Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education
Progress Monitoring Report – Performance Summary (State Diploma Endorsements)
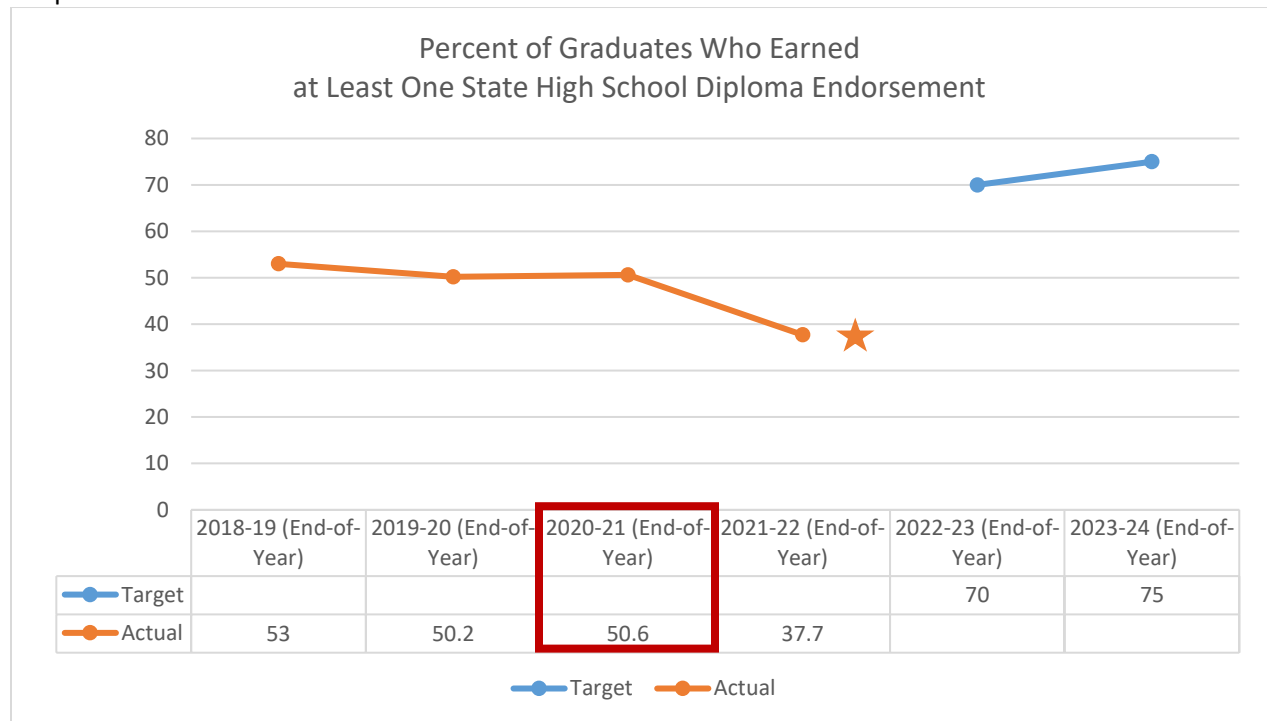**October 2022**

Introduction – What is Being Monitored
Goal 3 of the Board is to increase the _percent of graduates earning a state high school endorsement_ to 75% by June 2024. There are five (5) different state high school diploma endorsements: Career, College, College/UNC, NC Academic Scholars, and Global Languages. The five endorsements are earned based on course taking, grade point average (GPA), reading scores on a nationally norm-referenced exam, and a diversity of other criteria.

Evaluation of Current Performance
In 2021-22, 37.7% of students in the graduating cohort earned at least one state high school diploma endorsement (see Graph 1 below).   If this percentage does not increase dramatically this school year, we will be **Below Target**. However, the data upon which this report is based upon is unreliable. Findings of severe data quality issues this past spring persist as a solution is being developed (see May 2022 Monitoring Report and section below).

Graph 1.

