



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

District evaluates Summit Learning program

Board addresses parent concerns and identifies areas of improvement

Summit Learning, a personalized-learning platform currently used at 10 schools in Davis School District, will undergo some adjustments to improve the student learning experience.

That was the conclusion reached Tuesday after Davis School District Board of Education members addressed concerns raised by parents about the program's implementation and academic outcomes.

Summit Learning began at Farmington High when the school opened in 2018, followed by Farmington Elementary in 2019, then Centennial, Farmington, Legacy, Mueller Park and North Davis junior high schools and Clearfield High in 2020 and Bluff Ridge and Clinton elementary schools in 2021.

Summit is a computer-based platform that students and teachers use to gauge student progress and understanding based on standards in the curriculum.

Implementing Summit Learning in future

Board Vice President Marie Stevenson asked if the district has a protocol in place for schools considering Summit Learning. While no schools in the district are looking to add the program for the upcoming school year, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Logan Toone told board members the district is adopting a standardized process.

"For schools moving forward, we will be working with district administration to establish a set of expectations and criteria by which the appropriate stakeholders are involved in making big decisions about platforms for the schools, said Toone. "In making that (decision), we're going to look to the lessons that we've learned from the schools that have done it."

Tracking student learning

Board Member Gordon Eckersley brought up a concern from parents regarding the increased stress upon students.

"On many occasions, they have expressed that their student in the past has done very, very well, they've gotten very good grades and now with the Summit program, they

are taking the tests, they are failing, they are taking it again, they're failing, and they are starting to lose confidence in themselves and their ability to learn," said Eckersley.

Teaching and Learning Director Belinda Kuck explained that in a traditional learning system, there are typically two defined times of stress for students — mid-terms and finals, as opposed to the Summit Learning system that identifies student progress each day.

"Now with a system that is robust ... that tracks all those assignments that are required and what should be happening on a daily basis to be able to pace us throughout the year, I think that contributes to that feeling of, 'I'm behind, I'm overwhelmed, how do I catch up?'" said Kuck.

"...in every classroom, every day across Davis School District, we have teachers using digital tools to blend the instruction for our students because, in many of those tools, there is immediate data and instructional adjustments can be made."

— Teaching and Learning Director Belinda Kuck

"Part of our challenge in the system when we report, it says failing ... when that's not really true. The student's not failing, they are just off track, so we have some updates in our system that we need to do so that we can either have an OT for off track,

or an incomplete because the student is not complete with the course, but the student really is being successful," she said.

North Davis Junior High Principal Dr. Tyler Poll said the school is working to ease the stress on students with the help of mentoring class periods and student success coordinators for every core subject.

"I think learning can be stressful ... so we are very aware of the impact that learning has on our students and we want to help them be as successful as possible," said Poll.

"For the first time ever, we have data that we don't have to wait until midterm or end of term to intervene," he said. "We know the day after if a student understands the content or if they don't understand the content, so those student success coordinators have been imperative because instead of having an autopsy intervention at the end of the term, they have Instacare intervention and can support that student the day after they didn't learn the concept."

See SUMMIT LEARNING, Pg. 2

SUMMIT LEARNING, from Pg. 1

Using digital tools

Board Member Julie Tanner brought up a concern from parents regarding the amount of time students spend learning online compared to teacher instruction.

Toone told board members that students spend an average of 33 minutes per day online with the Summit Learning program.

“If it looks or feels like the teacher and interpersonal interactions with the teacher have been replaced by an online system, then we are not doing it right. That’s not the intent of the program ...” said Toone.

“We are trying to get as much enhanced interpersonal interaction, which means it’s not enhanced in terms of more minutes ... but enhanced by virtue of making sure that those personal interactions that teachers have with students are focused on what that student needs in a very personalized way,” he said. “That’s not true just of Summit, that is true of all our efforts in blended and personalized work.”

Additionally, Kuck pointed out that digital tools are used in every classroom across the district, not just in classes implementing Summit Learning.

“I would say that in every classroom, every day across Davis School District, we have teachers using digital tools to blend the instruction for our students because, in many of those tools, there is immediate data and instructional adjustments can be made,” said Kuck.

Helping students with IEPs or 504s

Board President John Robison asked how Summit Learning works for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 learning plan.

Kuck said Summit Learning uses a variety of methods for students with learning challenges — immediate access to data for tailoring instruction, reducing the number of questions in assessments, using text-to-speech and speech-to-text digital options, accessing additional language arts and math videos and increasing teacher assistant support in schools.

Farmington High Principal Rich Swanson said his school’s Special Education Department is laser focused on helping students.

“Each year at Farmington High school, we’ve signed four to five different students out of special education,” said Swanson.

“Just in the IEPs where I have sat in, the parents have said, ‘My student no longer needs this IEP,’ because the thing that we see in majority of IEPs is extended time, breaking down assignments into smaller chunks and having things read to them. This is something every student within our building has the opportunity to access at Farmington High School,” he said.

Standards-based system impacting grades

Board Member Liz Mumford pointed out that Summit Learning is a precursor to the district moving towards standards-based grading and asked if that is driving student anxiety.

“A standards-based system assesses a student’s skill in both professional skills and skills related to content,” said Kuck. “We want to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate that learning and have an opportunity to continue to learn and grow.”

Earlier in the meeting, Kuck mentioned that adopting a new system does come with a learning curve.

“We’re still struggling to find the balance and find the gaps and holes and that’s typical of any curriculum adoption. It takes about three years to finally have the curriculum adoption exactly where you want it with the district having worked with teachers identifying gaps and holes, building district-created resources to meet those things.”

Toone said the district will set up an independent study to look student-level impacts of learning systems, including Summit Learning.

As the meeting concluded after a long discussion, Board President John Robison said the district is on the right track with Summit Learning.

“Much of what we’ve heard as board members has to do with the like or the dislike of Summit, but I think what I take from tonight is this — the closer we can get ... to what that struggle is, the closer we can get to identifying that and the better we are capable as educators to help you as a parent and to help your child get in a path that is more productive, builds more confidence and he or she experiences more success,” said Robison.

Information shared with participants of the board meeting included a 20-page packet, which can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/3iwYkN8>

In other business, the Board of Education approved:

- Fee schedules for high school, junior high and elementary schools. The secondary fee schedule includes an increase of \$400 to a maximum of \$1,400 for student trips and a \$35 activity fee.

Board member Cheryl Phipps expressed concerns about equity with fee schedules. Business Administrator Craig Carter said policies are in place that ensure students with income limitations can participate via fee waivers. Additionally, funding is allocated from the district to make sure that no unfair burden is placed on one school over the others.

- Briskey Plumbing Specialists with a bid of about \$1.6 million for a HVAC replacement project at Crestview Elementary.

- A partial roof replacement at North Davis Junior High by Heritage Roofing with a bid of \$639,800.