

Using Assessments to Identify and Address COVID-19 Learning Gaps

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Central

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Overview

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Transcript

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Time to get started. Welcome, again, to our Quick Chat. We're using assessments to identify and address COVID-19 learning gaps. For those of you that don't know, I'd like to welcome you and introduce REL Central. We're one of 10 regional educational laboratories, and our mission is to conduct applied research and trainings to support a more evidence-based education system. REL Central is one of those 10, and we serve seven states, including Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

My name is Anne Butterworth I'm an Education Improvement Specialist at REL Central, and I'd like to thank two of our governing board members for joining us today, Norm Alerta from Cherry Creek School District. He's Director of Assessment and Performance Analytics, and Deb Johnson from Chamberlain School Districts in South Dakota. And she is superintendent, current superintendent at that school district. So, thank you very much for joining us.

So, we're going to start out today just discussing a little bit about the need for assessments. And how that's going to look different in the fall compared to previous years. This is unprecedented, as we all know. However, there are some opportunities to look at research and outcomes based on past events, such as Hurricane Katrina, where we ended abruptly in a school year, and had to see what happened as students came back.

So, there's a few assumptions that we're kind of going on, and what we're seeing in the research is impacts will be varied. So, you can see from this map, most school buildings were closed as they finished out their school year. However, there was a variance there. We also, if we can look at the polling results that we have, you can see that it's going to continue to be different as everybody's planning different models for coming back.

It looks like 73% right now are looking at a hybrid learning model. And 32% looking at full-time in-person and 22% full-time remote. So that seems to go along with what we're hearing, because

the messages and the information changes on an almost daily basis at this point. So thank you for sharing that.

So again, what do we expect when students come back? What we can expect is that the impact of remote learning in the 2020-- 2019-2020 school year and continued remote learning in 2020-'21 school year, there is going to be a varied impact. For some students, it's been the best couple of months of school. They've been able to focus. They were not distracted.

For other students, it was challenging. There was connectivity issues. There may not have been a lot of home support. There's a lot of factors. Even down to the adaptability and personality of this, not just the students, but the teachers as they work together. I think one thing to remember is, it's not how hard anybody worked on it, because I think efforts were there for all sides, but it's the success based on those factors that came in.

We can expect achievement gaps. That's not anything new. We've been talking about achievement gaps for years in education. But what we might see is those achievement gaps might be amplified based on some of those factors that I talked about. And we also might see some different achievement gaps that were unexpected start to emerge. So, some of our more homogeneous groups that don't usually have subgroups within them, we may find that they all of a sudden are having gaps developing in those groups as well. So those are some things to really look for that might be different in the fall.

There's also some advantages, as there always is, the good and the bad with the situation. So most of us will be dealing with a different type of accountability system next year, which will lower the stakes, most likely, of assessments, and really be able to change the use of them to be useful to do what's best for kids and drive instruction. So those accountability stakes are going to change, and we might just have a year that we can try some things that are best for students that won't affect our accountability reports at a state level.

Also another advantage, we have a whole bunch of assessments that were prepared for the spring, and most schools, or many schools, may not have used them. So whether it was state tests that have been prepared and not used, common district assessments that were prepared and not used, or even the great amount of online tests banks that are available. So that is an advantage that we have a pool of resources to move forward with when we are looking at assessments for the fall.

So what do we need to do when students come back? What is important when they come back in the fall? And most important is we just need to make sure to, I think, minimize that gap between getting started and learning so that we can continue going forward. And to do that, we need to come up with some detailed learning profiles for each kid. Those learning profiles need to do two things. They need to look at the past and understand what was not taught, or what students have forgotten because it wasn't reinforced, from the 2019-2020 school year. And we also need to look forward to where we want to get by the end of this next year.

So there is going to be a requirement for some pretty extensive data to be able to create a district profile to know where the district is, and create a big picture so that we can understand, what does a normal expectation of one year of growth look like in the 2020-2021 school year? And we also need to get that information at the student level, so that we can directly personalize instruction to meet students where they're at and move them forward for the next school year.

