



# Superintendent Update

DERRY TOWNSHIP SD | JUNE 16 2021

## LEARNING LOSS VS LEARNING LAG

BY DR. WINSLOW

The media has been rife with stories regarding the detrimental effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on education, in particular emphasizing the concept of Learning Loss. Learning Loss as it is being portrayed is not a real phenomenon. Once learning has been acquired, it cannot just be lost (it's not a sock in the dryer!) What reporters are really talking about when they are touting the issues with learning loss, is interrupted learning. This is a very real problem and is usually seen in our students who come to school after more than one year in a refugee camp or situation. These students are often referred to as SIFEs (Students with Interrupted Formal Education). A full interruption in education can take many years to remedy, even with intense intervention.

What COVID-19 has caused for some students, particularly here at Derry Township is a bit of learning lag.

Learning Lag occurs when students are able to continue with their formal education, but other circumstances (in this case a global pandemic) impact the amount of time dedicated to learning and the amount of material that is able to be covered and more importantly reinforced. Learning lag is much easier to remedy and with a focus on acceleration (supported instruction and exposure to grade level learning), generally disappears in a matter of weeks. We are confident that we have the structures in place to offer the appropriate support for any identified learning lag that has occurred for our students.

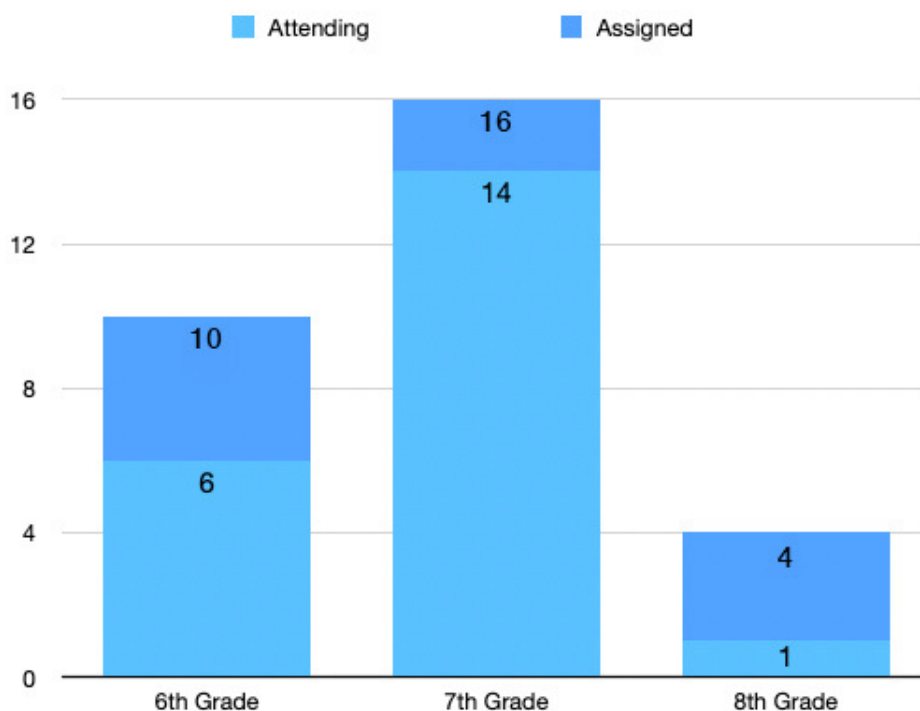
This week's newsletter is focusing on our students that we believe had interrupted education this past year. Due to family circumstances or other issues the student did not or was not able to engage in the learning process. While there was initially a fear that this could be 100 or more students, when it came time to analyze the numbers, it became clear that we were looking at a very small number of students. (See graphic)

Mr. Valentin worked with his middle school team to develop a Summer State Standards Remediation opportunity to address the learning loss this group of students is facing.

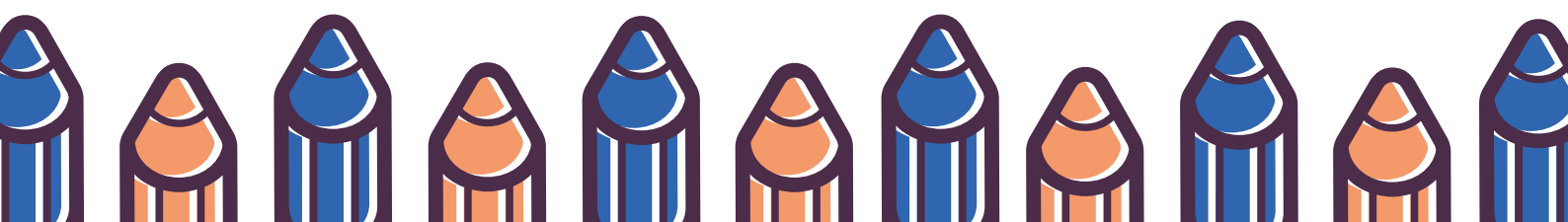
While grade level retention is an option that some state legislators are offering up as a solution to potential learning loss, we know from years of research that grade level retention is rarely, if ever, an effective means for “catching students up.” In fact, Hattie's research on maximizing impact indicates that retention actually has a negative impact on learning, -0.13 to be exact.

In other words, by retaining a student in a grade level, their learning regresses, it does not accelerate at all. The goal of the summer remediation program is to offer students the grade level content in mathematics and ELA that we know they missed in an effort to avoid grade level retention. In this three week period of time we can offer a full marking period’s worth of learning that will enable students to be successful, with support, as they move into the next grade level.

Sources:  
 Hattie, John. *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*. Routledge, 2012.



*Students assigned summer remediation vs attending at Hershey Middle School*



## WHAT ARE WE READING AND LISTENING TO?



***Think Again by Adam Grant:*** This book walks the reader through common mistakes in difficult conversations. Grant asserts that (regardless of chosen career) we take on the role of preacher, prosecutor or politician when trying to influence others, when what we really should be doing is acting like scientists.



***Leading the Rebound by Nancy Frey & Douglas Fischer:*** Frey & Fischer tackle the basics of what leaders and teachers need to know as we come out of pandemic teaching. They emphasize the importance of student agency and school wide systems (future newsletter topics).

***Work Life Podcast by Adam Grant:*** Grant tackles a variety of topics that can make work difficult. His interviews and insights are enlightening and entertaining. You can find Work Life in Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts.



***The Bomber Mafia by Malcolm Gladwell:*** Audiobook - Gladwell has published this book in hardcover, but the audio version is completely enthralling with historical interviews, archival recordings, and first hand accounts of the role of bombing in WWII.

