

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education**  
**Progress Monitoring Report (Grade 3 English Language Arts)**  
**March 2022**

**Introduction – What is Being Monitored**

The focus of this progress monitoring summary is Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) performance. A goal of Strategic Plan 2024 is to increase the percent of students that score College and Career Ready - a Level 4 or 5 – on the state’s End-of-Grade (EOG) assessment. Specifically, our Grade 3 ELA goal is to increase College and Career Ready rates from **47%** in SY2016-17 to **80%** in SY2023-24.

Beginning on July 1, 2022, the district will transition from Strategic Plan 2024 Goals and Targets to the Board’s recently adopted Goals and Guardrails. The Board’s Grade 3 ELA goal is to increase the percent of Black and Hispanic 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students combined who score at the College and Career Ready (CCR) level -- a Level 4 or 5 -- in English Language Arts (ELA) from **15.9%** in October 2021 to **50.0%** by October 2024.

Three different metrics will be shared in this monitoring report:

- Target College and Career Ready (CCR) Rates,
- Actual College and Career Ready (CCR) Rates based on students’ performance on End-of-Grade (EOG) exams, and
- Projected College and Career Ready (CCR) Rates based on students’ performance on Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) exams.

MAP performance has been shown to be a good predictor of performance on the EOG, and thus can serve as an indicator of later EOG performance. However, no exam is 100% predictive. An exam can over predict (produce false positives) or under predict (produce false negatives) students’ future performance. We acknowledge these limitations as we use MAP results for this particular purpose.

Results reported here are for students in the aggregate (all students), as well as for Black and Hispanic students combined. We present both to reflect the expiring goals from Strategic Plan 2024, as well as the emerging Goals and Guardrails.

It should be noted that results are not reported for 2019-20 school year. End-of-Year testing across the country was cancelled due to the pandemic. End-of-Grade tests were not administered. No results are available for that school year. Consequently, there is a gap in reporting on Graphs 1 and 2 below for the 2019-20 school year.

**Evaluation of Current Performance: Off-Track**

At the conclusion of first semester, 13.4% of Grade 3 students were projected to score College and Career Ready (CCR) on the Grade 3 English Language Arts EOG this spring (see Graph 1). Comparatively, 5.9% of Grade 3 Black and Hispanic students combined were projected to score College and Career Ready (CCR) on the Grade 3 English Language Arts EOG this spring (see Graph 2). Based on current projections, we are projected to complete the school year off-track.

Grade 3 CCR projections are lower than 2020-21 for all racial subgroups (see Table 1). Again, based on these projections, we are projected to complete the school year off-track. However, projections under predict CCR rates in 2020-21. We anticipate a similar trend this school year.

Graph 1.