Percent of Graduates Who Earned
at Least One State High School Diploma Endorsement

	2018-19 (End-of-Year)	2019-20 (End-of-Year)	2020-21 (End-of-Year)	2021-22 (End-of-Year)	2022-23 (End-of-Year)	2023-24 (End-of-Year)
Target					70	75
Actual	53	50.2	50.6	37.7		

Supporting Data: Severe Data Quality Concerns
The quality of graduation endorsement data utilized for this report is of poor quality and unreliable. The data systems currently at our disposal (including PowerSchool) are insufficient for us to efficiently and reliably collect data on students projected to earn an endorsement. Efforts to provide an in-year progress report last spring revealed errors in the tabulation and reporting of Global Language Endorsement data, resulting in over reporting of endorsements earned. This error appears to have

affected data reporting over multiple years. The error results primarily from how the Global Language Endorsement data is stored in Power School. Manual processes required in the absence of a suitable digital solution have exacerbated data quality concerns. Furthermore, it was discovered that PowerSchool does not appear to take into account the relatively new reading exam requirement passed in December 2019. Team members reached out to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) regarding the issue with PowerSchool, and the issues have not yet been resolved. This has contributed to additional over reporting. *These errors are significant, and contributed to over reporting of at least 10.6 percentage points in 2020-21. Specifically, we reported 61.2% of graduates in 2021 earned an endorsement, when the actual percentage was 50.6% based on the data stored in PowerSchool. These data errors put our calculations for 2021-22 into question.* Once accurate reporting is established, a new baseline, as well as the new targets, should be strongly considered.

Planned Next Steps
The data quality and integrity issues surfaced point to a variety of necessary strategic moves.   In order to address data quality issues, as well as support more efficient and effective progress monitoring, the following actions were taken:

- Conducted a review of school and central office processes for diploma endorsement reconciling and reporting to determine the depth of process challenges, surface any promising practices, and compare available school-based data with what is being collected in PowerSchool.

- Began development of an internal information system application that will reconcile requirements for each endorsement, and assist with progress monitoring towards earning endorsements. This project is on track to be finalized and will be in use by the beginning of second semester. A beta version of this automated system will be utilized by a pilot group of schools to inform tool functionality and collect input from users to provide insight for training materials. Training materials will be prepared in November, with staff training beginning in December. All high school counselors will have access to the automated system by mid-January, which will be timely for use during student course registration for the 2023-24 school year and second semester scheduling for high school seniors. Counselors will be able to develop post-secondary plans for students that incorporate students' goals, and includes endorsements that might help them meet their goal.

- Convened a district-level focus group of Principals, Assistant Principals, Deans, Counselors and District level staff to vet opportunities for immediate school support with student preparation for the state required ACT exam. Options reviewed and discussed were the provision of: test preparation materials for students, school-based direct prep courses, targeted courses in the Edgenuity platform, and subject test prep guides. The focus group also suggested providing schools with Pre-ACT data, giving subject area teachers training from ACT experts on the exam and how it is scored, forming partnerships with local colleges and universities on ACT training, as well as providing extended employment or creating positions to facilitate school-wide ACT support. Recommendations and feedback were taken by a designated cross-departmental Endorsement Team, and steps have begun to research opportunities. An immediate next step is to send an identified high school representative to an ACT Career Readiness Workshop in October. The Workshop will spend time on topics such as achieving equity for all students, identifying professional development opportunities for educators, and preparing students for key foundational skills. The subcommittee is also researching ACT trainers for school teams to be presented to the Endorsement Team in October.

Of equal or greater importance are actions to help raise our performance in this area. The tactics outlined below revolve around four (4) strategic priorities: 1) awareness about endorsements, 2) focus on endorsements, 3) high school reading mastery, and 4) grade point average. Tactical efforts underway aligned to these strategies include the following:

- Designation of a champion of district efforts in this area. Though several staff people may work on endorsements, no one person was previously assigned as a primary owner of this initiative. Assigning responsibility of this measure to a person will help create focus, prioritization, mitigate data quality challenges, lead progress monitoring, and provide accountability. A cross-departmental Endorsement Team, led by the champion, has been formed which includes members of the offices of Equity and School Performance, Accountability, Advanced Studies, World Languages, Student Services (counseling), Career and Technical Education (CTE), English Learners, and the Magnet office. The team develops and monitors tactical and implementation plans.

