



Superintendent's Report

November 14, 2024

Seen Around WPS...



8th Graders met with Town Clerk to learn about voting process, and observe early voting.



Mr. Grenham's 2nd Grade (Sheehan) facilitated a mock election for the whole school community.



Seen Around WPS...

A Special Edition

Monday, November 4



WE THE PEOPLE

Is Social Media a Good or Bad Thing for US Politics?

Maeve Gavin ('26)



Source: Forbes

Even with the negative impacts social media can have on US elections, it remains a necessary and inevitable component of our democracy.

During the formation of America's Constitution, one of the biggest concerns for the Founding Fathers was making the presidential election a direct election for voters. Thomas Jefferson even went so far as to say, "I have ever observed that a choice by the people themselves is not generally dis-

lack of media, as the new country had "fewer than one hundred newspapers." Without the widespread influence of national media, the Founders feared that, for example, a resident of Georgia would have no familiarity with a political candidate from Massachusetts. They were afraid the people would not be able to make an informed decision on who should lead their country since information and opinions could not be shared on a national scale. To address these concerns, the Founders created the Electoral College which awards each state electoral votes proportionate to their respective size in the hopes that it would force candidates to devote time and resources to gaining recognition in as many states as possible. The continued existence of the Electoral College today is a lasting reminder that spreading ideas and information is important for democracy to be carried out as it was originally intended (Levinson).

Later, in the 1920s, there was a media boom in the form of postcards. These were often used to spread political information, such as information concerning the fight for women's suffrage. Postcards were cheaper and could travel the nation faster than a standard

The Elections This November You Haven't Heard About

Deepak Viswalingam ('25)

This election cycle has been unprecedented. You might be enjoying the scintillating political turmoil that seems more out of a Netflix thriller than a presidential election. Like me, you might also be sick to your stomach about the misinformation and suffocating vitriol engulfing our country. You can't deny, however, that you—or anyone you know for that matter—have seen a presidential election quite like this.

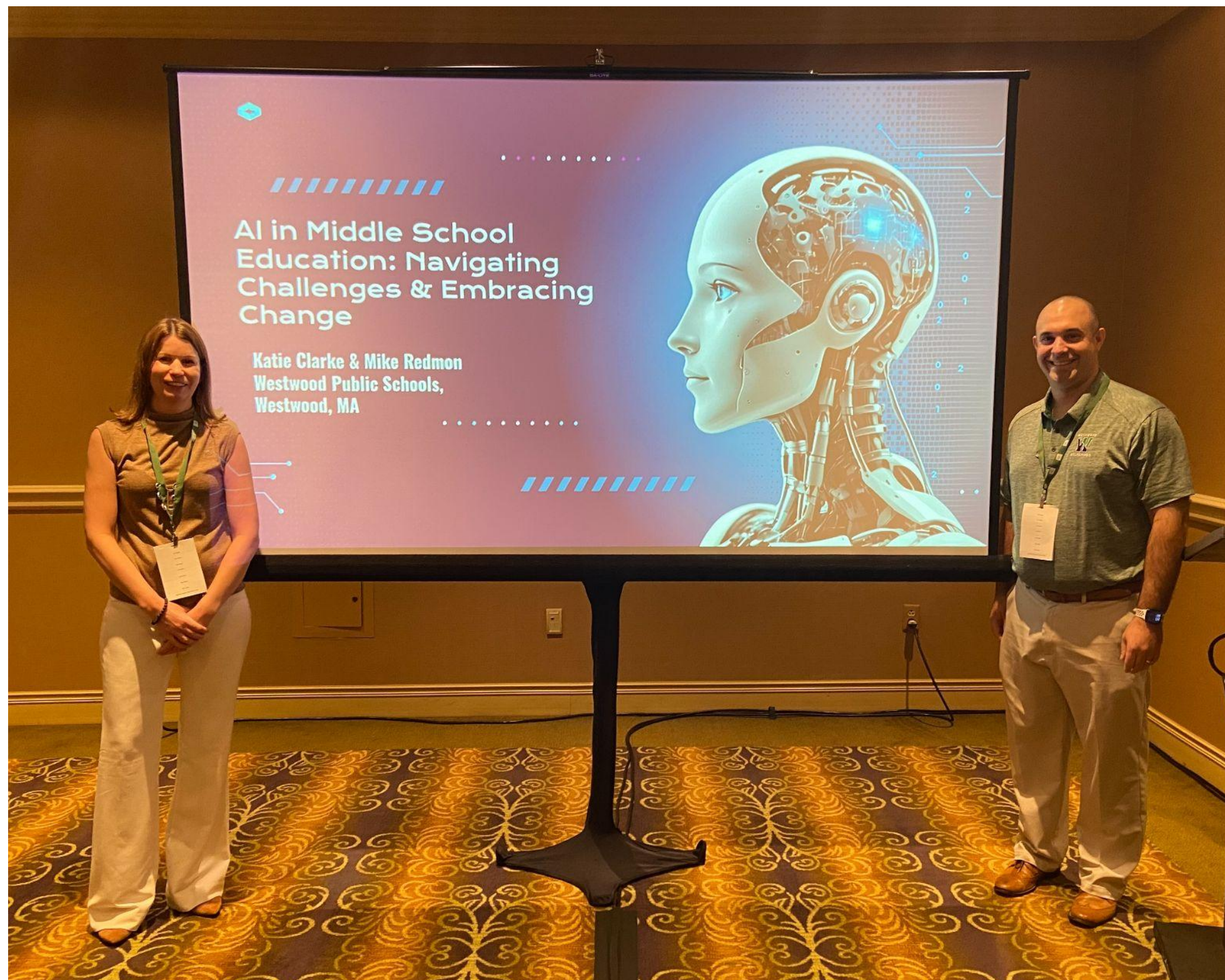
The media has unleashed a torrent of stories, fact-checks, and hit pieces, and the people are abuzz. Early voting records have been shattered all across the country. The second presidential debate boasted a whopping 67 million viewers. Social media is ablaze with hot takes, contentious discussions, and rife misinformation. And on the fateful day of November 5, 2024, every pair of eyes, from California to New York, will be watching with bated breath—

We The People: A Special Edition

Editorial team of Deepak Viswalingam (Editor), Tony Maari (Design Coordinator), Jacob Liu (Design Coordinator), and Isabella Gervais (Social Media Manager).

Deepak said it best in this issue, "[W]e decided to publish this special edition to encourage all of you to participate in this election to the fullest extent possible. If you are an eligible voter we beseech you to vote tomorrow. If you are not, we urge that you strive to remain politically informed as you develop into a civically-active citizen."

Seen Around WPS...



TMS Principal Mike Redmon and STEM Department Head Katie Clarke present on

Artificial Intelligence in Middle School
at the AMLE Annual Conference
(Association for Middle Level Education)

Seen Around WPS...