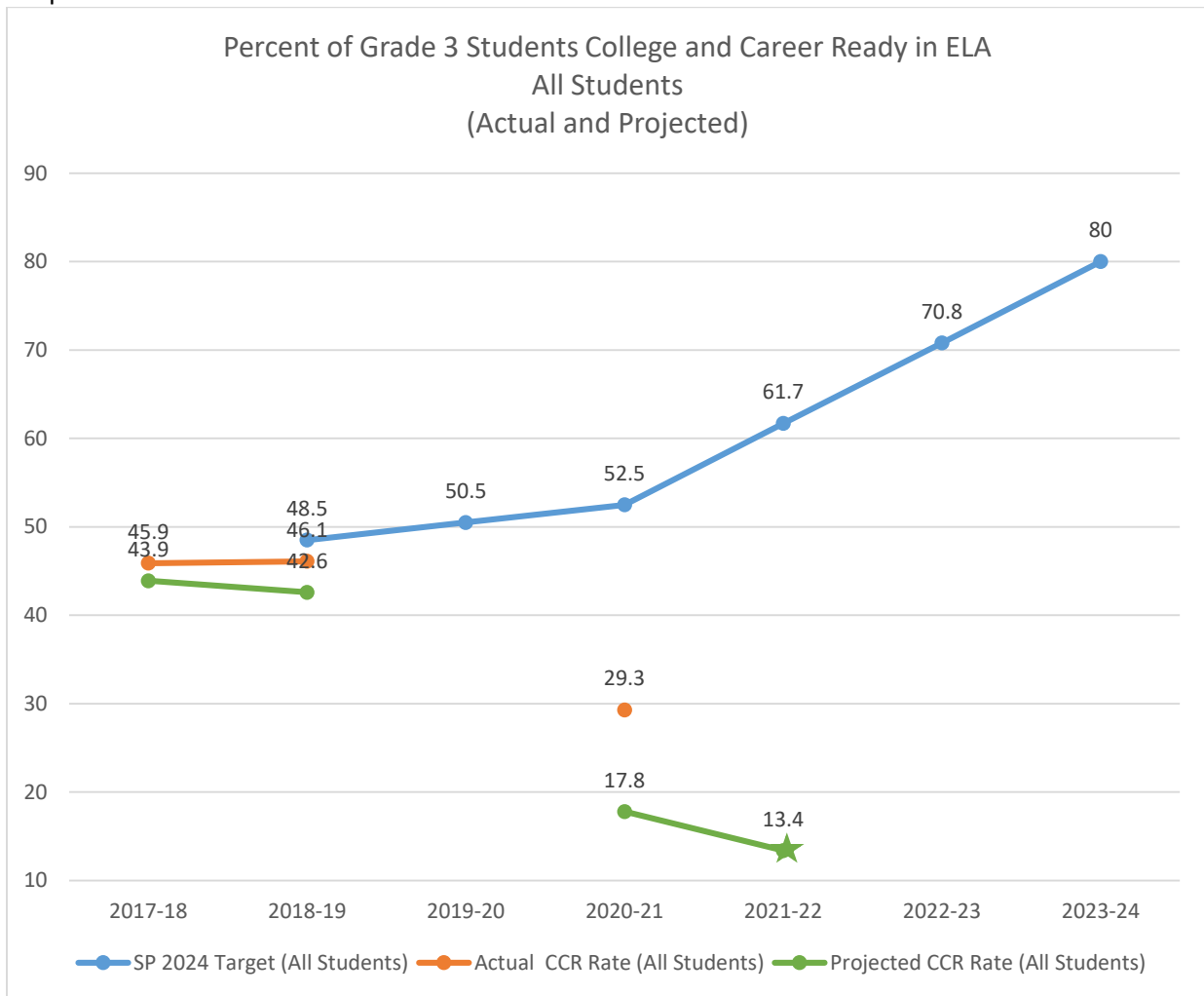
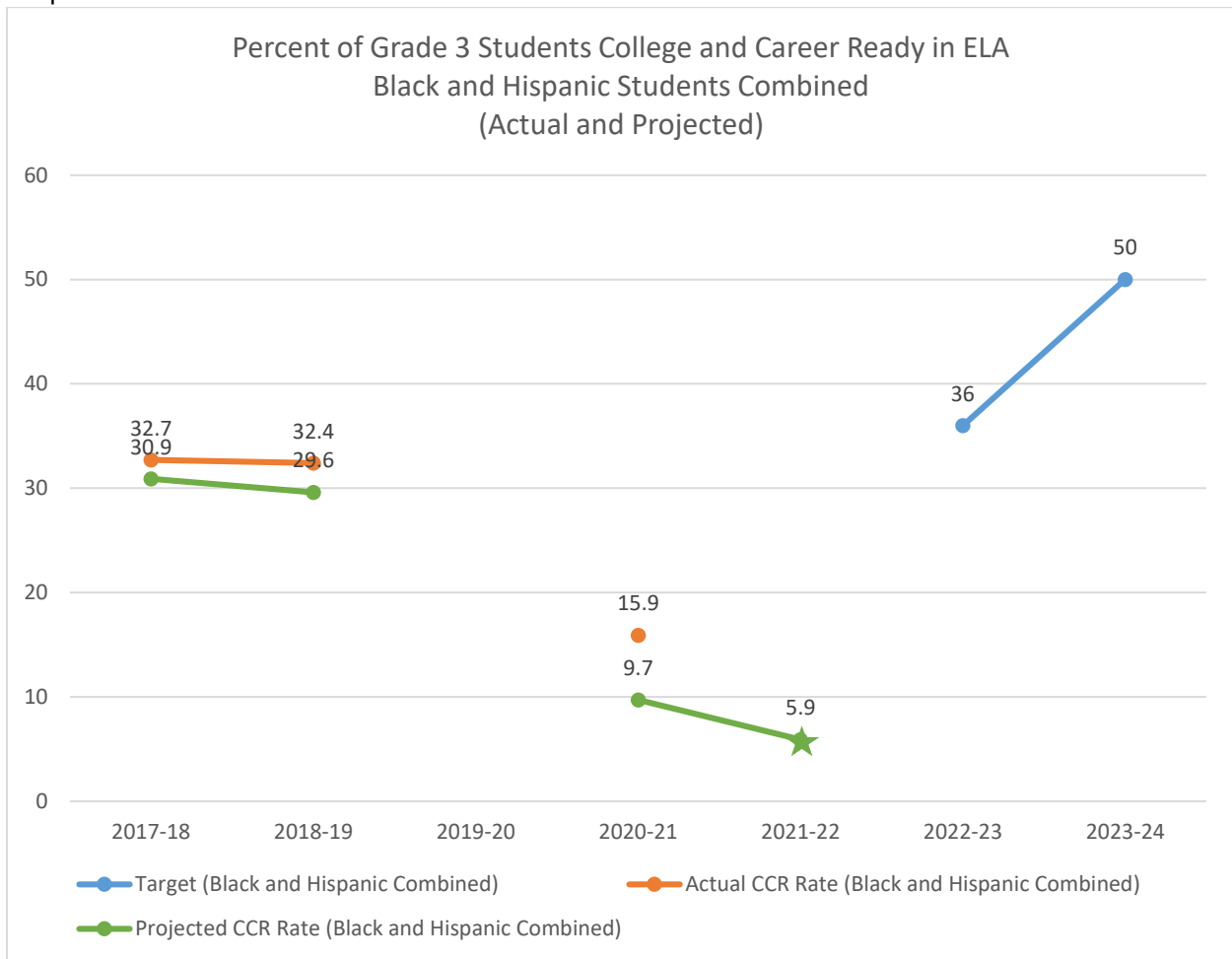


