

Rita Murphy Elementary School
Comprehensive Needs Assessment
May 2025

School Profile

Rita Murphy Elementary School is one of the Bismarck Public School District's eighteen elementary schools and is located in the eastern part of Bismarck. Rita Murphy Elementary School, named after a highly regarded English teacher in the Bismarck Public Schools, opened in September of 1969 with an enrollment of approximately 150 students. Since that time, the district has built three additions to the school. In 2007 the last of the three construction projects was concluded, which included eight regular classrooms, several specialist areas, a library/media center, a music room, and a cafeteria/multipurpose room.

The enrollment at Rita Murphy at the conclusion of the 2024-25 school was 366 students in grades K-5. The student base is made up of neighborhood children as well as those from rural areas to the east of the city of Bismarck.

Rita Murphy has a dedicated faculty of eighteen classroom teachers as well as specialists in the areas of instructional coaching, reading, physical education, vocal and instrumental music, library/media, english learner, gifted education, special education and counseling. The entire teaching staff at Rita Murphy consists of thirty-five highly qualified professional educators. In addition to the teaching staff, a support staff, made up of secretaries, custodians, cooks, a nurse, a library aide, and instructional aides keeps the school operating smoothly

Rita Murphy Elementary School just finished its first year as a schoolwide Title 1 school. The building has 38% of the 366 student body population who qualify for free and/or reduced meals. This number has continued to increase each school year. Presently, 13% of Rita Murphy's students have an active Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan, 2% receive Gifted and Talented services, and 4% are recognized as students in transition. The population of Rita Murphy consists of about 73% caucasian, 7% American Indian, 1% Asian, 9% African American, and 7% Hispanic.

Rita Murphy Elementary team members consist of thirty-five highly qualified educators. Twenty professional team members have obtained a Master's degree. Our instructional aides are currently highly qualified. Teaching experience at Rita Murphy Elementary ranges from a first year teacher to teachers who have been in the district for over 30 years. Our team members have had many opportunities to attend professional development sessions within the district, including in the areas of literacy, math, and social emotional learning.

Demographic Data

Enrollment:

This year, there were 366 students enrolled at Rita Murphy at the conclusion of the school year.. Rita Murphy's enrollment during the summer of 2022 was reduced with rezoning of the district's boundaries due to the building of a new school. The past two years the school's student population has stabilized. Our projection for next school year is 370.

2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-24
595	590	413	370

Attendance:

Rita Murphy's average daily attendance is tracked by PowerSchool and reviewed weekly by the Student Success Team which is composed of the school Social Worker, the building Principal, and Assistant Principal. A series of letters and interventions are put in place to address concerns of attendance. Interventions include phone calls home, home visits, school meetings, and attendance plans identifying barriers to regular school attendance. Rita Murphy will continue to follow district guidelines regarding student attendance.

Rita Murphy's average yearly attendance for the 2024-25 school year was 94.19% overall, which is a slight increase in comparison to last year. This year's data shows that 35% of the students missed 5 to 9 days, 19.7% missed 10 to 14 days, and 16% of students missed 15 or more days of school.

Mobility/Stability:

Prior to this past school year, the mobility of Rita Murphy had increased yearly to 16.2%, which was a five year high. This year it decreased to approximately 7%, with 16 students coming after the first day and 10 leaving before the last day. We have been unable to identify a specific reason for the recent decrease in mobility rate, but this decrease is very welcomed! Rita Murphy staff realize that while mobility and stability do impact student learning, there are factors in which we as a school cannot control such as economic status, employment changes, transportation, and educational priority. We as a staff continue to strive to be responsive to needs by involving parents in learning events and activities and allowing them to feel a part of the Rita Murphy community. We also work to provide community support for families in need and keep communication open to families so they are willing to receive the support they or their student may need. This year's stability rate was 94% which was an increase from previous years.

Perception Data

Parent & Family Engagement Survey:

This year Rita Murphy Elementary hosted several school events including a fall Open House for kindergarten students and new families, a Title I Annual Parent Information Night with a special presentation by Mark Mindt, a Stem and Stories Night, and a school dance. In addition, we had virtual and in person monthly PTO meetings with childcare to promote family attendance. Parent-teacher conferences were held twice during the school year. Our parent/family attendance for conferences in February, 2025 was 95%. We continue to hold monthly Spirit Celebrations featuring staff and student activities. At these events we also announce first-time Pawsitive Paw recipients for the school year (acknowledged students displaying the Murphy Bs) from each grade level as well as present class trophies for the most Bulldog Barkouts (another positive reinforcement for students and classrooms).

Rita Murphy has continued to implement a monthly family newsletter, engaged in more frequent positive school communication between teachers and families, and embraced cultural backgrounds along with providing parental tips for growing learners at home. A spring Title 1 survey was administered in June, 2025 to parents. The survey asked perceptual questions as well as two open-ended questions. The feedback on these questions was as follows: (40 responses)

Perceptual Questions:	Yes	No	No Opinion
I feel that I have had opportunities to become involved in my child's reading program.	90%	10%	
I have been informed about my child's reading progress throughout the school year.	90%	7.5%	2.5%
I have been given information about how I can help my child with his/her education, such as classroom studying and homework.	92.5%	5%	2.5%
I have been given opportunities to make suggestions regarding my child's reading program.	62.5%	20%	17.5%
I have made suggestions, and they were handled in a friendly and serious manner.	52.5%	12.5%	35%
Does your child study independently at home?	65%	30%	5%
My child's organizational skills have improved this school year.	75%	15%	10%

Open-ended question: "Please list some areas of school skills in which your child has made improvements:" (26 responses)

Organization

Reading

Both now read on their own time.