Eight WHS students sign National Letters of Intent

Cecelia Thurmond, Hofstra (lacrosse)

Charlotte Demaio, Quinnipiac (lacrosse)

Caroline Nozzolillo, Brown (lacrosse)

Emilie Demaio, Quinnipiac (lacrosse)

Bridget Mulkeen, College of the Holy Cross (softball)

Lillian Guleserian, Penn State (golf)

Harper Morrison, Longwood (soccer)

Dante Martucci, Assumption (lacrosse)

FY26 Budget Calendar and Preview

FY26 Budget Calendar

- November 1: Budget templates shared with Principals and Cost Center Leaders
- November 14: School Committee discussion about operating budget priorities
- November 18-22: Meetings with Principals and Central Office
- December 6: Cost center leaders submit final FY26 budget requests
- December 12: School Committee discussion about expenses and revenue
- January 10: Budget Book delivered to School Committee members
- January 16: Presentation of proposed budget to School Committee
- February 13: Public Budget Hearing and School Committee Budget Vote
- March: Finance and Warrant Commission Public Hearings
- May 19: Annual Town Meeting

Annual Budget Drivers

- Meet contractual salary obligations
- Meet other inflation-impacted costs (e.g., transportation, utilities)
- Maintain class sizes consistent with School Committee goals
- Address special education needs
- Continue to make progress on the educational goals articulated in the district *Bridge Strategy*

Specific FY26 Budget Drivers

- Personnel costs
 - Entering negotiations with teachers and administrative assistants
 - Residual 0.25% increase on WTA contract from split third year wage rates
- Transportation cost increases
 - Year 3 of yellow bus transportation contract, with optional extension
 - Annual special educational transportation contract increase
- Out-of-District special education tuition
 - OSD minimum increase of 3.67%
- Utilities, including Pine Hill impact
- Erosion of 'purchasing power' on supplies due to inflation

Class Sizes

- School Committee guidelines for class sizes (Policy IIB)
 - Grades K-3: 18-22
 - Grades 4-5: 18-24
 - Grades 6-12: Reasonable class sizes (18-24), ideally not higher than 28, with the exception of traditionally large group classes (e.g., band)
- Current class sizes within guidelines
- Continued desire to maintain guidelines for FY26

Differences in FY26 and FY25

- The FY25 budget benefited from two unique circumstances that are not replicable in FY26:
 - The opening of Pine Hill allowed for operating budget savings from the consolidation of the Hanlon and Deerfield Schools
 - Special education out-of-district tuition decreased from FY24 to FY25 as a result of enrollment shifts
 - Anticipated increase in out-of-district tuitions from FY25 to FY26

November 5, 2024
Professional
Development Day

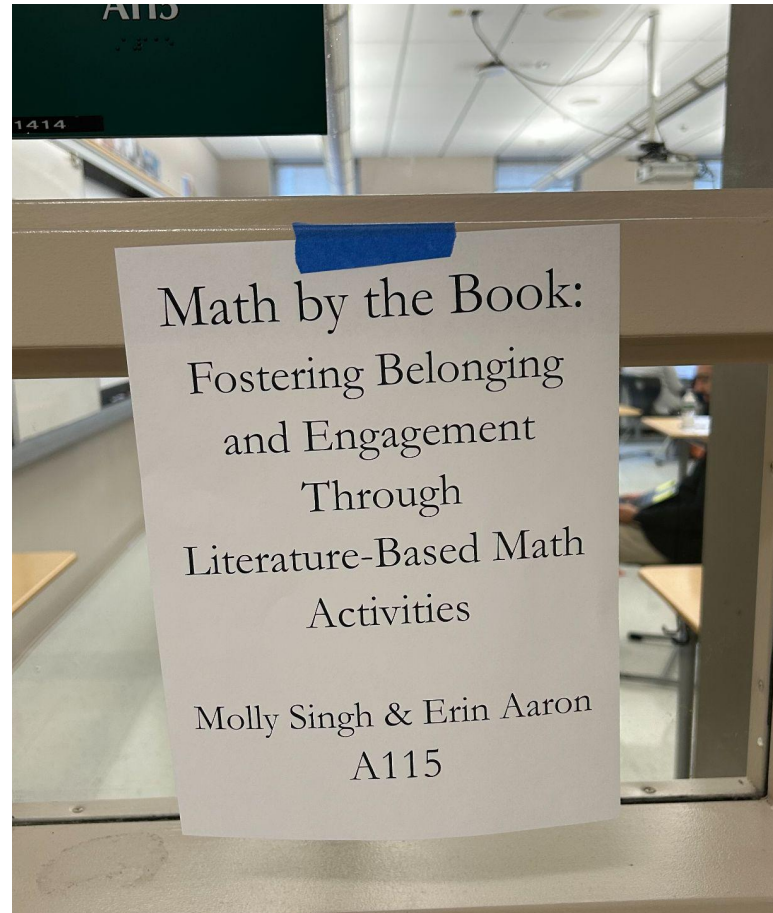
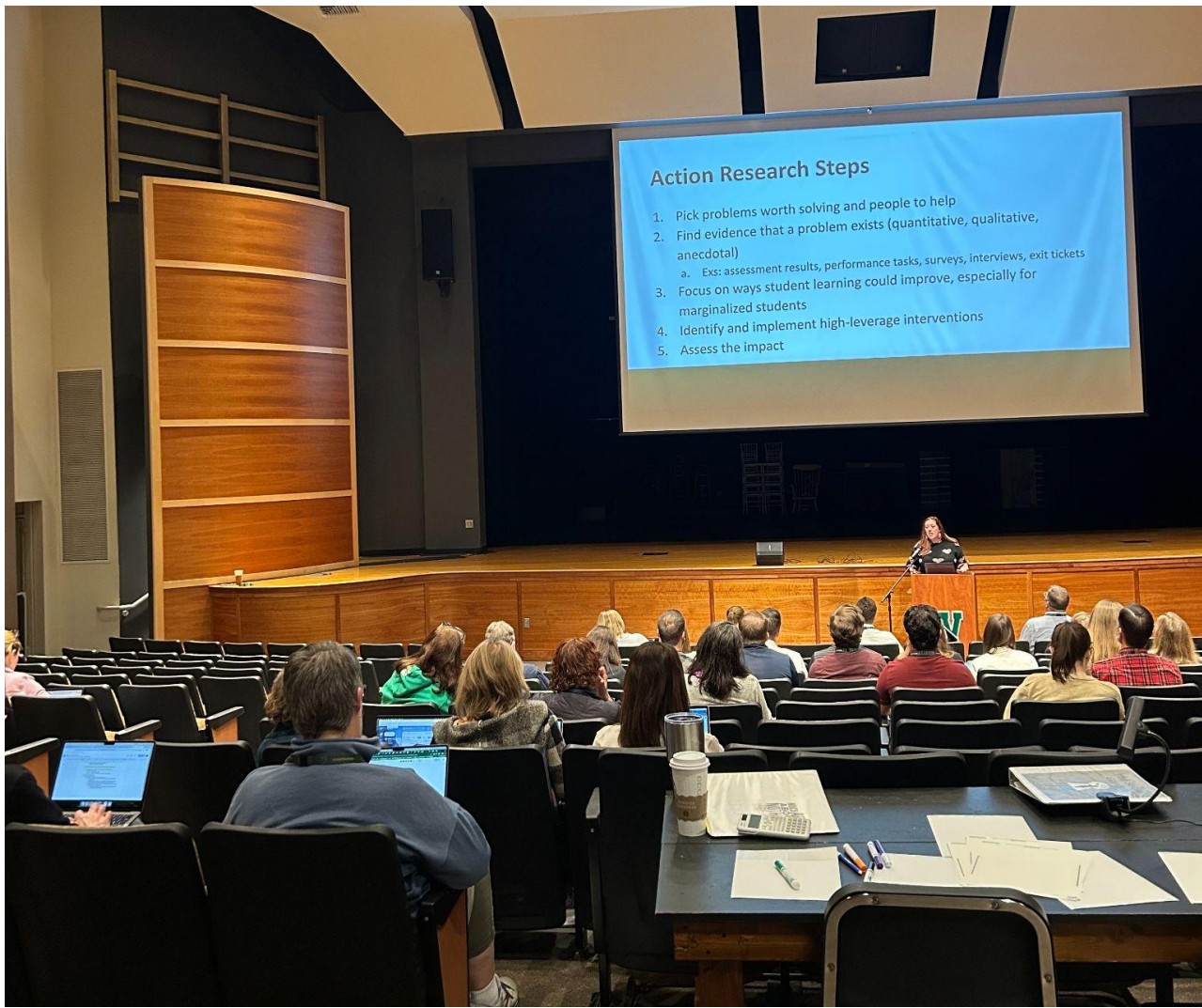
When Everyone Belongs, Everyone Learns

