

MILESTONE 2: READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY 3RD GRADE

MILESTONE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Frank Hernández
Assistant Superintendent,
Yonkers Public Schools

Lauren S. Parlato
Assistant Director
of Research & Evaluation

Dr. Cynthia Palmer
Director Library Media Services

Luke Schrade
Principal, Patricia A. DiChiaro School

Samantha Crescenzo
Assistant Principal, Kahlil Gibran School

Cameica Fogah
Social Worker

Maria Payano
Teacher, Yonkers Urban
Leadership Academy

Nancy Vigliotti
Teacher, Yonkers Urban
Leadership Academy

What is your 5-year goal for the selected Milestone?

Our aim for this work is to increase the number of 3rd grade young men of color who reach proficiency or excel on the New York State English Language Arts Exam. At this juncture, and subject to refinement (especially an increase) our stated goal is as follows:

- By June 2027, at least 50% of our Yonkers Public School's third grade young men of color will read on grade level as measured by the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam.

Described in more detail below, to accomplish this broad goal, we will start by focusing on the years before 3rd grade, beginning in kindergarten, to examine and describe early reading profiles and to pinpoint emergent areas of needed growth and targeted support. These steps will inform our overall approach, for all learners and especially for under-served sub-groups, including and especially young men of color.

Context for the Work

In Spring 2023, only 34% of Yonkers Public School's third grade young men of color demonstrated proficiency (Level 3) or excelled (Level 4) on the New York State English Language Arts Exam. Yet research shows that reading proficiently by 3rd grade is the greatest predictor of high school graduation. To improve the life and educational opportunities of marginalized young scholars, we must address literacy proficiency as a social determinant of poverty, health, and class among other equity issues.

Effective reading instruction must be: "developmentally appropriate, precise (explicit) instruction about every strand of literacy (letter patterns, vocabulary, usage, comprehension), instruction that includes clear modeling, plenty of practice, and specific feedback on that practice" (Gabriel, 2021).

Our Current Impressions + Insights: Informing our Year 1 Strategic Activity

To create more optimal literacy-learning environments means two important strategic action steps:

- engaging in data use practices to closely monitor student progress, identify early vulnerabilities and areas for support, and respond accordingly
- further developing teachers' literacy content and pedagogical knowledge to engage in data-driven, differentiated literacy instruction; investing in our educators' craft and toolkit is a means of investing in our children.

What progress do you hope to achieve by the end of year one implementation?

FOCUS AREA: Our focus will be to closely examine the performance of the 2023 – 2024 kindergarten cohort of young men of color on the NWEA MAP exam across each of the five pillars in literacy to promote and support students' reading progress and performance.

PROGRESS: By June 2024, at least 40% of our Yonkers Public School's third grade young men of color will read on grade level as measured by the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam.

The NWEA Reading MAP exams students' performance in four main areas:

- MAP GOAL 1: **Literary and Informational Text**
Meaning, Context, Craft, & Structure
- MAP GOAL 2: **Foundational Skills**
Print, Phonological Awareness (K/1), Phonics & Word Recognition (K/1)
- MAP GOAL 3: **Writing and Conventions of Academic English**
Text Types & Purposes, Research, Grammar & Usage, Capitalization, and Spelling
- MAP GOAL 4: **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
Word Meaning & Relationships

Strategic Activity

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To engage school leaders, staff, and teachers on key topics and with direct connections to our literacy curriculum, including using exemplars and examples: 5 Pillars of Literacy, Rigorous instruction (using intellectual engagement framework), Differentiation (content, process, product, and environment) addressing the academic and social-emotional needs of young men of color, and Next Generation Learning Standards.

CURRICULUM + PEDAGOGY

Implementation of literacy framework that incorporates the 5 pillars of literacy, increases reading stamina, and promotes a love of reading using an evidence-based curriculum with a culturally and linguistically responsive approach.

- Research shows that students who see themselves represented in their curriculum, instruction, materials, and resources, are more engaged and achieve higher scores. Thus, to revolutionize reading instruction we must provide culturally responsive pedagogy, integrate digital literacy, and promote students' love of reading and choice.