- Completion of a resource toolkit for staff, student and family awareness of endorsements through an orchestrated campaign for our 8th through 11th graders. Professional learning sessions for principals, counselors and district support personnel have been developed and delivered. Family and student friendly documents were created for distribution at school sites and through electronic platforms.

- Administration of language proficiency assessments to a broader range of students – beyond just those students successfully completing Honors IV or higher in a World Language – to increase the number of students eligible for the Global Languages Endorsement.

- Leveraging CTE Pathway Development Coordinators at every comprehensive high school to increase the number of CTE concentrators through the promotion of CTE pathways to all students. This includes collaboration with counselors and master schedulers to ensure students can access the next course in their designated pathway. Additionally, CTE Career Development Coordinators promote career pathways by providing work-based learning opportunities to increase interest in students completing a pathway.

- Increasing the number of new students taking CTE pathways through Central Piedmont Community College. Jointly funded College and Career Coaches in 12 comprehensive high schools, where the percentage of students earning endorsements is the lowest, will identify and recruit new students to enroll in the transfer pathways.

- Completion and deployment of the internally developed application to identify seniors who are positioned to earn an endorsement by taking and passing the ACT WorkKeys exam, increasing ACT performance, and/or enrolling in courses second semester that won't prohibit on-time graduation.

- Development of growth targets for each teacher, outlining the number of students that will earn an industry credential. Targets will be based on an analysis of past rates of industry credential attainment. Additional training will be provided for teachers to build capacity regarding certification instruction.

- Utilization of PSAT and Pre-ACT results, the best predictors for how a student will perform on the ACT and SAT, to inform efforts to maximize later SAT and ACT reading performance. This will include the creation of new data reports for school use.

- Emphasis on skills assessed by the ACT Reading Section into English III courses for current 11th graders, who will take the ACT in March 2023.

- Identification of possible incentives and supports for 11th graders to take and excel on the ACT, given that many colleges have made college entrance exams optional.

- Continuation of a partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS). While the focus of EOS is on Advanced Placement, the goal of ACCESS 2024 morphed into including all advanced courses (AP, IB, Cambridge and select CTE). The aim is to expand access for all students, specifically those who have potential but may not have considered taking advanced courses. Selection criteria were expanded by considering qualitative data on mindsets, educational and career goals, teacher recommendations. Strategies that supported student success in the courses included implementation of AVID and redesigning the district teacher support system for AP teachers (Advanced Studies Office). The participation trend continued to increase despite some of the challenges of the last few years. Additionally, while the effort focused on specific populations of students, evidence supported that that there were increases in student enrollment in advanced courses, including honors courses, across all student subgroups. More students are currently projected to participate in advanced courses this fall compared to fall of 2021. Specific next steps are to expand recruitment, academic support, enrollment, and course perseverance best practices.

- Lastly, pre-ACT and ACT composite scores will be tracked to identify and to provide additional support to prepare for/retake the ACT to increase scores

The strategies outlined above are already underway in an effort to maximize results for both 11th and 12th graders.

Requests of the Board
The most efficient and cost effective response to our diploma endorsement data quality issues is for our state's student information system – PowerSchool – to accurately calculate students having earned, or on track to earn, a high school diploma endorsement. Those calculations should be rendered in student, school and district-level reports, and updated nightly, or at least each semester, offering updates at the same frequency of grade point average (GPA) calculations. This response will require PowerSchool to both prioritize and invest in producing this solution. As CMS staff advocate for just this type of investment of time, energy and money with our colleagues at the NC Department of Public Instruction, we ask that you too advocate for such a digital solution with the state.

In the interim, we ask that the Board consider modifying interim goals 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. As Mr. Crabill outlined in his white paper for the Board, *CMS Interim Measures Deep Dive: Continuous Improvement in Action*, if interim metric data are lacking in availability, "…the school board should expect the superintendent to provide an implementation plan with timelines that describe the process involved with going from the current state of not having available data, to the planning process, the piloting process, the district-wide implementation, and finally to data reporting." The monitoring report presented provides that type of response.