This year's district-wide PD day, themed ***When Everyone Belongs, Everyone Learns: How increasing student belonging increases student engagement in classrooms and overall school achievement*** built upon the work done in prior professional learning in the district, and explored how building strong relationships correlates to rigor within classrooms.

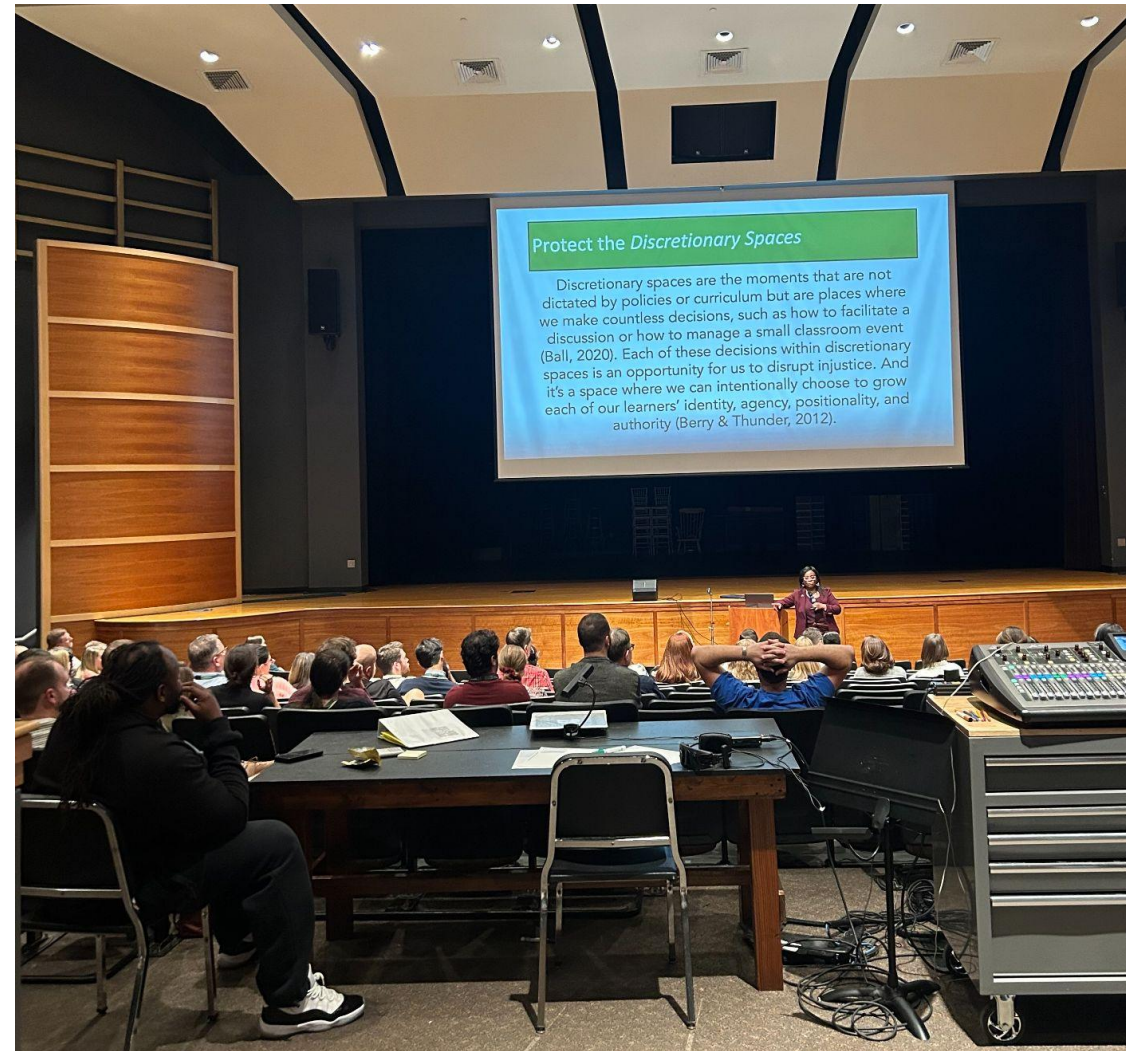
Participants engaged in sessions led by our school-based Equity and SEL leaders, workshops facilitated by WPS educators, and a keynote session by Dr. Kalise Wornum. Each section of the day was thoughtfully designed to give educators concrete strategies to use to increase student belonging and engagement; we are so grateful to our facilitators and participants for their hard work and thoughtful contributions!

Highlights

- About 380 participants, including educators, administrators, IAs, ABAs, and Extended Day staff
- 26 Equity and SEL Leaders led morning workshops for each school
- Participants chose to attend one of 16 Breakout Workshops, led by 24 WPS educators



"All of the workshops were what I needed to hear and learn right now, especially. Perfect timing!"



