 2018-19 school year, the Des Moines Public Schools Board of Directors engaged parents, community members/partners, district staff, and students in work sessions that resulted in three areas of focus for district goal setting. These areas are:

- *Early Literacy* – how well are students learning to read in early elementary school (pre-k through third grade)
- *Algebra* – are students taking and passing Algebra I as freshman in high school.
- *Social Emotional Learning (SEL)* – how well are students learning to connect with others, develop identity, and how welcome and safe do students feel.

Both Early Literacy and Algebra goal areas are also focused on the success of black male students.

## Update

On February 16th, Des Moines Public Schools staff shared the following update on the district's progress toward the Algebra 1 goal. The Algebra 1 Goal is a measure of the percent of black male students who have completed Algebra 1 with a "B" grade or higher by the end of their first year of high school. How well a student performs in Algebra I has a high impact on the student's likelihood of high school graduation. The goal is calculated to include all black male students who earned a B or higher in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, out of all possible 9<sup>th</sup> grade black male students, including those who are not enrolled in Algebra I.

**Data Summary** – The Algebra I Board Goal has three additional progress measures, which are tracked to provide additional context and trends towards the district's goal. Due to the way the data for the Algebra I Board Goal is collected, an update on the district's progress for the 2020-21 school year will not be available until after the close of the spring semester, when all student's grades are completed. Progress measures 1 and 2 show how well the district and schools are doing at making sure that Black Male students are accessing Algebra I. Progress measure 3a-c shows how well the district and schools are preparing students to be successful when they entire Algebra. Outcomes on the progress measures are as follows:

*Progress measure 1:* Percent of Black Males Scheduled in Algebra I at the beginning of each semester of their 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Year or Entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade with a B or Higher in Algebra I from 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Districtwide Target: 74.2%                      Districtwide Actual Data: 76.4%
- School data: 2 out of 5 DMPS high schools met their individual targets for Semester 1 of 2020-2021

*Progress measure 2:* Percent of Black Males Enrolled in Algebra I as 9th Graders Who are Earning a B or Higher

- Districtwide Target: 27.1%                      Districtwide Actual Data: 19.8%
- School data: 1 out of 5 DMPS high schools met their individual target for semester 1 of 2020-21

*Progress measure 3a-c:* Percent of Middle School Grade Black Males Not At-Risk on the Fall District Interim Assessment

<i>6<sup>th</sup> Grade:</i>	Districtwide Target: 10.8%	Districtwide Actual Data: 8.9%
	School data: 2 out of 10 DMPS middle schools met their individual target for 2020-21	
<i>7<sup>th</sup> Grade:</i>	Districtwide Target: 13.0%	Districtwide Actual Data: <i>n count too small to be included</i>
	School data: 0 out of 10 DMPS middle schools met their individual target for 2020-21	
<i>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</i>	Districtwide Target: 11.5%	Districtwide Actual Data: 9.8%
	School data: 4 out of 10 DMPS middle schools met their individual target for 2020-21	

Note: The Interim Assessment is new for DMPS this year, and targets may need to be adjusted to reflect the shift from measuring College and Career Readiness on MAP to the current progress measure, however, this cannot occur until the district collects more data through the assessment.

**Response to Data and Current Work** – While Progress Measure 1 indicates a positive trend towards ensuring that Black Male students have access Algebra I, the other Progress Measures show that the district is not yet meeting the needs of those students in a way that supports success in math courses. The district is continuing to make changes in two primary areas, Implementing High Quality Curriculum and Ensuring Access to Grade Level Instruction, which district staff believe will better support the success of Black Male students, and all students, when the changes have been fully implemented and all needed supports are in place.

*Implementing High Quality Curriculum:* Over the course of the 2020-21 school year, the district is working toward the implementation of a new math curriculum in grades 6-8, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II – this means that the way that the district is teaching math to students is changing. In order to implement the new curriculum, district teachers must receive the necessary learning to provide the lessons to students and administrators and coaches need the necessary understanding to coach teachers about how the lessons and principles should be used in their classrooms. Additionally, with the roll out of the new curriculum aligned math assessments in all grades, the district will have access to better data to understand the needs of students. The first instance of the assessment, which was taken by students for the first time in the Fall of 2020, indicates that the assessment itself is more rigorous than the previous interim assessment, that students struggled to maintain learning through the spring/summer, and that as of the first assessment, they had not yet regained the lost spring and summer learning.

*Access to Grade Level Core Instruction:* The district is working to break down the systems in place that are keeping students from being in the classes that they should be in based on their grade level. This means that the district is working to change the beliefs that are supporting the current racist systems and outcomes and rebuilding those systems in a way that supports the high achievement of all students. Currently, this means that district staff is:

1. Working to monitor and support classrooms where students are currently receiving below grade level instruction, to ensure students in those classes are also receiving grade level instruction
2. Developing additional supports based on student needs
3. Ensuring that math course pathways are clearly developed and communicated to students, families, and schools
4. Building structures that support the instructional that all students are receiving, including having standard procedures for special populations (special education, gifted and talented, and ELL students)

*Implementation of Extended Learning for High Schools and Summer Learning Experiences for All Students*

Beginning February 15, 2021, all high school students have access to extended learning sessions after school four days per week. This additional time allows students access to a certified teacher for academic help as we all work to make up lost learning due to COVID. These after school sessions will be offered for the remainder of this school year.

Also, plans are under way to design a robust summer school option for students that target the three board goal areas, including Algebra and Algebra readiness. Curriculum is being prioritized for effective learning recovery and intentional efforts are being made to strengthen community partnerships. The district believes that this will create an environment of aligned, focused teaching and learning over the summer months.