Her reading has really improved

Spelling, reading comprehension, attention span, and interest in reading

Reading, math, socialization

Reading, organization, communication

Reading, Speech

Fluency

reading, spelling, writing sentences, math

Reading. Math

Being efficient with her time in order to get her schoolwork done in class so she doesn't have to bring any work home. Also, having a love for certain subjects in school. Both kids were actually super excited about certain subjects in class because their teachers made it enjoyable for them!

Reading, math, organization, emotional regulation

Positive self talk! The positive language that is used schoolwide at Murphy was part of many conversations at home. "I can do hard things" among others became a very common phrase at our house and it was good for everybody!

Math reading

Reading and problem solving

Reading and math

Math and reading for both kids improved for the year. Critical thinking and abstract thinking skills improved in my 4th grader.

Tons of progress with reading and his confidence with reading!

Leadership & responsibility (school jobs) through Bulldog Boosters

My son is so much more excited to read at home. He is also retaining so much cool facts and information from what he is reading!

General reading, though she is also enrolled in a one-on-one private tutoring program.

Improvements were age/learning appropriate for their grade level. I'm not sure I noticed any standout improvement(s), but I don't think we were concerned or looking for them either.

Math and reading

Open-ended question: "Please list some areas of school skills that you would like to see your child have increased improvement:" (19 responses)

N/A

That is something we have to do at home, if she's not pushed she won't do it

Nothing. We love our school beyond words and are so thankful we're part of the Bulldogs

Reading

Confidence

Remembering to go through their folder everyday to show us their work or important notes. They were definitely better at it this year compared to last so I can tell it was something that was worked on this year!

Overall satisfaction

Math

Reading and math

Being responsible, and being respectful to classmates (hands to self, asking before touching others)

Responsibility

Math enrichment

Timed reading is hard in our house. I wish there was a different way to track my sons progress other than counting minutes per month.

Reading

Confidence in reading

My child is advanced in math, reading and science because of her high IQ and reading/activities at home as well as her strong work ethic. Unfortunately, her standardized math and reading test scores have plateaued and she is often bored with the Murphy schoolwork/reading being too easy and not being challenged intellectually.

Each of my children has different interests and strength zones. Lower scores/skillsets can be indicative of a lack of interest and not ability.

SEL

Open-ended question: "Other Overall Comments/Suggests for us:" (14 responses)

Mrs. Krugar has been amazing! Her efforts have had great impact. We appreciate her.

Rita Murphy teachers are doing incredible, as are the administrative staff. My two children love being Bulldogs.

Thank you for all you do.

I saw a difference in our family's commitment to studying and in my child's learning when homework was required. When homework was optional, we didn't find the time, because family life and evenings are busy. But when my child started seeing Mrs Krueger and he had a daily chart for me to sign to confirm he read the assigned passages, we made it a priority and we saw much improvement. I think homework is helpful for both the child's learning and the parent's involvement.

N/a

We love Murphy and all the teachers and staff! Thank you for loving our kids and always wanting the best for them and helping them succeed!!

I would have appreciated more information regarding what Title 1 is and why the services were being provided. I remember when we got the letter saying Brody was going to receive services for reading, my husband and I felt like we didn't have all the information. I have more background than some families regarding Title 1, but my husband was left feeling very confused. I would recommend a few more specifics being given such as frequency of intervention, when/during what time of day (is the intervention during a core class, etc) and an overview of services being provided. (is it letter sounds, etc - this would give us more information regarding what could be worked on at home too) I understand the generic letter for all families is easier, however, it seemed too vague and left us with more questions than answers. Could there be a different letter for families who have never had a child receive Title 1 services? Just a thought!

Great job!

The best school

Partnership with the community to increase education/knowledge of science/ science experiments

More communication

Didn't see major changes for being designated a Title 1 school from previous years.

I wish Murphy would dedicate more class time for silent reading the classics instead of time spent daily on SEL (social emotional learning). Dedicate more time to Reading/Writing and challenge your students so that Rita Murphy is no longer one of the bottom elementary schools in ND with only 39% of students proficient in reading. <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/north-dakota/rita-murphy-elementary-school-247100>

Ya'll are doing a fabulous job! Zero complaints here. We've been very happy with our Murphy experience and the ways in which our kids have been nurtured along the way.

Student Survey:

We know that in order for students to feel connected to school, they need to feel part of a team or school family. A committee met, brainstormed, and created teams and lessons for a new concept called, “Bulldog Team Time”. The intention of Bulldog Team Time is that every student and staff member on a “Bulldog Team” meets monthly around a specific topic that celebrates friendship, trust, uniqueness, etc. Overall, the school staff and students enjoyed this monthly connection in a unique way. All students were surveyed in the spring at Rita Murphy with wonderings of how they felt with our monthly Bulldog Team Time meetings, Spirit Assemblies, and if they had a trusted adult at school besides their classroom teacher.