With that, the focus of our webinar is going to be, discussing what considerations do you need to think about as you're planning your assessments? And then, what logistics might you need to think about when planning your assessments? And what resources might educators need once that data is collected, so that they can use it directly to impact instruction?

And we have, again, joining us, Norm Alerta and Deb Johnson. And I have a few questions for them that we'll go ahead and ask. And we'll also check in with the QA box and see what questions come from the audience. So, I'll go ahead and start with Norm on this one. And Norm, I'm just wondering from your perspective, what differences do you see for prioritizing for assessment in 2020 as compared to prior years?

NORM ALERTA: Well, I think the biggest difference, at least from the teacher perspective and the school's perspective this fall is that, in Colorado, I'm not sure if this was true across other states, but in Colorado, there was a pause on the state assessment testing this spring. And I think for our teachers and our schools, in general, that is something that, as they roll into that, they're really looking at that, and we make that assessment data available to schools as we receive it.

And we know that during that, right before school starts, teachers tend to look at that data. And it's mostly the state assessment data, but they're looking at assessments that we've administered, and then that plays a big role in how they start scoping out the rest of the year. So that's going to be a big difference, I think, for a lot of people.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Deb, did you have anything to add to that?

DEBRA JOHNSON: Yeah, and just piggybacking on Norm there a little bit, we have a summer data retreat, always, in our district. And then, in September, right away, we meet the data team has the information all ready to go for teachers. So we're going to miss out on that, too. We're going to try to do some of it, but we're not going to certainly be able to do it to the full extent that we used to.

But I guess I also see the need for assessment different this year because COVID break was unexpected. And with an unexpected break, different things are going to happen with learning. So in an unexpected break, such as holiday or even our regular summer break, the learning loss most likely will not be as evident or as dramatic. And I was reading in some of the articles that were given out by The REL before we started this, that even in summertime, some students increase their level in a normal summer with the reading programs that the libraries have or something that they may have at home.

But as educators, we've expected learning to take place during COVID, because that's just who we are. We expect learning. However, a lot of children didn't have access to, maybe, parents who could help them. That played a big part, because of those kinds of things.

Maybe they didn't have enough food in their house. I mean, there are just so many things that are affecting this break that maybe didn't happen before. So I think the need for assessment is really critical this fall so we can find out where our kids are at. And it's kind of like what you said, Anne. The variabilities, the gap may be bigger than what we would expect.

I just did want to mention, again, that those reading resources that you had were excellent. I don't think people really have to read the whole report, but they were excellent in just in terms of looking at what you need to think about when teachers come back this fall and when kids are here. Hopefully, they'll be here.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Yes. Thank you, Deb. And we will put a link to those resources to that handout into the chat as well. We'll put that in a couple times for this. But thank you for your answers to that.

The next question is, there's so much to assess. All that was missing between this unexpected COVID break, how are you going to prioritize bringing students back, whether it's in a hybrid model or full-time remote, or in the school? When they come back, how are you going to prioritize what to assess on our students? And Deb, I'll let you start with that one.

DEBRA JOHNSON: Well, at this point, our district is considering a few options. In the area of academics, we're trying to narrow down those areas so that we have some consistent data to review, and also try not to reinvent the wheel or take valuable time to administer assessments that our teachers are not even familiar with. So I would say that a big one for us is we are looking at our current series that we have in reading, math, and language arts. And I know people across the country have all kinds of different ones that they're using.

But if our teachers are familiar with those, we're looking at formative and summative assessments within some of that, those areas. Inventory surveys that could be done. And we're also leaving the option open as to what Norm referred to as the statewide assessments. But there is an interim assessment we could use that is available to us.

Not sure right now how that would go over with staff members as there is some hand scoring that's involved in that, and that would maybe become too cumbersome and take away valuable time. But it's an option. And I think right now that's something that's really important is to keep those options open.