Table 1. Percent of Grade 3 Students Projected to be College and Career Ready on the Grade 3 ELA End-of-Grade (EOG) Exam

	Winter 2021 Projected Pct. CCR	EOY 2021 Pct. CCR	Winter 2022 Projected Pct. CCR	EOY 2022 Pct. CCR	2022 Target
All	17.8	29.3	13.4	TBD	61.7
Asian	32.8	48.9	26.3	TBD	77.0
Black	12.1	17.8	6.8	TBD	53.3
Hispanic	6.9	13.8	4.9	TBD	51.1
Black and Hispanic (Combined)	9.7	15.9	5.9	TBD	-----
White	32.0	57.1	28.8	TBD	81.7

Graph 2.



### Supporting Data

Current third graders experienced pandemic induced disruptions to instruction that have left them behind prior student cohorts. In 2019-20, when our current third graders were in first grade, the pandemic forced us to go to remote instruction for the entire 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of that school year (see Table 2 below). First graders were provided access to packets of instructional materials in two-week intervals. For many students, they lost three months of instruction during this period. In 2020-21, we began their second grade year still in remote, shifting to hybrid in second quarter, having to briefly return to remote instruction in response to a surge of the Delta variant. Though the option of hybrid instruction, a mix of in-person and remote instruction, was offered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of that school year, over 4,000 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students that school year (approximately 35% of all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders) chose to stay remote in their respective schools' Full Remote Academies.

To reduce screen time during remote instruction, a request from families at the time, the daily minutes of direct instruction during literacy block were reduced. Direct instruction during a “live session” was cut to 40 minutes. The remaining 80 minutes of instruction during the literacy block (67% of the literacy instruction) was to be done on a student’s own. Overall, the described disruptions in instruction, accompanied by prolonged remote learning experiences with reduced direct literacy instruction, have contributed to students falling behind and subsequently exhibiting lower academic performance.

Table 2. Instructional Experience of Current 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Students in Grades K-2

Grade	Kindergarten				Grade 1				Grade 2			
School Year	2018-19				2019-20				2020-21			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3 <sup>1</sup>	4
Instructional Modality	In-person				In-person				Remote	Hybrid or Remote	Hybrid or Remote	Hybrid or Remote

The interruptions to instruction described above were exacerbated by high student absenteeism rates. In a review of all current 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, we see a relationship between declines in projected College and Career Readiness in ELA and higher student absenteeism in 2020-21. More specifically, nearly half (43%) of students NOT projected to score College and Career Ready this spring on the Grade 3 EOG in ELA were chronically absent at some point during the last 18 months. Nine percent (9%) were chronically absent as 2<sup>nd</sup> graders last school year (2020-21). Twenty-two percent (22%) were chronically absent through the first semester of this school year in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (2021-22). Twelve percent (12%) were chronically absent last school year as 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and this school year as 3<sup>rd</sup> graders (2020-21 and 2021-22). The cumulative loss of instructional time has been devastating.

