

OPS Board Agenda

Q & A

July 2025

(III.A)-PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2- Are cohort groups consistent year over year?

There can be variability from year to year and/or they can be consistent....there really is no exact answer to this question. In a school our size, cohort performance can be greatly affected by the transfer in/out of learners...we've seen that happen during this school year. What is important for us is how we monitor, respond to, and support each cohort for the years they are with us. We feel we have systems that are in place now to deal with inconsistency or, for that matter, consistency of cohorts.

(III.A)-PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2-How reliable is STAR Math in detecting growth across short intervals like fall to early winter?

STAR Math is a reliable assessment tool for detecting student growth over short intervals like fall to early winter (about .90 reliability) STAR is an adaptive test, nationally normed, and statistically validated.. However, a few key points to keep in mind: Short-interval growth may be harder to show, especially for students already at or above grade level, younger learners, or those that have poor attendance. Instructional consistency and curriculum pacing between test windows also play a major role — if new concepts haven't yet been introduced, growth may not be fully captured. We report progress to the board and public using STAR; But, our daily planning and instruction includes information garnered from multiple assessment sources, including but not limited to: STAR, classroom-based assessments, and teacher observation.

(III.A)-PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2-How is student progress monitored between STAR assessments, and how are results used to adjust instruction?

Student progress is monitored through a combination of curriculum-based measures, classroom assessments, and skill checks aligned to our state standards. Teachers use summative and formative assessments, exit tickets, and observations to determine mastery or identify gaps in skill attainment. We progress monitor our intervention students every 2–4 weeks, depending on their tier level using STAR CBMs or other skill-specific probes, allowing us to track whether our interventions are working. Once assessments are administered we use the data to identify strengths, skill gaps, and trends. We are constantly adjusting instructional groups or intervention time based on current needs. Again, STAR data is important...but what we do daily in our classrooms is KEY to helping us adjust instruction and increase learning.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2-Was there a common cause identified for the repeated declines in performance following each season gain?

Pinpointing a common cause is almost impossible...way too much variability with our little humans and all that is at the table affecting their learning on a day-to-day basis. However, we have made educated guesses at to contributing factors that include attendance, testing fatigue, lapses in urgency/motivation as the year progresses, and misalignment between STAR content and ND State Standards. We've shared our thoughts on these in the past and we continue to focus on trying to combat areas that we believe affect our performance and we are constantly working on ways to adjust things that we can control as adults here at school—instructional pacing, revisiting high-priority standards, and boosting learner engagement.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2-How do STAR Math scores correlate with classroom grades?

We haven't invested the time into doing a long-term comparison of classroom "grades" with STAR in the elementary. However, based on ongoing observations and informal comparisons, we've found that the two data points generally align well—particularly for students performing in the Red (urgent intervention) and Yellow (intervention) categories. Students identified by STAR as needing significant support often reflect that same need in classroom performance—struggling with grade-level concepts, missing foundational skills, or requiring frequent reteaching. While STAR provides a

snapshot of proficiency and growth, scores on standards are a more comprehensive measure of day-to-day performance.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2-Can you explain the incentive system for elementary in more detail?

Last year, we implemented a tiered incentive system tied to NDSA performance to recognize and celebrate learner achievement. Students who scored Proficient or Advanced in one subject earned a treat and an extra recess. Those who scored Proficient or Advanced in two subjects were invited to the park with Mr. Dobitz for ice cream. Our 4th graders, who took the science assessment, received an additional reward: if they scored Proficient or Advanced in all three subjects, they attended a special "party" where they could watch a movie and enjoy snacks. This year, because NDSA results won't be available until the fall, we adjusted the incentive structure to focus on STAR benchmark performance. Students (K-6) who scored in the green (at or above the 50th percentile) earned an extra recess and a treat (Mr. Dobitz cleaned out the popsicle freezer at Millers 😊). Many of our teachers also offer small, classroom-based incentives tied to STAR growth or strong benchmark performance, helping reinforce the importance of effort and improvement. To be honest, it's impressive how motivated and focused our learners become when something as simple as a treat or extra recess is on the line. These incentives aren't just about rewards—they're about building momentum, setting goals, and celebrating academic success in a way that's meaningful to elementary-aged learners. We plan to continue refining this system moving forward, using both STAR and NDSA data to encourage and recognize growth and proficiency throughout the year.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.1 & 2.2-We talk about the "summer slide" and know why it happens. Do we know why we are having the late winter slide in test scores?

Pinpointing a common cause is almost impossible...way too much variability with our little humans and all that is at the table affecting their learning on a day-to-day basis. However, we have made educated guesses at contributing factors that include attendance, testing fatigue, lapses in urgency/motivation as the year progresses, and misalignment between STAR content and ND State Standards. We've shared our thoughts on these in the past and we continue to focus on trying to combat areas that we believe affect our performance and we are constantly working on ways to adjust things that we can control as adults here at school—instructional pacing, revisiting high-priority standards, and boosting learner engagement.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.3 -With our 10th graders scoring 90%, is this skewing our data? Job well done by our educators & our 10th graders!

It's possible that our 10th graders scoring at 90% is skewing the overall data a bit—but it's also true that our lower-performing groups could be pulling the average down. The reality is both ends of the spectrum influence the overall picture. That said, our 10th-grade group has clearly performed very well, and that's a reflection of both their hard work and the strong, consistent instruction they've received from their teachers.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.3-What will interventions look like in the junior high and high school level?

At the JH and HS levels, interventions will focus on giving students the chance at targeted help during study halls or intervention periods. Staff will work with small groups or individuals to reteach key skills or practice these skills.