Students, also, receive support within our Tier 1 system on core instruction on social skills and daily modeling and explicit teaching with school-wide and classroom expectations. We have continued to strengthen and grow our student-led clubs of Student Council and Bulldog Boosters with much success and celebration. Students aspire to be part of these clubs and take on leadership roles.

Student Survey Results	Students Spring 2025
I enjoy our monthly Spirit Assemblies (ranking between 1-5)	3.85
I enjoy Bulldog Team Time (ranking between 1-5)	3.76
I have a trusted adult in the building besides my classroom teacher.	91.2 %

Staff Survey:

Annually, all staff members are surveyed through a District administered Strategic Plan survey.

At Rita Murphy we use the High Reliability Schools Level 1 and Level 2 survey questions to determine how staff are feeling and perceiving our school in the areas of safety and culture and effective teaching in every classroom. Scores with a score of 3.5 or higher are considered an area of strength and a score of less than 3.5 indicate an area for growth. Rita Murphy’s area of strength includes all indicators from Level 1 and no areas of growth. We will continue to find opportunities for parents, students, and the community to have formal ways to provide input into student learning at Murphy.

The following graphs below reflect historical survey data from Rita Murphy teachers and staff.

HRS Level 1

Leading Indicators	Teachers and Staff Spring 2021	Teachers and Staff Fall 2021	Teachers and Staff Spring 2022
1.1 Faculty and staff perceive the school is viewed as safe, supportive, and orderly.	3.99	4.34	4.43
1.2 Students, parents, and the community perceive the school as safe, supportive, and orderly.	3.83	4.16	4.37
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision making process regarding school initiatives.	3.48	3.97	4.34
1.4 Collaborative teams interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, and student achievement.	3.88	4.17	4.29
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	3.36	3.74	4.23
1.6 Students, parents, and community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	3.5	3.36	3.96
1.7 The school acknowledges the success of the whole as well as individuals within the school.	3.18	3.57	3.89
1.8 The school manages its fiscal, operational, and technological resources in a way that directly supports teachers.	3.63	3.73	3.99

HRS Level 2

Leading Indicators	Teachers and Staff Spring 2023	Teachers and Staff Spring 2024	Teachers and Staff Spring 2025
2.1 The school leader communicates a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school.	4.1	3.9	3.8
2.2 Support is provided to teachers to continually enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans.	3.9	4	3.7
2.3 Predominant instructional practices throughout the school are known and monitored.	3.8	3.8	3.7
2.4 Teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data.	3.7	3.8	4
2.5 Teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional goals.	3.9	3.7	3.5
2.6 Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching.	3.2	3	3

Student Achievement Data

The academic data charts which follow depict a clear picture of Rita Murphy's academic needs and growth for 2024-2025 school year. These charts are current and reflect beginning and end of the year growth points. The data indicates that overall, our students made growth in both reading and math. Most importantly, the challenge to meet expected growth norms and a year's worth of growth for every student, remains a priority. Rita Murphy staff tracks student academic progress through a variety of systems, coupled with its Professional Learning Community (PLC) grade level collaboration meetings. The established SMART goals are grade level dependent and based on the incoming student's level of math and literacy. These goals adjust accordingly to individual student growth throughout the course of the academic school year and measure a year's worth of growth. Our school conducts data review meetings every 6-8 weeks to determine student growth using a triangulation data monitoring system, MTSS-A.

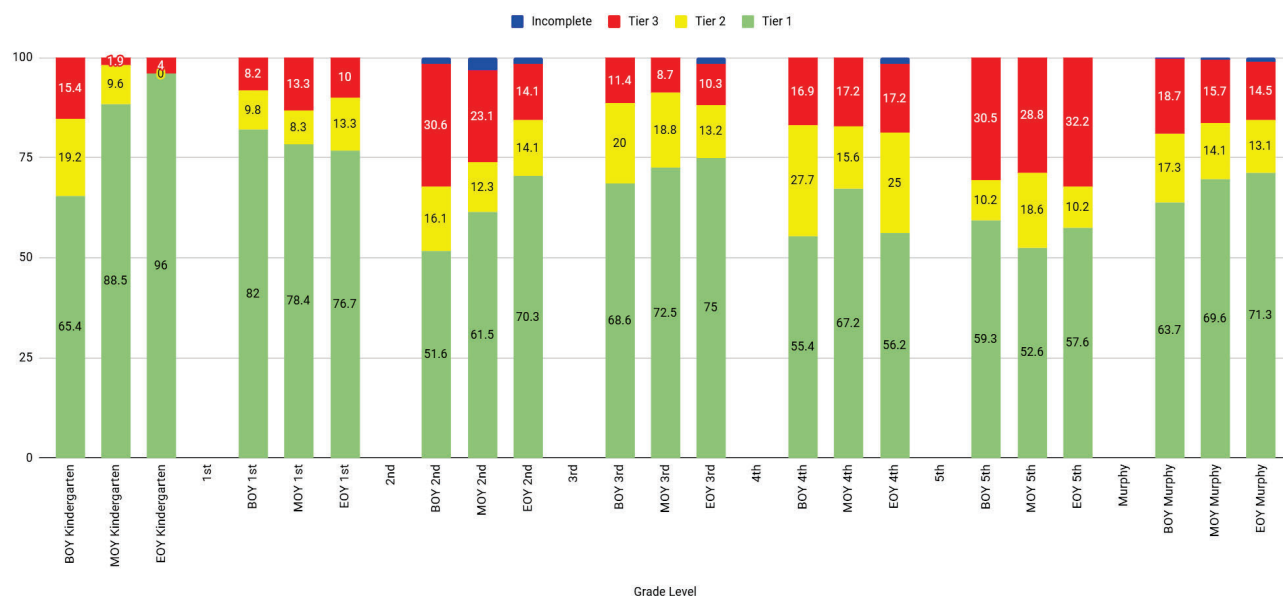
Reading Data: The Tiering data is a triangulation of benchmark scores for each grade level. Tiering data consists of standards-based scoring, MAP data, and Aimsweb data . We also compare