One other item that I think people are thinking about out there or have seen some articles on it. We're also going to have to assess that social-emotional aspect of learning. And that may need to come before we do the academics. And we just need to find out where kids are at.

Like I said before, we're probably going to see some children that are in families that had to go to the food lines, and never had to go there before. May have a parent who doesn't have a job, or maybe some kids are just afraid of the virus. But I think school counselors, mental health agencies, and local hospitals will be valuable for helping us determine some of those needs. So that would be my response to that.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. And Norm?

NORM ALERTA: I was going to say, I agree with everything that Deb has said. And I would have to say, too, Deb, being in a superintendent role, I think some of the things that she described were really these big picture kinds of concerns and things that really have to start planning around. And I'll have to admit that being in the assessment world and being part of a team that was really focused on the instructional side of the district, once we went into this kind of pandemic shut down, we were trying to figure out, OK, so what instruction, what does learning, what does assessment look like as we get through the spring? And then, what is it going to look like as we move into the school year?

We were so focused on that. And think about all these other things-- and it wasn't until maybe about two weeks ago where our chief of staff sat down with us and he said, OK, so here's all the other things that we're dealing with. They're dealing with how to keep kids socially distant, how to deal with transportation. I'll have to say that-- and I'll preface this by saying that right now Cherry Creek is planning on going into a hybrid learning model next year where we'll have kids in school part of the week and then at home the other part of the week, and how that's going to work.

We kind of have some plans in place, but the thing that we believe is that everything can change in the next 24 hours, so we kind of live on this kind of pivot. But yeah, there's things like that. And so just to hear all these other things that we have to consider, and what we really need to start prioritizing.

I think we've started already from the very beginning. At the end of the school year, we sent out a survey to parents. We said, OK, so what worked? And we're really trying to find out things about access to internet, devices. We sent devices out. I think-- we kind of collected all this data-- we sent about 6,500 devices out across our district, so that students had something that they can access the learning remotely.

Where social-emotional learning assessments, I think what I'm hearing, what's being proposed is that very first week of school that's all that we're going to focus on, some sort of an assessment to see where kids are, how they're feeling about things, and then really started to address it that first week.

And then, I think going into the school year-- and you kind of had that first slide that says, look at the past and present-- I think it's helpful for us to kind of do just take some measures of, what is it that kids might have missed in this past spring? Even though we said learning is going to

take place, I think we also said that [INAUDIBLE] really holds [INAUDIBLE]. So things like grades and things like that, I think we weren't really looking at that.

But really, we want to make sure that the kids coming into the school year have some sort of understanding of the standards. So one of the things that we're looking at, it's continuing what we implemented this past year, which was, as Deb mentioned, an interim assessment system. And we actually started the school year with this, I will say, comprehensive assessment.

And what it did was it measured the expected learning for the entire year. We made that available at the beginning of the year. And I'll admit we got a lot of pushback from that, because I think what people were feeling was, why are you measuring students on standards that they haven't even been exposed to, right? And the idea was that we're trying to get a baseline for that.

Well, now, and what some teachers were saying was, why didn't you give, to our fourth graders this year, why did you get last year's third grade comprehensive assessment? And I was, like, well, that's not really the purpose of it. But now, as we roll into next year, I think that's probably what we would have to do, is to say, if we have this assessment that's available, could we tweak it and give it to our fourth graders? Give a third grade assessment to our fourth grade students, but really get it to where it's looking at, what are the big prioritized standards that the kids should know as they as they finish up that third grade year, just to see whether or not they have some of those things in place for grade four.

And I think Deb also mentioned making sure that, if you're giving up these assessments, that everything is machine-scored so that we don't put an extra burden on our teachers. And that was something that we heard from these assessments last year as well, was that there were pieces where the teachers had to go in and grade them. And I kind of put a note to myself this morning to, I have an assessment coordinator in our district that is starting to do some of this work. And I think she's actually on this call, so she'll hear this from me today.