"I'm feeling rejuvenated and hopeful from today's sessions to use many of the resources I learned to reset expectations in my classroom and make students feel empowered and successful."

Portrait of a Graduate

Work to Date

- Assembled working group of ~50 people
 - Students, families, teachers, support staff, admin, community members
- Two days of in-person sessions facilitated by MLP, looking at the future of education
- Draft Portrait of a Graduate developed to share with broader community to solicit feedback
 - Draft is content only; visual representation will be part of final product

Portrait of a Westwood Public Schools Graduate (Draft)

A Vision for WPS Students PK-22

Graduates of the Westwood Public Schools will:

Think Critically

WPS students possess the skills and strategies to be curious, lifelong learners. They apply critical reasoning skills to understand information, adapt to novel situations, and design their own paths.

Communicate and Collaborate

WPS students communicate effectively across cultures and generations. They leverage their skills and voices to be productive speakers, listeners, writers, creators, and collaborators.

Act with Integrity

WPS students are guided by a deep sense of self and compassion for others. They demonstrate authenticity, responsibility, and perseverance in their decision-making and actions.

Engage Locally and Globally

WPS students are connected to communities locally and globally. They find purpose and joy in engaging with others, in service of one another and our planet, and in strengthening communities and conditions for all.

Innovate

WPS students are innovative problem-solvers. They are creative, flexible thinkers who persevere in the face of challenges to be a force for positive change in the world.

Next Steps

- Gathering feedback from wider staff and community
 - Staff Survey
 - Community Virtual Forums:
 - Tuesday, 11/19, 6:30pm
 - Thursday, 11/21, 12:00pm
 - Community Survey
- Feedback shared with working group to finalize
- Final verizon publicly released January 2025; launch of Strategic Planning Process