our tiering data with our standards-based scores to determine if performance in the classroom is matching what we are seeing on nationally normed assessments. Additionally, we screen all students in K-2 using a phonics screener to deficits and areas where instruction is needed.

District Tiering Reading Data:

The below graph represents Rita Murphy's 2024-2025 tiering reading data.

Murphy Reading Tiers 2024-2025



In reviewing our schoolwide reading tiering data, we reached an average of 71.3% of the student body in Tier 1 according to district tiering reports, increasing from last year's 68.4% in Tier 1. Kindergarten reached 96%, 1st grade at 76.7%, 2nd grade at 70.3%, 3rd grade at 75%, 4th grade at 56.2%, and 5th grade at 57.6%. We recognize that our upper grades 4th-5th have the least amount of students in Tier 1. We are working hard in PLC to improve Tier 1 instruction and with the adoption of a new curriculum we are hoping to see that trend change. We scheduled our instructional coach to be on a rotating schedule to be in each grade level during their literacy core instruction block to provide support and feedback as well. Our Title 1 reading specialists are supporting the upper grade students by aligning their instruction to the same resource that is used in the classroom, focusing on pre-teaching and reteaching those skills. In recognizing the importance of early literacy skills within K-2, we used the research of Stephanie Stollar to rethink our schoolwide model for reading intervention. This year it was a success! We started the school year by doing a phonics screener on all students K-2 and then decided which students we would serve in Title 1 reading based on their literacy needs. We aligned our intervention times with the core phonics instruction time so that our students could be served for an hour in a small group setting by an interventionist. Our

interventionists are delivering two lessons during the session in order to catch the students back up to grade level. The model has been very successful and we see the improvements in the above reading data in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade. We will continue this model into the 2025- 2026 school year. We will continue to look for professional development opportunities for our Title 1 reading aides. This was their first year implementing UFLI as their resource, so we are looking into finding more training for them, so they can continue to grow and adapt instruction to meet the needs of the learners they serve.

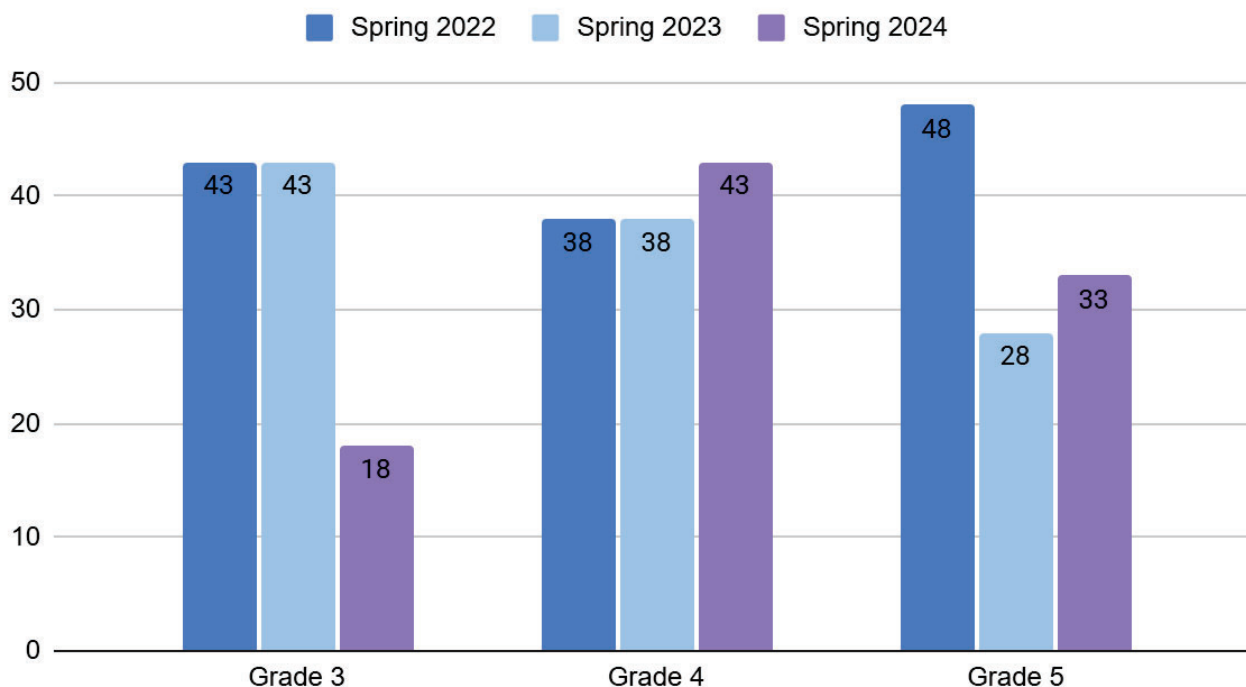
Standards Based Score % Proficient – End of the Year – Reading & Math:

Grade Level:	% Proficient Reading:	% Proficient Math:
Kindergarten	92%	98%
1st grade	75%	88%
2nd grade	51%	69%
3rd grade	59%	75%
4th grade	68%	72%
5th grade	63%	48%

This data shows the percent of students scoring a proficient average of 2.75 on ELA standards and math standards at the end of the school year. The data indicates that the percent of students proficient in reading and math is comparable to our district tiering data. Rita Murphy has more students in tier one for math than reading.

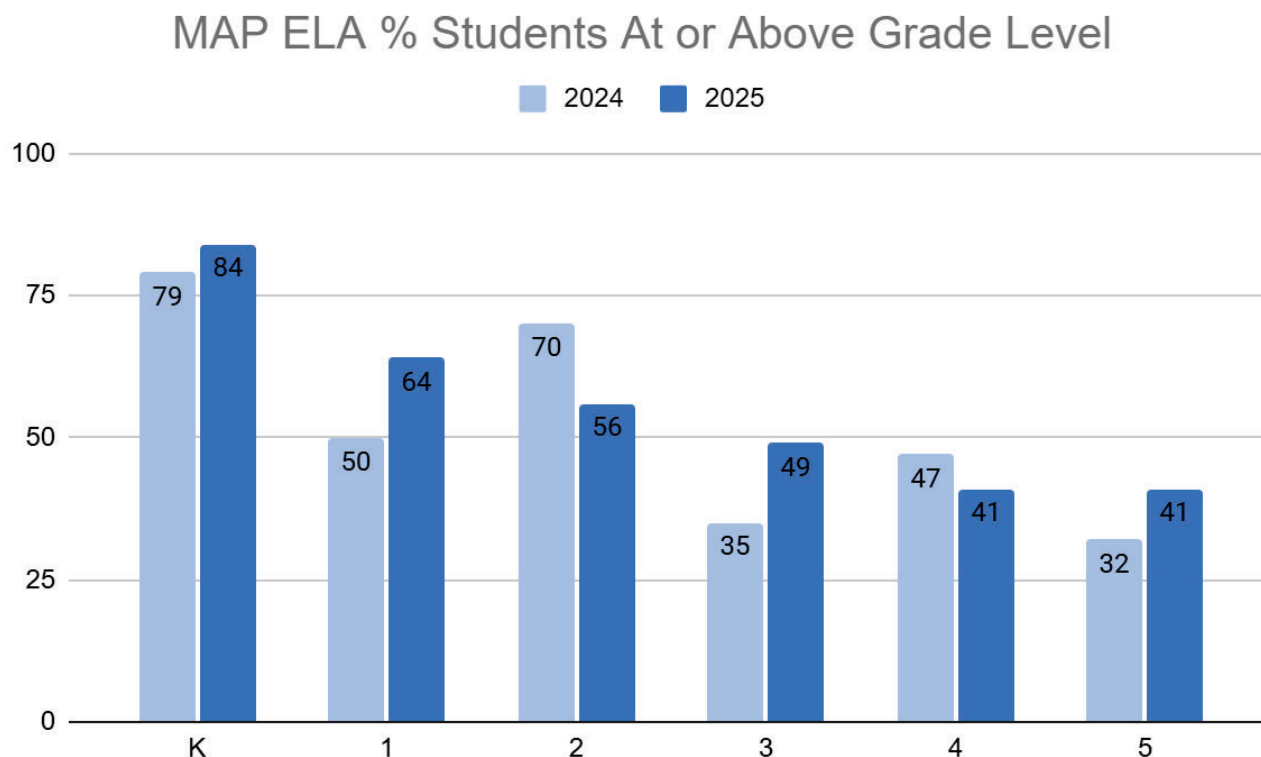
NDSA -- North Dakota State Assessment for ELA

Grade 3-5 NDSA ELA Proficiency Percentage



During the past three school years, Rita Murphy has consistent NDSA data to utilize when making decisions on needs. The assessment was given in mid-March during each school year. We will not have current data from this year until the fall due to the transition to NDA+. We will review the data when it comes in and discuss it with our leadership team. This year our team got together to discuss the drop in scores in third grade. It was determined that as a building we would focus on goal setting with students around testing and include students more in their progress. We also did an all staff training on teacher affect during testing and promoting a positive growth mindset. We are hoping with added emphasis on the importance of state testing with the staff and students that we will see this data look more like our district tiering data.