"It is our duty as educators to teach skills, but also to teach students to know, validate, and celebrate who they are."

— DR. GHOLDY MUHAMMAD

DATA USE

Use protocols to analyze qualitative and quantitative data to drive instructional practice to inform teaching, leading, and learning.

- Our goal is to continue to review data using a disproportionality lens to analyze patterns, trends, and outliers across reading strands for our young men of color as indicated by the NWEA MAP data.
- In analyzing qualitative data, we will examine surveys to identify how parents, students, and teachers feel about literacy instruction in our district.
- we will review reader interest surveys to learn more about our students as readers and conduct focus groups with teachers, students, and school leaders to gather more information regarding what is working and what needs to change.

TARGETED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS

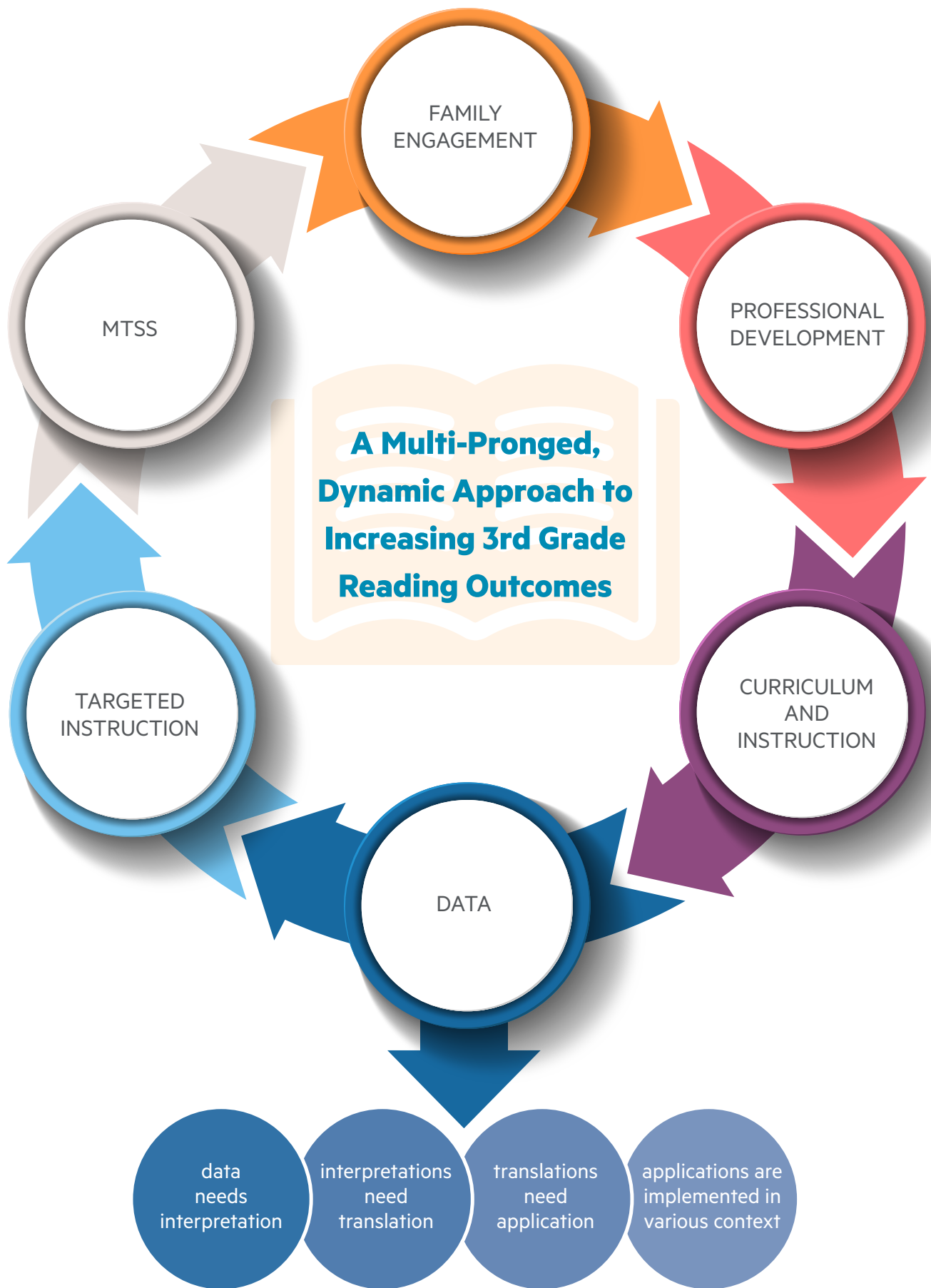
Before and after school enrichment programs with an established criterion to support grade level proficiency for our kindergarten young men of color.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