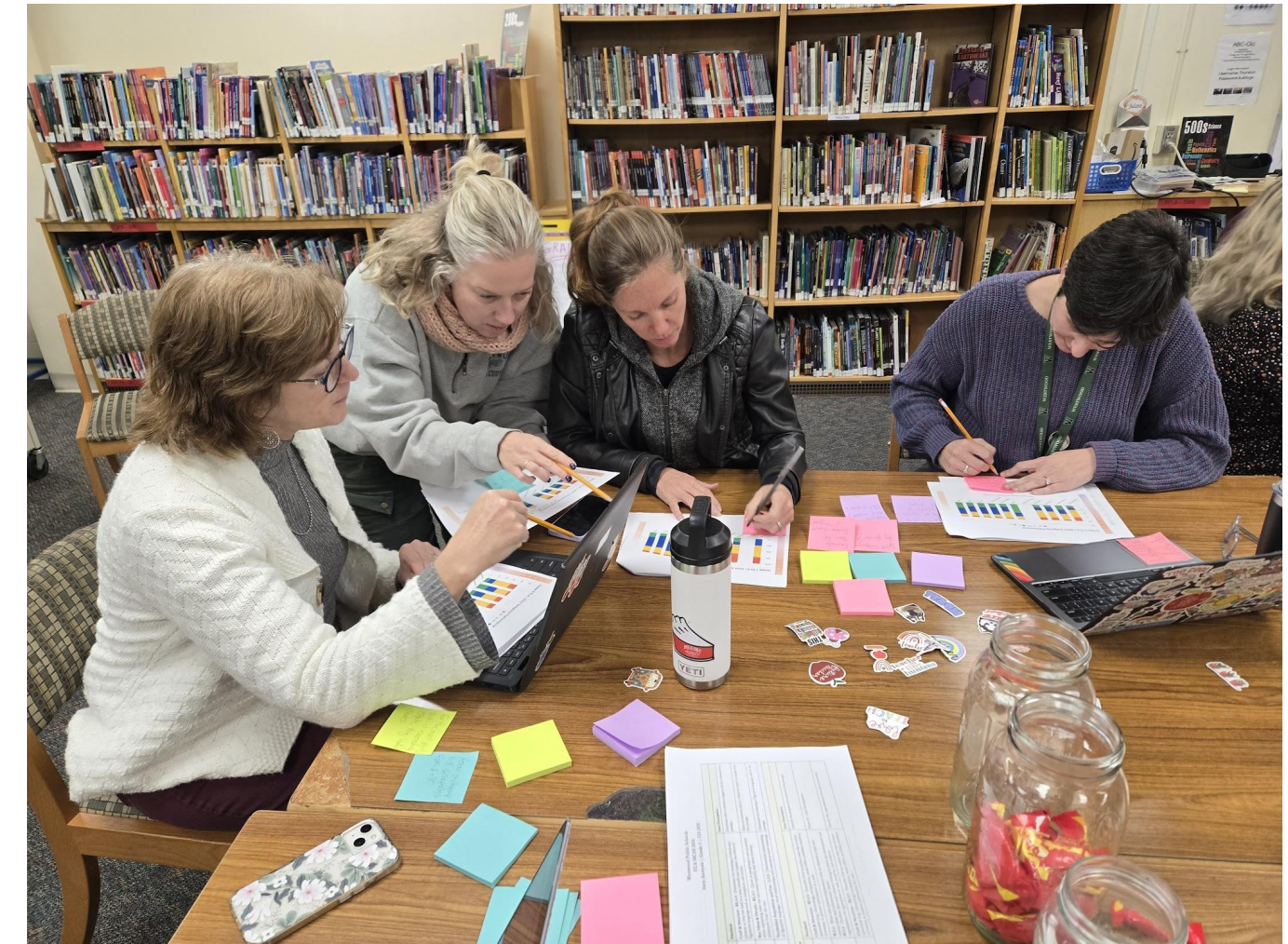
Data Analysis and Instructional Impact

Using MCAS Data at the Department and Classroom Levels

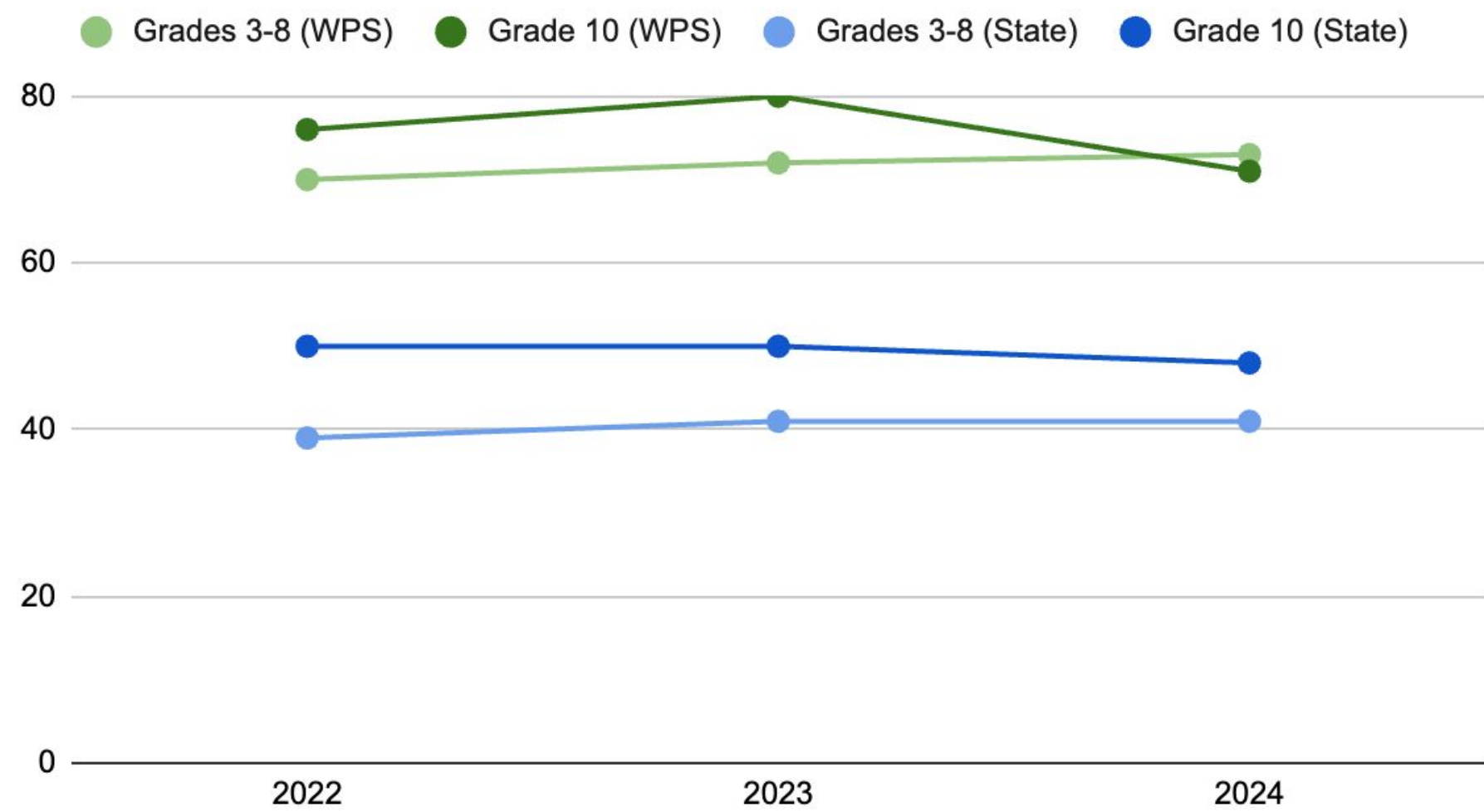
Department leaders and curriculum coordinators look at the data with teachers, and identify next steps for curriculum and instruction.

Example outcomes:

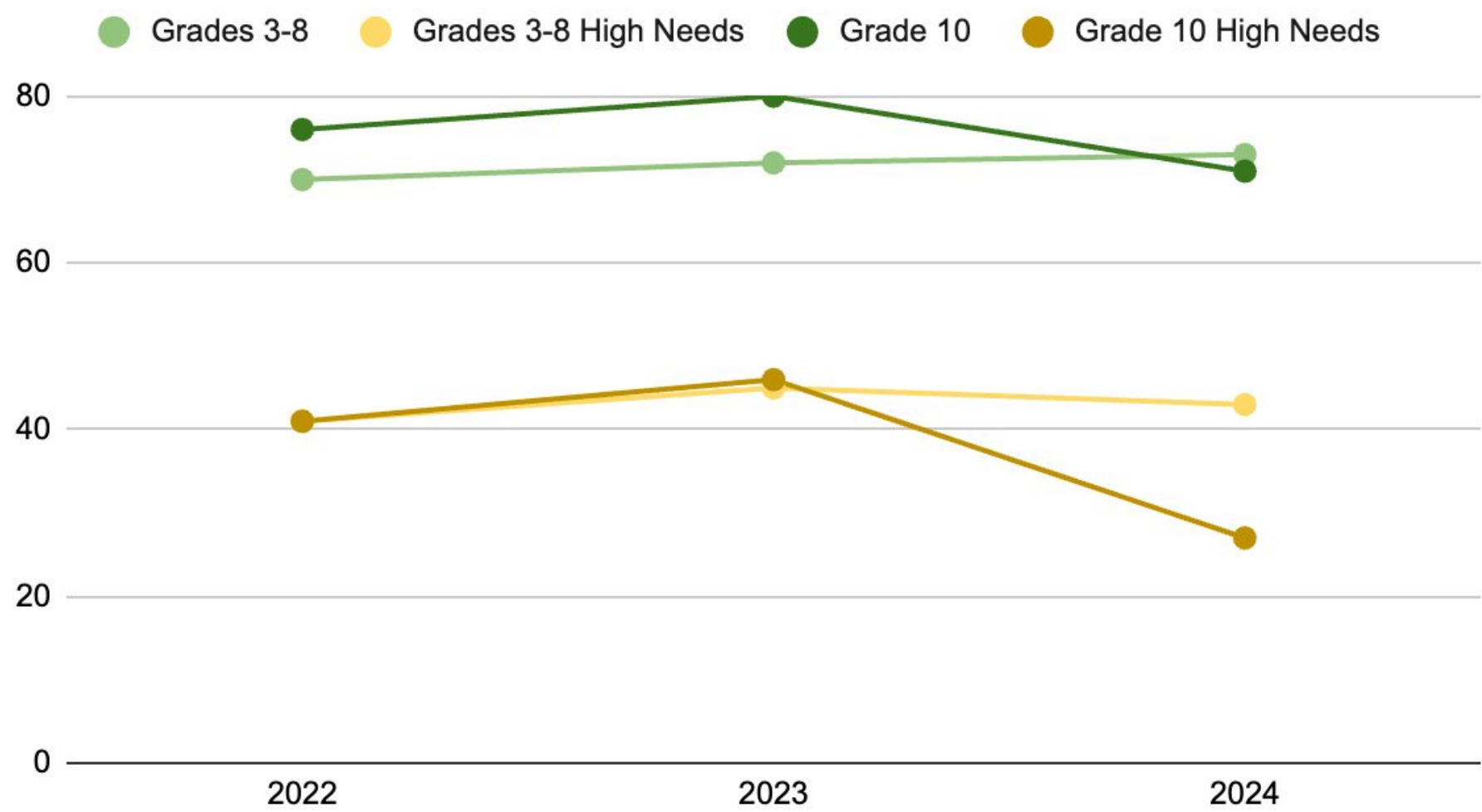
- *Elementary Math and Literacy staying the course, but refining parameters for intervention support;*
- *6-8 ELA saw improvement in writing which was a focus from 2023 MCAS data, and this year plan to focus on subgroup performance and student engagement;*
- *9-12 Math scores improved on short answer responses (an area of departmental focus during SY25), and this year will be incorporating more Delta Math to acclimate students to digital assessment format and content*