NWEA - MAP ELA:



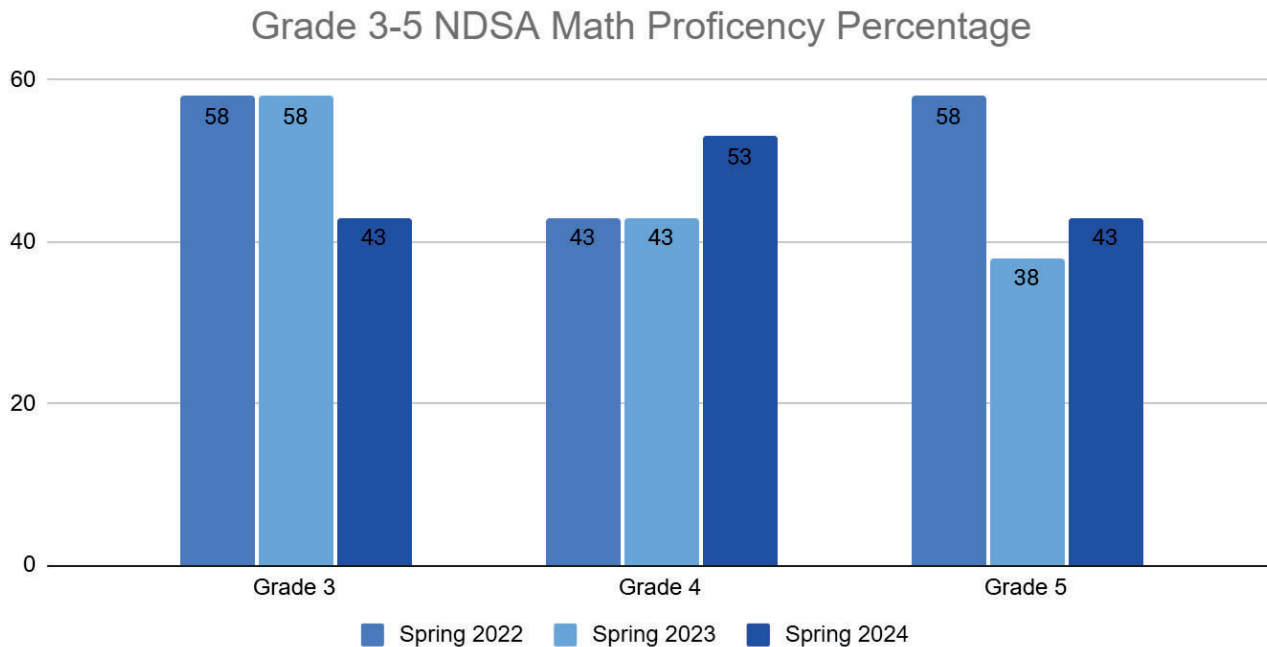
This benchmark formative assessment is conducted no less than three times a year for all students in grades 2-5 and once in the spring for grades K-1. Once this assessment is given, the data is used as one point in the Bismarck Public Schools triangulation process to identify at risk learners. In addition, students set achievement goals based on their current level of performance.

Rita Murphy has shown growth in percent considered at or above grade level in all grades in ELA except for 2nd and 4th grade. We've discussed that this level of proficiency is decreasing as students get older, as you see the higher numbers in grades K-2 and the lower numbers in grades 3-5. When we cross reference this data with our standards based scoring we've had discussions in PLC about raising the level of rigor in instruction to support meeting these benchmarks.

Mathematics Data:

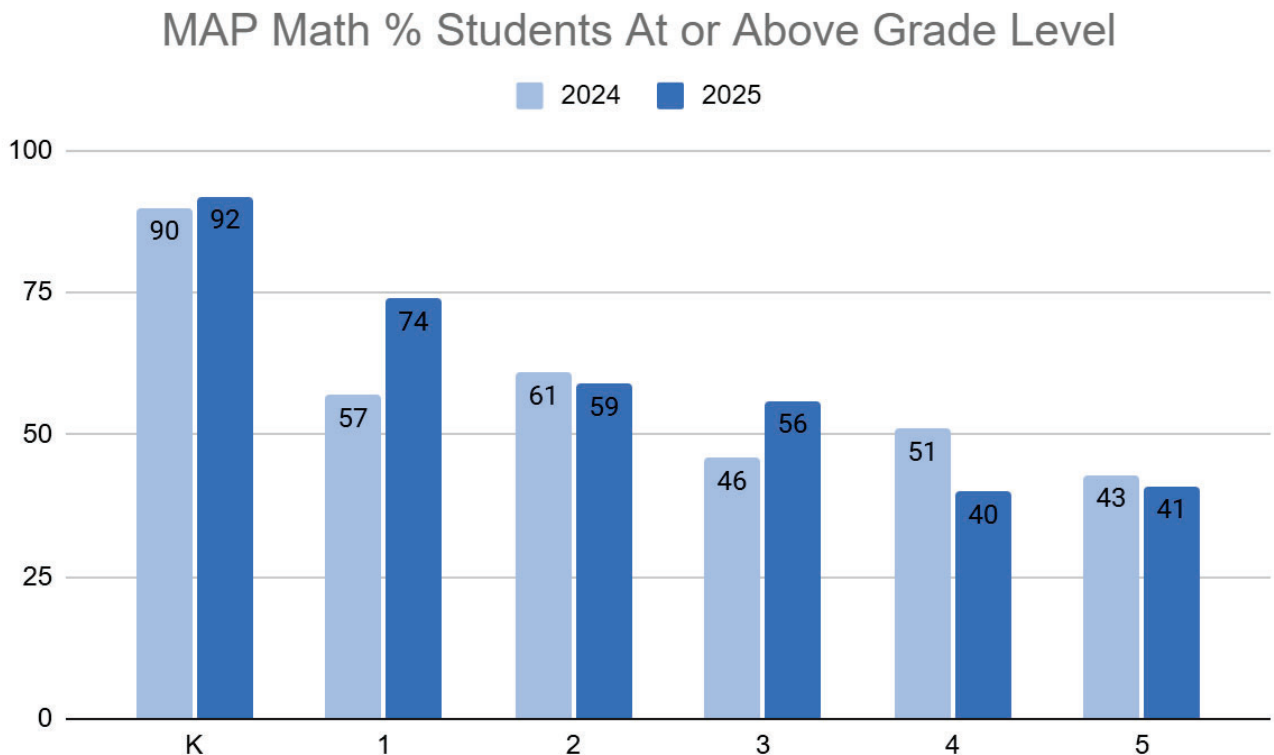
Mathematics data includes the North Dakota State Assessment which is used as exit data. The Tiering data is a triangulation of data for each grade level. Tiering data consists of standards-based scoring, MAP data, and/or AIMSweb data. We also looked at standards-based scores at the end of the school year to determine the number of students on or close to end of year proficiency.