Training and support on ways to increase reading proficiency in the home and promote life-long readers. Strategies to create a culture of literacy for our kindergarten young men of color.

ACADEMIC & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

Use of Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention/enrichment to accelerate learning to address academic and social-emotional needs of young men of color. Students will receive appropriate supports across Tiers I, II, & III. Teachers will differentiate content, process, product, and/or learning environment for students across each Tier.



Fall Performance & Progress Monitoring Strategy:

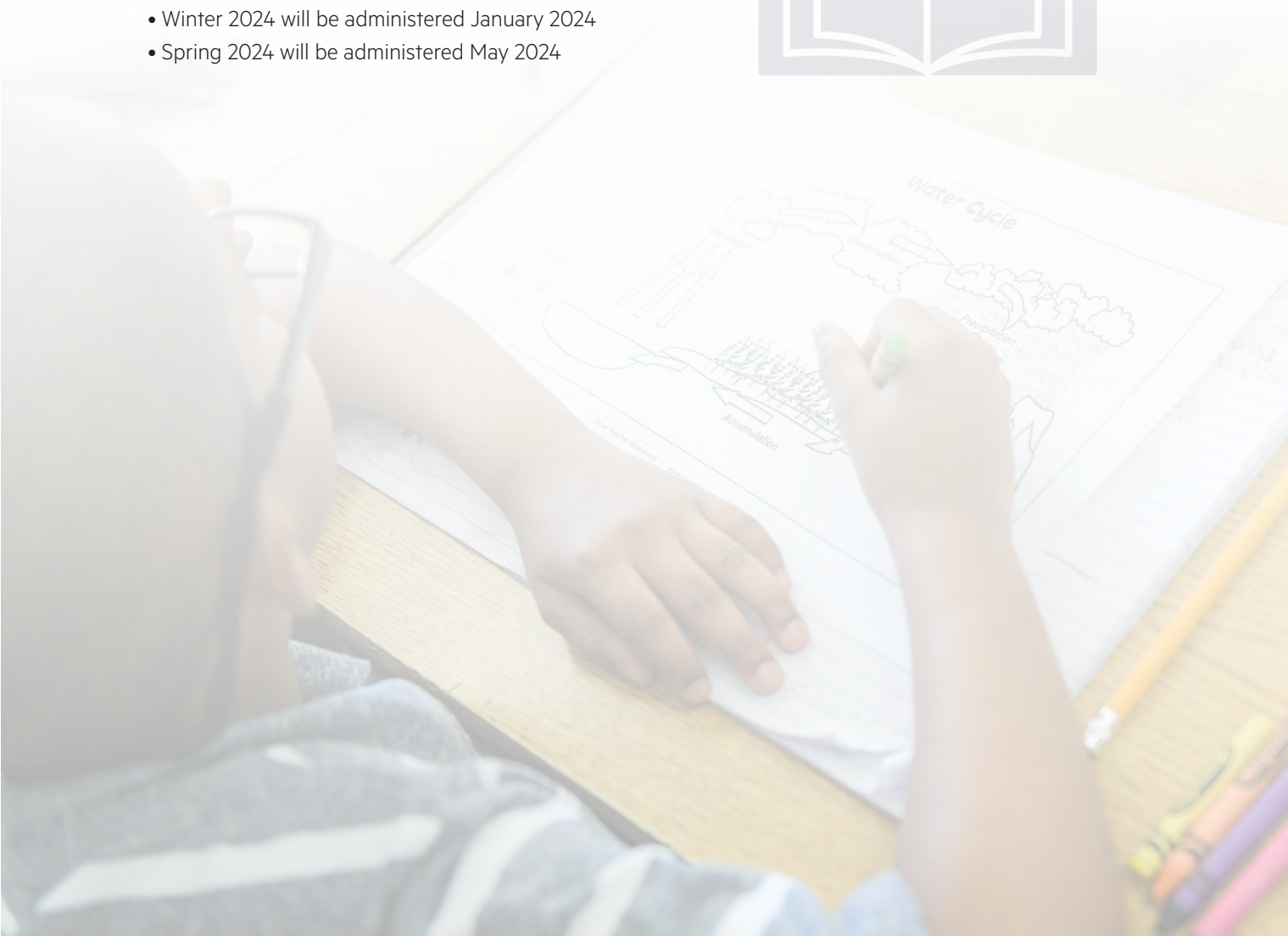
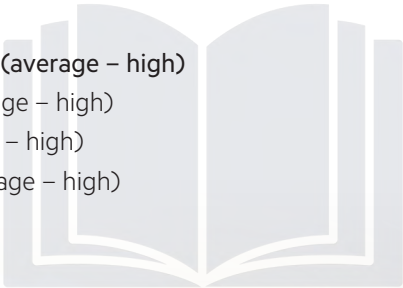
Progress will be monitored on a district level using NWEA MAP Growth projected proficiency reports. These diagnostic assessments are administered 3X/year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Schools will continuously monitor progress during instruction, teacher team and PLC meetings using MAP Growth reports.