(III.A)- PM Goal #2 Math-GPM 2.3-Will the incorporation of math in Title I be done in the junior high and high school as well?

The high school is not a Title I school; therefore, Title I math services won't extend into these grades. Students will still get extra support through tools we already have in place. The goal is to meet kids where they are and help them build confidence and catch up where needed.

(IV.C)- PM Guardrail #2 -Effective Instruction-In Guardrail PM 2.2, you mention that designing learner centered assessments is a big lift for our educators. Will the time involved decrease once they have fully designed the assessments? Will it be something that will just need tweaking as time goes on & not as time consuming as when originally designing the assessments?

This is very encouraging to see the large growth in our educators for this guardrail. Compliments to our staff for attaining this growth & to our admin for providing the PD & tools to get them there.

Designing learner-centered assessments requires educators to move beyond traditional tests and create tasks that are personalized, standards-aligned, and meaningful to students. It also means educators need to rethink how success is measured—shifting from rote recall to demonstrations of deeper understanding and application across content. The biggest lift is the absolute need to ensure that they move beyond our traditional system of “averaging” grades to true standards-based reporting. It takes time and collaboration to develop assessments that are rigorous and responsive to individual learner needs....hopefully, once the initial shift happens time spent will decrease and only small adjustments will need to happen to keep pace. But while the work is a big lift, the payoff is greater student engagement and more accurate insight into what students truly know and can do!

(IV.C)- PM Guardrail #2-Can you tell us more about the Avanti learning platform?

Avanti is an online professional development platform that personalizes educator learning. It provides a centralized space where teachers and instructional leaders can access curated, standards-aligned professional learning content—anytime, anywhere. We decided to purchase Avanti because we believe it will help us shift from one-size-fits-all PD days to a **more flexible, relevant, and learner-driven model** for our staff. Avanti offers personalized learning paths, microlearning asynchronous modules, job-embedded reflection, and progress tracking/reporting. The content of the Avanti platform aligns with our schoolwide goals, it offers equity, and it facilitates personalized access allowing for that voice and choice for our professional learners.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget-Does the second reading have to be approved at the July meeting?

Yes. On August 10, we must have a preliminary budget available to the public. It can be amended up to October 10 when we need to notify the County Auditor our mill levies.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- On the Per Pupil Aid, the budget shows an increase of approximately \$132,629. During negotiations, we were using approximately \$79,800. What changed? Or is the difference because our actual for 24-25 was more than what we had budgeted?

DPI guidance was to calculate the PPA using "our" expected numbers as we usually have a better idea of the numbers coming in than DPI does when doing the projections. We did use DPI's number for the budget though.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- Does this budget max out our mils for each category again - general 70 mils, building 20 mils, special reserve 3 mils, miscellaneous 12 mils? Our taxable valuation increased & some of the tax levy amounts increased but some decreased. This is because our valuation increased over 5% and we can only assess 3% over last year, correct?

We will know more within the next 2 weeks after Don Flaherty and Wanda Sheppard get us more solid numbers. If our overall valuations increase more than 3%, no, we will not be maxed out. Shannon has visited with Don Flaherty and he told her Dickey county commercial and residential were reassessed and we could see an increase between \$700,000-\$800,000. They don't know any numbers from the other 3 counties. Because we had property values decrease, NDCC allowed Wanda to levy slightly more in the general fund (70.22) and Misc (12.04) and building (20.06). We have those extra small mills to maybe work in our favor.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- Does this budget have anything included for tuition levy? And if we do assess for this, does those funds go into the general fund?

No. We did not include a tuition levy. Yes, Those funds go into the general fund using a separate project code for income and expenditures. We are currently not using those accounts since we do not have a tuition levy.

IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- Wouldn't we want to show the 50% of the special reserve fund transfer to the general fund?

We decided **not** to include a special reserve transfer. Instead, hoping we could start to increase that amount and have those dollars protected and available for future use since the forecast coming from the state for funding is looking less than stellar in the next biennium.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- Was there a change in the Federal Grant Title I? We had the same amount for the prior 3 years & the budget has an increase of about \$60,000.

Yes there was a change in how Title I was calculated. The \$157,534 is the last number that we received from NDDPI. We did receive communication from Kirsten Baesler that our Title I funding amounts, which traditionally are released on July 1, are delayed with passage of the funding bill. So, for now, we are on hold to know the exact amount of Title I funds.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- The elementary counselor expense shows an increase of about \$60,000 over last year's budget. Why is that so large?

This was an error...We had the \$60,000 of the JSHS counselor in the EL counselor number. This has been changed, and a corrected copy of the preliminary budget is in the board packet in One Drive.

(IV.D)- 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget- You are budgeting \$60,000 for JH/HS Counselor. There was none in last year's budget. I know that the counselor is SRCTC's employee. Where was our reimbursement to SRCTC accounted for in last year's budget?

The quarterly assessments amount due to the SRCTC are included in the SRCTC tuition line. 24-25 they were \$67,054 per quarter. We haven't heard from SRCTC yet what the 25-26 number will be, so we used the 24-25 amount in the preliminary budget.

(IV.R)-2025-2026 Fee Schedule- Where are our fees sitting compared to schools around us?

July is the month when school boards set their fees for the year, so I do not have current fee amounts to share. I do have comparisons from last year and we are lower than some and we are higher than some. It is necessary for us to seek additional revenue due to our declining enrollment and the effect on our state-funding...and that includes everything from raising lunch prices to charging more for athletic participation and attendance.

(IV.T) Bus Purchase-Can we try selling Bus #9? Maybe we could get a little money for it.

Yes, we can. In fact, Dave and I made the decision to bring the sale of this item to the board for approval in August. You will be seeing it on the agenda next month.