NDSA -- North Dakota State Assessment for Mathematics:



This assessment is used as exit data for students at Rita Murphy Elementary School. Our proficiency has dropped in grades 3-5. It is our plan to PLC cycle around math instruction again as grade level teams. We spent a lot of the year around our new ELA curriculum this year but we plan to dig back into math instruction and assessment as a team. Each team will build an assessment blueprint and consider a walk to learn model during intervention to address the needs of each learning target as we are teaching them. We have had discussions about using Title 1 funding to support an additional Title 1 math aide to support interventions and curriculum resources that may be needed in that role. We will continue to monitor the math data after bringing Tier 1 back to focus first and if improvements are not made we will discuss supporting an interventionist at the tier 2/3 level.

NWEA – MAP Math:

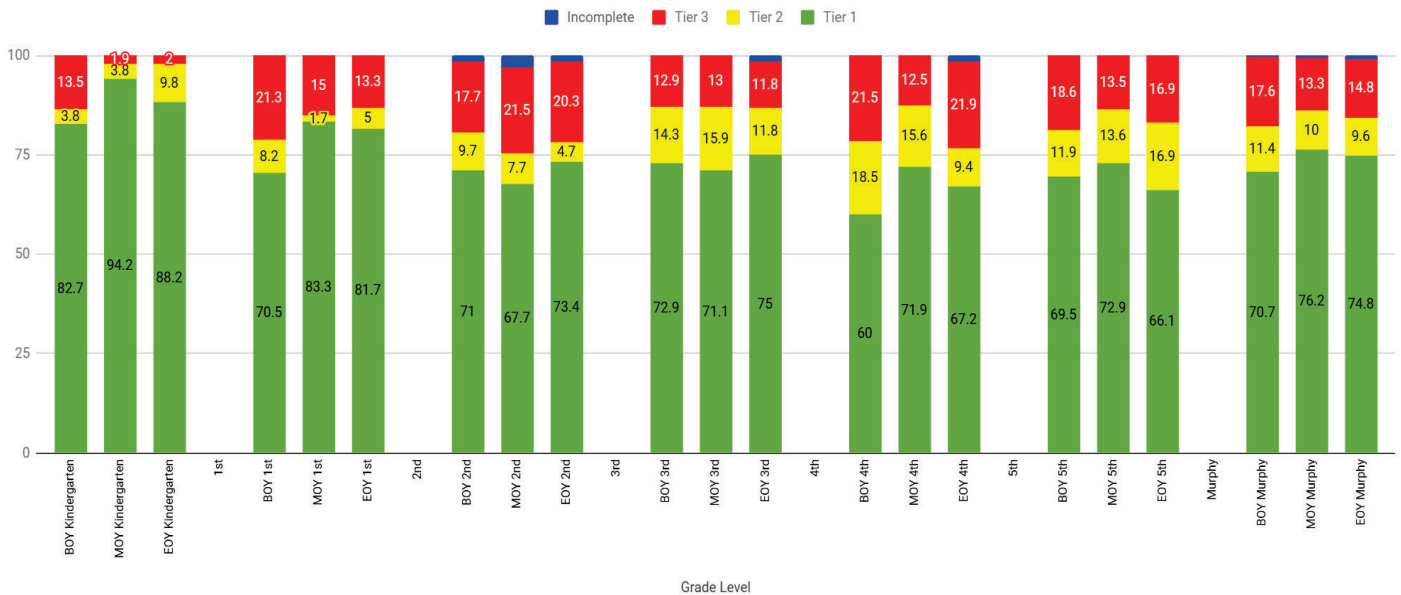


This benchmark assessment is conducted no less than three times a year for all students in grades 2-5 and once in the spring for grades K-1. Once this assessment is given, the data is used as one point in the Bismarck Public Schools triangulation process to identify at risk learners. In addition, students set achievement goals based on their *current* level of performance. In our district tiering process, the standard measure to demonstrate that a student is able to access the core is 40%ile and above.