But we were talking about redoing these assessments. And one of the things I put a note to myself was just to make sure that there's nothing on these assessments that the teachers have to grade. And then, I think in addition to that, we have a lot of assessments and measures that are tied to curriculum that we're currently using. So, I would think that teachers might begin to collect additional data from their students using those types of measures.

And then, as a district, we've established PLCs as our model for continuous improvement. So there is an expectation that each of our schools and our teachers are meeting in these teams. And one of the elements of PLCs that we really focus on over the last couple of years was the development of common formative assessments. So we see those common formative assessments as these teacher teams are planning for those first initial units, that they're using those common formative assessments to, again, as they define what standards would be covered in these instructional units, using some of these assessments, or at least creating some pre-assessments to kind of get an idea of where students are in relation to what's expected to be taught in these upcoming units.

So we've got a bunch of different things going around. And I would say, too, that we haven't really solidified a lot of our planning. We're still working on some things. But we did create a site on our district, it's kind of our landing page. And as we start filling out resources, those resources would appear there.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Great. So I just, I want to ask a follow-up question. You mentioned prioritized standards. And if I'm an administrator on here and we haven't started that process, is that something somebody can do in two months? Or how long was that process with your district for prioritizing standards just so we're in a realistic time frame.

NORM ALERTA: OK, well, I'll have to say, too, but what we were planning to roll out this year was, we spent all of this, or next year, we spent all of this past year really creating what we called our universal instructional framework. And really what that is is Cherry Creek has had this model, we call it our teaching-learning cycle. Plan, teach, monitor, and adjust. Those are the elements of that. But it's really focusing on that.

And what Cherry Creek never really had in the past several years was a common scope and sequence that was available to teachers across the district. So that was something that we had coordinators working on all this year, and then within that common scope and sequence, we actually did this prioritization of the state standards a couple of years ago, we actually brought teachers in and we took two full days of having teachers in every single grade level just taking the Colorado standards. And I would say just in English, language arts, and math, that's what we would focus on at that time. And just spent two days prioritizing those standards.

We did that a couple of years ago. But we didn't really lay them out in any kind of logical sequence of how those standards would be taught. We just said they're available, but here's the things that we really think teachers need to focus on. We also identified the supporting standards. So as with this new scope and sequence that we're trying to implement next year, we've actually prioritized those standards. So I'd say prioritizing it, when we get it a couple of years ago took us about two full days. And we brought teachers, K12 across the district.

I think math was a little difficult. I wouldn't say difficult, but it was it was a little different because we actually had to [INAUDIBLE] at the high school cohort into a separate cohort, put them in another room, and then they went through the different sequences of the courses like algebra 1, Geometry, and algebra 2. But yeah, for us, when we prioritized a couple of years ago it was two full days.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Great. Thank you so much for answering that. I do want to just, you jumped a little bit into implementation and logistics. I do want to give Deb a chance to discuss kind of what their implementation ideas are, and then we'll go to our QA. We have some questions to answer from there. So Deb, do you want to share what kind of logistics and your thinking about with the implementation and balancing assessments as we are in different forms of education? Different, I guess, venues, for education? And also weighing all the different priorities as you talked about SEL, maybe you could talk to, when is the right time to give these

assessments as we bring kids in and want to balance giving them time to get started and adjusted back to school, but also not wasting too much time not knowing where they're at in their learning. So—

DEBRA JOHNSON: Yeah. Well, and I first want to just preface my comments with, I am retiring in June at the end of June. And so, we have a new superintendent coming in. And as we briefly visited about this before the session, I'm probably not the only person in the country that's dealing with this right now. But what I've tried to do there is communicate with the new superintendent, let him know what we have done, what we're doing, and trying not to overstep my bounds into what is going to happen.

The new superintendent is coming from a larger district. He's a principal there. And coming into his first superintendency. So, I think that is just great that he is going to have that big school picture of how they're going to do some things, and then coming into our district. And it's not even too far away, and it's in a neighboring district about 70 miles away. So that makes it nice.