Math Meeting and Exceeding Expectations, Grades 3-8, 10



Math Grades 3-8, 10 High Needs Comparison



High Needs subgroup includes low income, English learners, and students with disabilities



Tenth Grade Math

Grade 10 Math	2022	2023	2024
Percent Meeting/ Exceeding	76	80	71
Scaled Score	515	516	517
Student Growth Percentile	55	65	57

YOG 2026	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Percent Meeting/ Exceeding	Spring 2020 No MCAS	65	63	71
Scaled Score		510	507	517
Student Growth Percentile		40	44	57

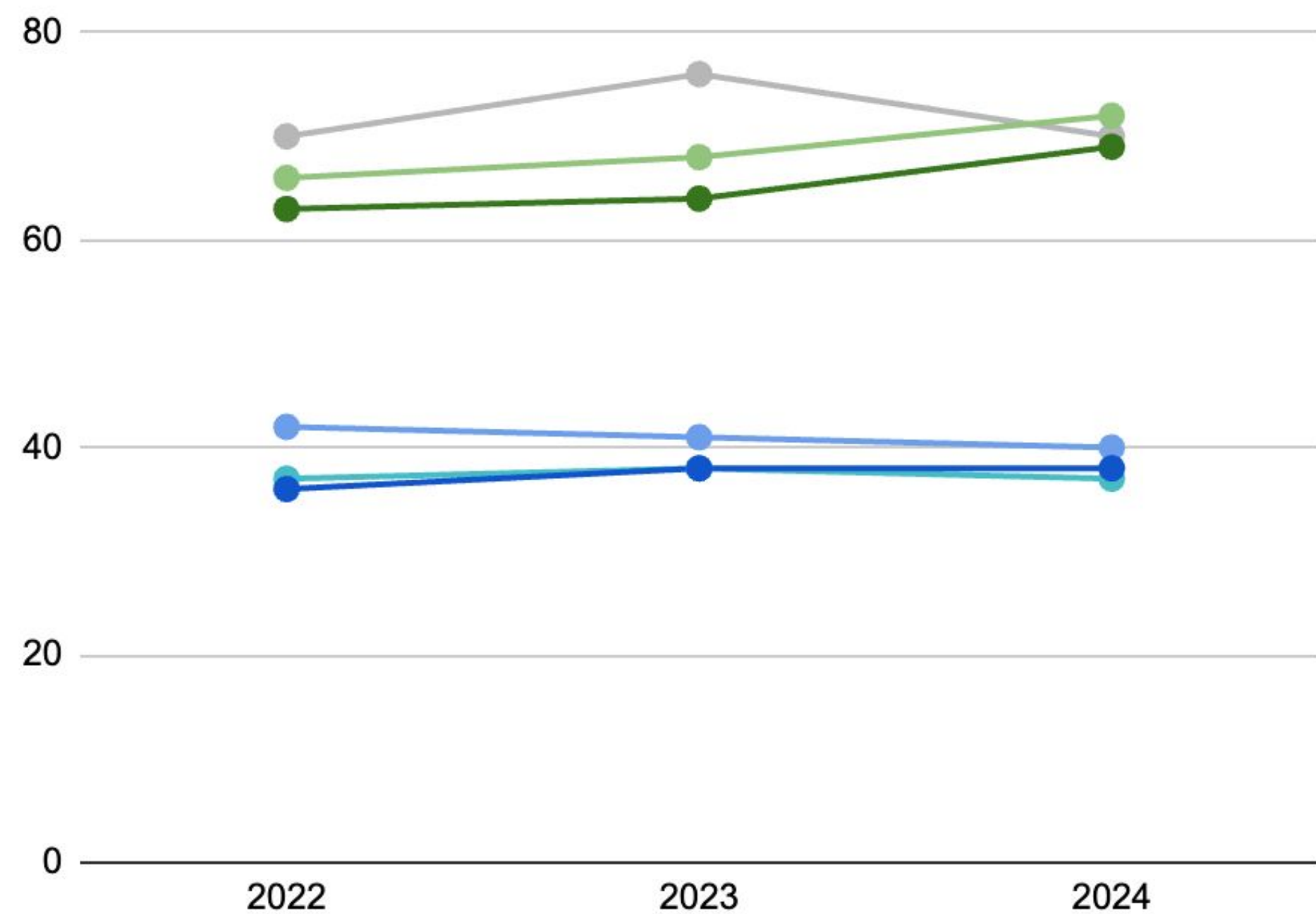


Putting the Data in Context

Data Analysis and Instructional Impacts

- The content areas the WHS Math Department chose to focus on last year, based on 2023 MCAS data, saw improvement!
- Celebration: very strong SGPs, compared to YOG 2026 8th grade test. Students with Disabilities SGP increased from 34 (low growth) to 61 (high growth), High Needs subgroup SGP increased from 37 to 59.
- S Block “Boot Camps” for students to reinforce skills
- Challenges of curriculum sequencing
 - Timing of Exponential Functions instruction does not sync well to the test, and students will get a deeper dive with this content in Algebra 2.
 - Circles unit is taught after the MCAS assessment, but questions are showing up more frequently on the test.

Math Meeting & Exceeding Expectations, Grades 6-8



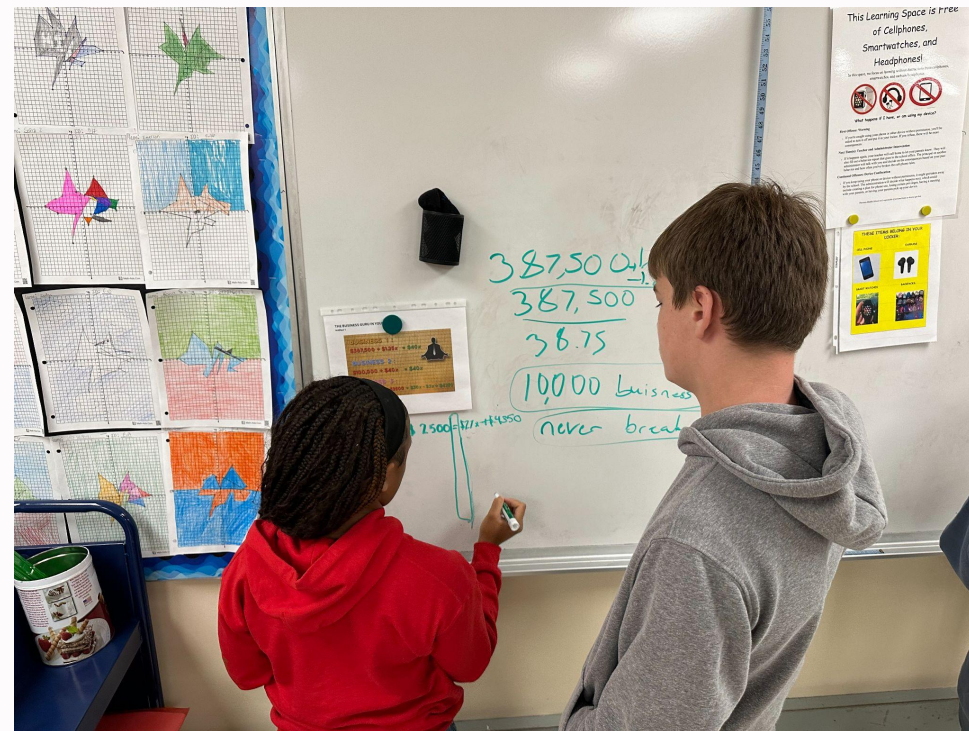
- Grade 6 (WPS)
- Grade 7 (WPS)
- Grade 8 (WPS)
- Grade 6 (State)
- Grade 7 (State)
- Grade 8 (State)