Cumulatively, this learning loss has resulted in the majority of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students having under-developed decoding skills. Research reveals that a student’s reading comprehension relies on two sets of skills: 1) the ability to understand spoken language (language skills), and 2) the ability to recognize written words (decoding skills). In 2017-18, seventy-percent (70%) of students that had been with us in grades K-3 had strong decoding skills. As we exit the pandemic, only forty-six percent (46%) of our current third graders have strong decoding skills. Only thirty-four percent (34%) of Black and Hispanic students combined have strong decoding skills. The interruption of instruction has created a system-wide challenge in decoding, a challenge most harshly experienced by Black and Hispanic students.

Despite the pattern of weak decoding skills in a majority of Grade 3 students, some schools have been able to accelerate reading improvements. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment measures a student’s decoding skills. A student’s scores on the DIBELS assessment gives teachers information about whether or not a student is “on track” for grade-level reading success, what is called by some “at benchmark.” First Ward Creative Arts Academy, a school whose student enrollment is 89.2% Black and Hispanic, had the second largest increase in the percent of Black and Hispanic students at or above benchmark from Fall 2021 (Beginning-of-Year assessment – BOY) to Winter 2022 (Middle-of-Year assessment – MOY). First Ward increased the percentage of students at or above benchmark twenty-four (24) percentage points, raising the percentage from 19% to 43% in a single semester. Lessons garnered from the success exhibited at First Ward will be outlined below in the next section.

**Needed Strategic Moves**

To achieve the approaching Grade 3 goal in ELA, we need to increase school capacity, tailor central office supports, and refine our district approach. Informed by lessons from our own schools, such as First Ward Creative Arts Academy, as well as lessons from the field, we are adapting our approach to include the following key aspects (strategic priorities) to increase the percent of Black and Hispanic students CCR in ELA:

<sup>1</sup> The Board voted in January 14, 2021 for students in elementary and K-8 schools to return to hybrid instruction beginning on February 15, 2022.

1. *Speak Consistently About, Plan Intentional for, and Actively Monitor the Academic Progress of Black and Hispanic Students in English Language Arts*

To make progress toward achieving the Board’s ELA goal, we will need to shift from a universal approach for “all students,” to being intentionally focused on the school experience and academic progress of Black and Hispanic students. This will be the intentional focus of district, learning community and school-level work in Grade 3 ELA.

2. *Develop Teacher Capacity to Explicitly Teach Decoding Skills During Core Instruction*

The district currently provides access to literacy instruction trainings such as state subsidized *LETRS* (Language Essentials for Teachers of the Reading and Spelling) training, which teaches the skills needed to master the fundamentals of reading instruction, and district provided trainings on the Orton-Gillingham Approach, a prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling doesn’t come easily to students. Provision of such trainings will be continued, with grade 2 and 3 teachers being given priority, particularly in schools with larger numbers of Black and Hispanic students.

3. *Include Small Group Targeted Instruction as Part of Core Instruction*

Embed small group targeted instruction within daily literacy blocks to tailor instruction to students’ specific needs. With the majority of students operating below grade level in literacy, learning gaps must be addressed for students as part of daily instructional routines. Small groups will be intentionally assigned, so that students with common literacy needs (such as vocabulary development) can receive on-going intentional support.

4. *Make Additional Time for Literacy Instruction Every Day*

As a complement to the daily literacy block, we will work with elementary and K-8 schools to build at least 30 minutes daily into their master schedules for the provision of evidence-based interventions in the area of literacy. Opportunities for acceleration can also be offered during this 30-minute window. Again, teaching to the specific literacy needs identified by various assessments and teacher observations, students can get the help they need as soon as we know they need it, without taking away from vital core instructional time.

5. *Use the Additional Time Intentionally, Methodically Working to Maximize the Number of Students Receiving Evidence-based Interventions*

Closely monitor intervention provision, teacher preparation to provide interventions, and timely monitoring of student progress as part of larger MTSS implementation. This includes the regular review of assignment to invention groups, and monitoring of specific decoding and language skills.

These strategic efforts, if implemented effectively and coherently, can accelerate Black and Hispanic Grade 3 students’ literacy development as seen at First Ward, and other schools such Allenbrook Elementary. We must investigate alternative/new strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism, particularly in the early grades.

### **Needs From You**

We ask for Board advocacy and community leadership in four (4) areas. First, the development of and funding for a county-wide birth to age 5 (0-5) school and reading readiness initiative with a focus on early literacy development. Second, alignment of community resources to support and engage families of the chronically absent, particularly in the early grades. Third, creation of a shared community voice and value for on-time attendance at school each day, every day. Fourth, strengthened teacher preparation statewide in the area of teaching students foundational reading skills, with emphasis on teaching Black and Hispanic students, building on the assets and cultures of their communities.