But I just want you to know that what I say here may not be the whole picture of what happens in Chamberlain, because I'm not going to be here. But I have worked with the administrators and the program directors in putting into place just a basic framework of what we think this might look like. And I think one of the first things is, we've got to give a little bit of time for the teachers and the students to develop those relationships, which are so key to learning and so key to having everything go well in a school.

Now, that's going to be different for different people, but developing relationships, teachers have that with kids, they know how to do that. And sometimes it works very well. And in the environment that we're going to be in, I think they're going to feel some pressure to do that. But you just have to give a little bit of time, to just a few routines, some relationships that they're going to build with those kids as they're doing those routines to get the year started.

Comfort and trust levels, of course, go along right along with that to be established before any type of assessment can begin. And then, I just think, we make those assessments a part of what we do. We don't make it a big deal, we don't set off these alarms, that oh my gosh, I have to find out where you're at before I can do anything else in this classroom. It has to be that atmosphere of trusting, people getting along, knowing that the teacher is there for the students.

Of course, it's going to fall a lot to the teacher's delivery as it does with any type of assessment or anything that they do during the school year. And we have the higher stakes testing in the spring. A lot of what happens begins with how the teacher delivers what's going to be going on in that room.

And when you want students to perform at their highest level, whether it be a band contest, or a math test, end of the quarter art project, doesn't matter what it is, we want to make sure that there's that level in the classroom where students are going to be able to succeed. I think a

challenge that we have, and Norm addressed it is, how many days are we going to be here? How many days aren't we going to be here? I know states are giving out guidelines to their staff as to what will happen if a COVID case occurs in your school or community, what do you do?

In our community right now, in our county, we had the first COVID case yesterday. I don't really know what that means. Does that mean now we have to worry about community spread, how many kids are going to be here? But just weighing in on those priorities like I mentioned last time, English, language arts.

And I read several articles where math is going to be the concern. Especially as we move into the high school levels. But math we may want to concentrate on because the research has shown in the past that is the one that may be the most difficult for children. And I, even to this day, I have been in on so many parent conversations, or when they're coming in for parent-teacher conferences, or even on a phone call, where I just never was good at math. And I just wish they wouldn't even say that anymore.

And I think that they're telling that to me, I'm wondering what's happening in their homes when we have this online learning going on and their child gets stuck, and the teacher isn't available when they're ready to do the work. So prioritizing it, we're sticking with math, language arts, and reading. And everyone is a reading teacher, everyone does some language arts. Some of us do some math, maybe at different levels, of course, but we're going to stick with those and just develop that basic framework of, what do you want to do, what do we need to do and getting it done as soon as possible without making it go too fast.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Mm-hmm Yeah, balance. Thank you. So I'm going to go ahead and David, if you have any questions, I think you have some questions prepared. Could you share one with us?

DAVID YANOSKI: All right. Well, thanks Norm and Deb. A couple of questions have come in. The first one I'm going to route to Norm initially. And that's if, with the possibility of having to do school online or virtually again next year, are there concerns about-- are there reliability and validity concerns if we are in a position where we have to administer benchmark or interim assessments online?

NORM ALERTA: Yeah, and I think there's always going to be those concerns. And part of this is I think when students are at home taking these tests, how can we ensure that they're not looking at the answers, or they don't have their parents beside them really helping them answer questions? And I think it really has to, I think we really have to communicate the purpose of these assessments, and why we would need to administer them at home, and what we're trying to do.

I think one of the things that we're really talking about, that we've been talking about, really, for next year, because we are implementing the scope and sequence. You really can't implement something like a scope and sequence and tell teachers to build their units, instruction units based

on the scope and sequence without having, also building in a comprehensive assessment system in the district. So whether it's common formative assessments or these classroom, in-the-moment types of assessments, it's really having teachers monitoring the progress of the student learning.