Math	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Percent Meeting/ Exceeding	70	72	69
Scaled Score	511	513	508
Student Growth Percentile	45	49	45

Implementation of MidSchool Math

All Grade 6; Level 2 in Grades 7 and 8

- 2023-2024 - classes implemented MSM to some extent, supplementing with Big Ideas and Desmos
- 2024-2025 - classes implementing MSM with full fidelity
- Level 1 Classes - Continuing to use previous materials; focus on implementation of more inquiry-based approaches





Complete

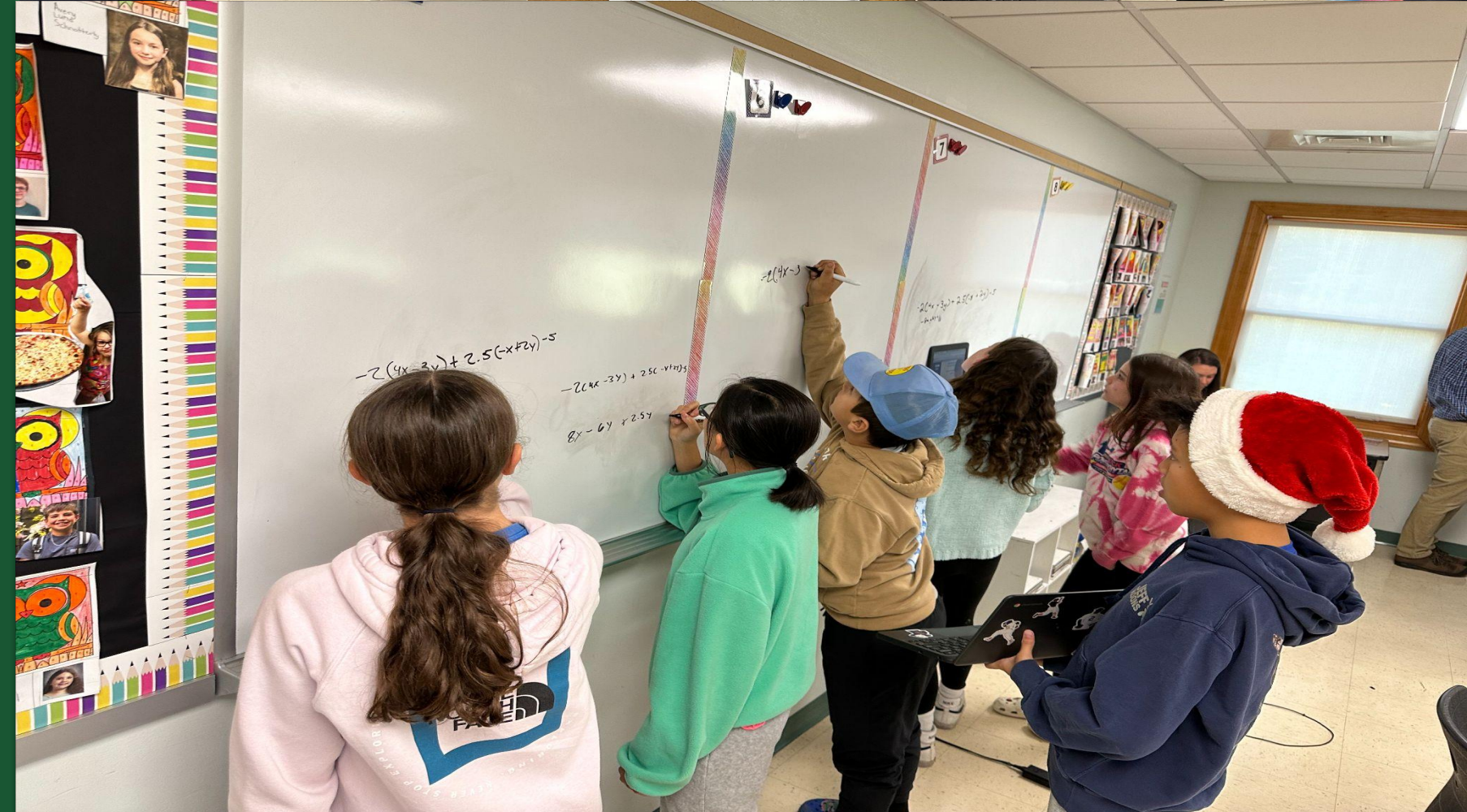
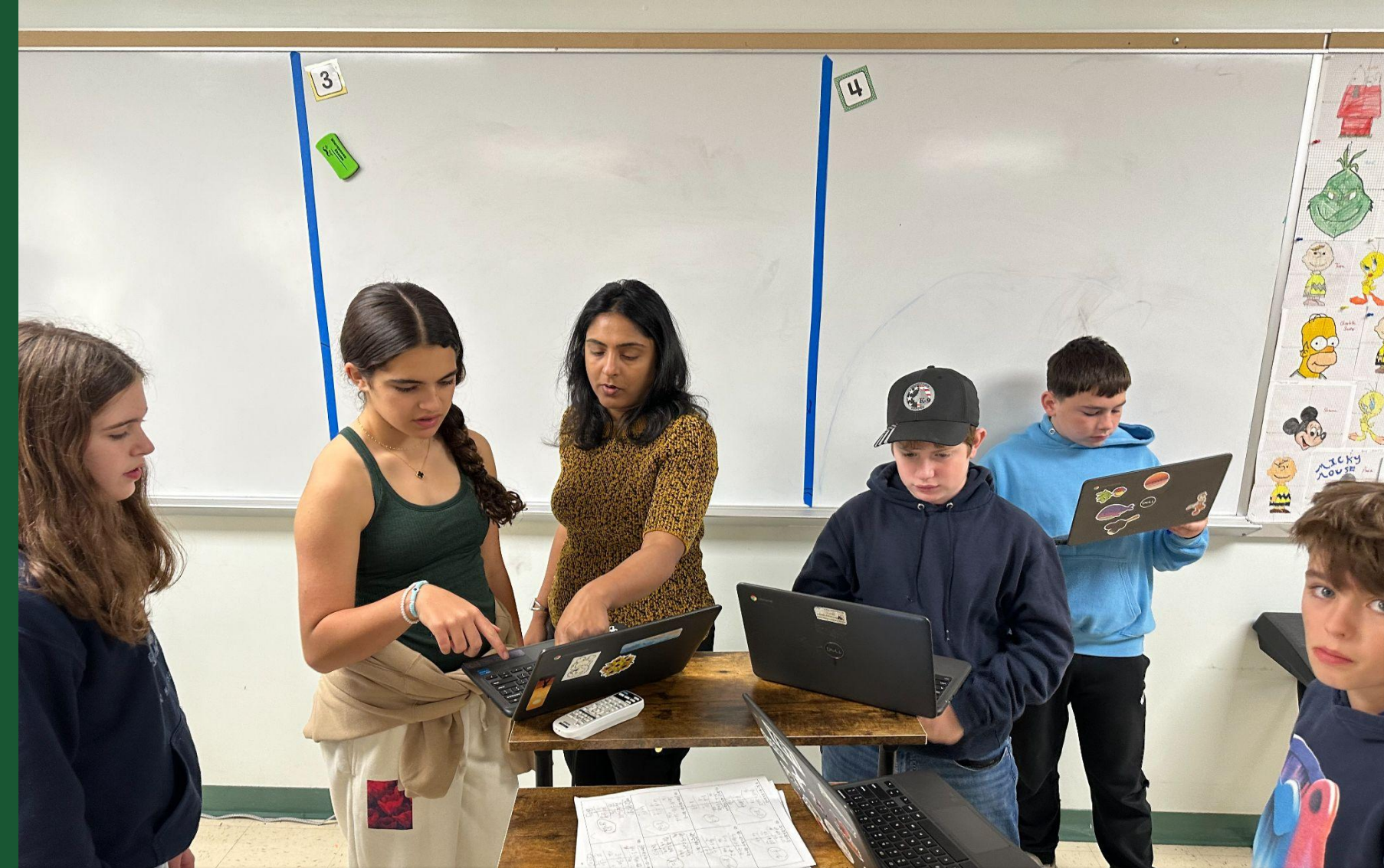
Clear Badges