In grades K-1, as well as 3rd grade we have seen growth in the amount of students at or above grade level from the year before. We see a slight dip in grades 2nd, 4th, and 5th. We'd like to see the data be more consistent across grade levels and not see a drop as the students continue to get older. To address our areas of need for math, each PLC team will track student data on each standard as we are teaching it and initiate team and classroom interventions as needed during the unit, rather than waiting for tiering data to come out in October and starting interventions then. We are hoping that being more responsive to the students based on the standards we are currently working on will create less tangle for our learners and allow them to focus on the specific learning targets.

District Math Tiering Data:

Murphy Math Tiers 2024-2025



This benchmark formative assessment data is conducted no less than three times a year for all students. The Math data is used in the Bismarck Public Schools triangulation process to identify at risk learners. Grade level expectations for both content areas are set at 80% proficiency. Each grade level has identified universal screeners which includes three of the following assessments: AIMSweb-Math Computation and/or AIMSweb - Math Concepts and Applications (grades K-5), and NWEA MAP (grades 2-5).

During the 2024-25 school year, Rita Murphy triangulated data showed 74.8% of all students performing at Tier 1 at the end of the school year in the content area of Math which is down about 4% from last year. Again our core instruction is reaching about 75 percent of our students. We'd like to see that number back near 80% or more and with the use of collaboration in PLC, tracking student progress more closely on standards as our first approach we hope to see that change. If it does not we intend to fund a math interventionist to support as well.

Behavior Data

A comprehensive behavior management system was developed and implemented along with a behavior support model for Tier 1 through PBIS. A list of school wide expectations was modified and communicated to all stakeholders. A part of this system included weekly meetings to review student data with the counselor, social worker, school psychologist, assistant principal, instructional coach, mental health collaborator, and principal to determine needs. A binder of resources was developed for staff to utilize including school discipline policy, school expectations, behavior management flow chart, and calendar of life skills. A Benchmark of Quality assessment was conducted at the end of the school year to determine direction for the MTSS-B committee. A school walk-through with district staff was conducted in the fall to determine if our Tier 1 supports were being understood and utilized by students and staff. The results of this walk-through indicated that we were scoring at a 95% proficiency. Our self-management behavior standard continues to be collected weekly on all students. End-of-year data indicates that 84% of students are being supported through Tier 1 behavior supports, while 16% of students are in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. We will continue to focus on supporting these students in need of support with their student success skills through small group and individual interventions.

Behavior Tier:

We used a tiering report this year, which assigned points to students based on Attendance, Behavior, Student Success Skills (CASTEL Competencies) and Course work. This report had two tiering parts, one for the last thirty days and one for the school year. This allows school teams to monitor improvement for each student based on interventions. Our student success team monitored this report each week and adjusted interventions based on this data.

We continue to utilize the Check-in Check-out intervention. During this school year (2024-2025) 11 students participated in the Check In Check Out program with six graduating. Three of the eleven students required an intensified plan and two students required CICO throughout the entire school year. Rita Murphy had 18 students receiving Tier 3 behavior interventions such as a BIP and crisis plan at the beginning of the school year; however, 4 students faded from this intervention and 2 students had plans that were intensified. We ended the year with 12 students requiring Tier 3 support throughout the school year. Our school social worker is the lead on training, collaborating with teachers, and communicating data to parents.

Rita Murphy will experience its first school store, The Barking Lot, this upcoming school year. Our school believes in acknowledging positive behavior. The more we acknowledge, the more we get. Students earn Bark Outs for displaying the 4 Murphy Bs throughout their school days. All students have opportunities to earn Bark Outs along with Pawsitive Paws daily. Students receive a Pawsitive Paw when going above and beyond to make a positive impact on someone's day. With the school

store, students will "purchase" items from The Barking Lot with their Bark Outs and Pawsitive Paws. These items can be used in the classroom, on the playground, and enjoyed at home. The goal of the store is to promote an increase in the number of students following our Murphy Bs and create/support a "business" within our school community. Our school store will be introduced at the beginning of the upcoming school year in a fun way to all students. We are excited about the opportunities that this store will provide to our students in promoting our school's beliefs, as well, another way for students to experience leadership roles.

Reteach Plan Data:

Fix-it plans are documented to determine and monitor location, month, and rule infraction in order to make staffing or instructional changes. Our data indicates that classroom and playground supports are needed as these are the areas with the most re-teaches. With "Consistent Culture" as one of our school-wide goals this past year, more Fix-Its were given from not only classroom teachers, but also support staff. Adults were consistent with expectations and holding all students accountable if requiring a reteach or consequence when not following school-wide expectations. The number of Fix-Its was higher than last year; however, this is due to consistency from all staff and completing a Fix-It plan when necessary. Data was shared out much more often this year and we plan on doing so bi-monthly or monthly next year.

Conclusion

This concludes our needs assessment for the 2024-2025 school year. Based on data review, our overall needs continue to be in the areas of reading, math, and social emotional learning. We will continue to work towards improving outcomes through our schoolwide Title 1 plan. Title one funds will be allocated to supporting staffing to support our two Reading Specialists and two Title I instructional Assistants to support interventions. The remainder of our funds will be used for materials, supplies and interventions for systematic instruction in literacy, math and social-emotional learning as well as to provide continued professional learning opportunities for staff in the aforementioned areas.