Performance of YPS Young Men of Color
KINDERGARTEN – SECOND GRADE READING MAP GROWTH ASSESSMENT

GRADE	FALL 2023	WINTER 2024	SPRING 2024
Kindergarten	49%		
First Grade	31%		
Second Grade	36%		

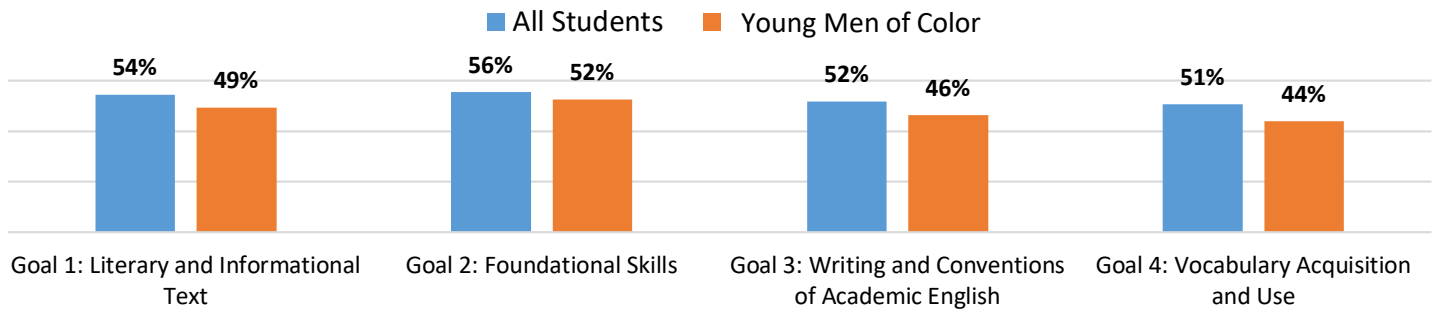
Notes – Fall 2023 MAP

- Kindergarten – Second Grade: 46% of all students are on track (average – high)
- Kindergarten: 49% of our young men of color are on track (average – high)
- First Grade: 31% of our young men of color are on track (average – high)
- Second Grade: 36% of our young men of color are on track (average – high)
- Winter 2024 will be administered January 2024
- Spring 2024 will be administered May 2024