Go To

	Post	Pre	The Big Shrink					Ship Shape					Malaria Medicin						
Stone Post	8.EE.A Milestone Pre	Math Simulator™	Simulation Trainer	Teacher Instruction	Practice Printable	Clicker Quiz	Student Reflection	Math Simulator™	Simulation Trainer	Teacher Instruction	Practice Printable	Clicker Quiz	Student Reflection	Math Simulator™	Simulation Trainer	Teacher Instruction	Practice Printable	Clicker Quiz	Student
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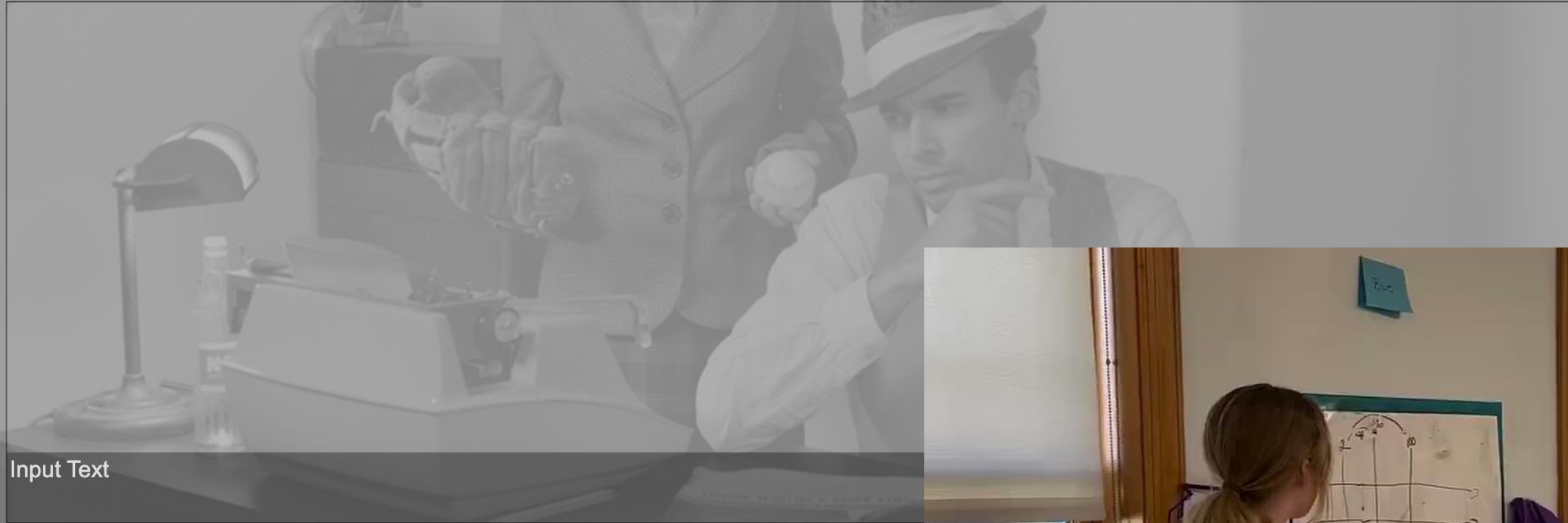


MidSchool Math in Action



How many runs will Jackie Robinson likely score in the 1948 season?

What do you need to know? What are your ideas?



Input Text



- Bell Schedule Changes
- Continued Progress Towards Pre-Pandemic Performance
- Attended MSM Conference Spring 2023 and 2024
- Ongoing collaboration with MSM developers, including tailored professional development for staff
- Selected for a DESE grant to support implementation of High Quality Instructional Materials - HQIM PDPO
- PD plan for this year



Next Steps

5th Grade Successes

- Expected growth in student skills and test-taking acumen
- Effective core curriculum and instruction, K-5; comprehensive instructional support
- Teacher experience and longevity in the grade/school
 - Strong understanding of curriculum and grade-level standards
 - Collaboration across teams and schools

Grade 5	2022	2023	2024
ELA M/E	78	79	72
ELA SS	514	513	512
ELA SGP	65	62	61
Math M/E	78	79	76
Math SS	513	515	514
Math SGP	63	63	65
Sci M/E	78	76	76
Sci SS	516	516	515

Next Steps in Data Analysis and Reporting

- Bridge Strategy Focal Area 2: Culture of Data Use
- Creation of Districtwide Data Team, with charge of identifying key data indicators to examine, and creating a reporting calendar for SC
 - This may include attendance data, AP enrollment, universal screening data, discipline data, etc.

Discussion