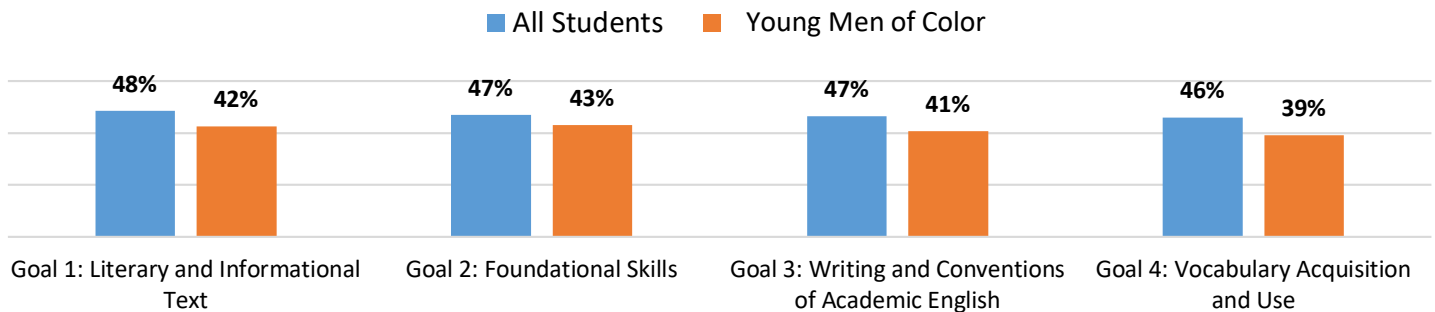
Appendix: Fall Map Performance

2023 Fall NWEA MAP ELA % On-Track (Avg-High) by Goal - Kindergarten



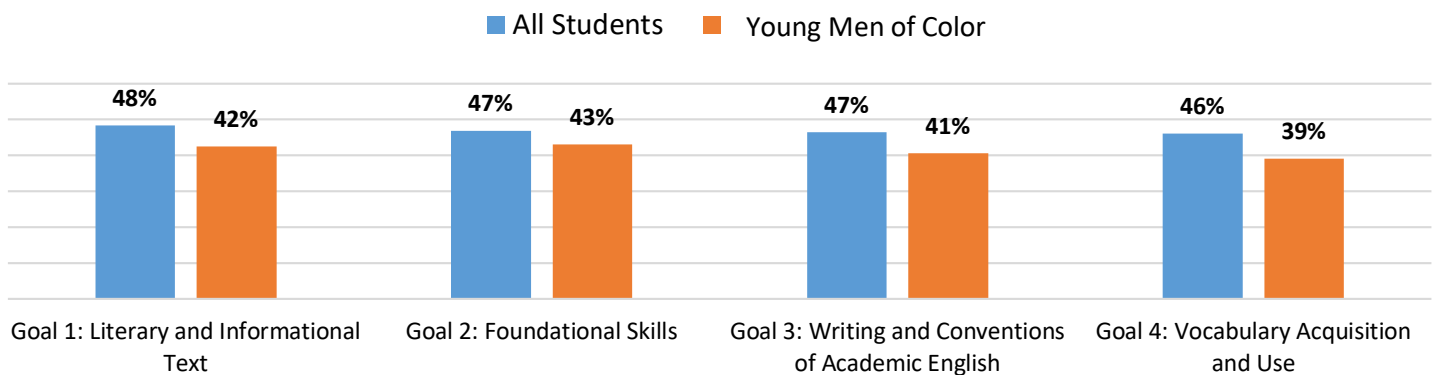
- Overall YPS Kindergarteners performed highest in foundational skills
- Kindergarten young men of color performed highest in foundational skills
- Overall YPS Kindergarteners performed lowest in Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Kindergarten young men of color performed lowest Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Overall goals 1 & 2 are stronger for all YPS Kindergarteners than goals 3 & 4

2023 Fall NWEA MAP ELA % On-Track (Avg-High) by Goal - Grade 1



- Overall YPS First Graders performed slightly higher in literacy and information text
- First grade young men of color performed highest in foundational skills
- Overall YPS First Graders performed lowest in Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- First grade young men of color performed lowest Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Overall goals 1 & 2 are stronger for all YPS First Graders than goals 3 & 4

2023 Fall NWEA MAP ELA % On-Track (Avg-High) by Goal - Grade 2



- Overall YPS Second Graders performed slightly higher in literacy and information text
- Second grade young men of color performed highest in foundational skills
- Overall YPS Second Graders performed lowest in Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Second grade young men of color performed lowest Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Overall goals 1 & 2 are stronger for all YPS Second graders than goals 3 & 4