And I think when you get into these interim assessments, it's really trying to get at that as well. And emphasizing that, to the students, if they have to take it remotely, that these assessments are really designed to kind of see where you are in relation to where you need to be. And that has to really start with, as you're building these instructional units, having the students involved in the learning to say, we're going to cover this. By the end of this unit, I'd expect you guys to learn this.

And we're going to, and along the way, students are, through the use of formative processes and assessments, students know where they're at. And then that interim assessment or those benchmark types of assessments just kind of give that, give the student and teacher additional information about where they are in relation to where they need to be. I think the paradigm that we've lived in with assessments is that they're used for one, grading purposes, right? I look at my daughter's curriculum when she was going through school, and especially in high school, there's a certain amount of their grade that is assigned to quizzes, and final exams, and things like that. I mean, that's just our practice, right?

But then you've also had, I think, the attachment of assessments, especially the state assessments to some sort of an accountability system. Here in Colorado, and I think in a lot of other states, over the last couple of years, the use of assessments to evaluate teachers has just been a part of the accountability system. So I think there's this added tension with teachers and the meaning of, not just the state assessments, but just assessments in general and the need for students to do well on those assessments because teachers might feel that that's a reflection of their practice. And so they may lose track of the purpose of those different types of assessments, whether they're formative, common formative, interim or benchmark, to really just help the teachers and students kind of know where they are in relation to where they need to be in terms of learning the standards.

DEBRA JOHNSON: Yeah, and I think, too, just to add to what Norm said, that if the students are at home and online and doing it, what is the purpose of it? We would like to know where your child is at. That's basically what we're doing, so that we can move forward.

And I think it also goes back to that idea of getting away from grading. Because no doubt somebody is going to ask, well, is this going to be a part of my child's grade? And those are things that we've been trying to do for years, and we have some standard-based report cards, all those kinds of things. And I'm sure many people do out there. But I think maybe this will help us in educating our parents that we're just trying to find out where your kids are at so we can move forward.

And it's not a part of anything that's going to be graded or whatever. It's mainly what it says. It's an assessment. It tells us where we're at and how we can move forward. So in that scenario,

maybe we're going to move further ahead of that grading system that a lot of people are concerned about.

NORM ALERTA: And I want to add something, too, because I think we have to also start thinking about the types of questions that we would build into assessments if the only option is to assess remotely from home. So again, I think it's-- we talked about answers that aren't Googleable, right? And so I think of more of performance task types of assessments. Now, initially, I had said, as we were rolling into the school year, we're giving these comprehensive assessments, we're trying not to, we don't want teachers to have that added burden of grading those assessments. And that's really because next year, this fall, there's going to be this big transition for a lot of our teachers, and we're trying not to add too much onto their plates.

But I think there is, I don't want to not say that there isn't value in-- I think I used, like, a triple negative on that-- there isn't value in teachers using some sort of a rubric to judge student work and really get into some of this cognitive processing that students are doing. And you can build that into a math question just by having an equation and then, and having, building something where there could be answers that are almost correct but they're not fully correct, and then having kids explain why they went that route.

And then, or actually even bringing that up, those types of problems into a classroom discussion to say, OK, so here's this problem. How would you solve this? Or why did you go about this way solving it. And that just brings, again, this assessment. And it starts to, I think, ingrain into students that when they're responding to a question, you're responding to a question to really just see how much they understand about it and not necessarily to try to get the right answer.

The other thing I think that we have to also think about is, sometimes we've used assessments to place kids into things like GT programming or to identify them as special ed. And I think we have to think about bodies of evidence and how those assessments are used, because I think it sometimes gets away from this. And especially, in some cases, the parent thinking that my kid needs to do really well on this test in order for them to get into the next higher level course that's available in our system.

DAVID YANOKSI: Great. So we had a number, a couple other sets of questions that are asking about our youngest learners, our K through two, our K through three, and the fact that many of the assessments for that age group serve different purposes. Is there any thought so far about how we might adapt assessments for that for that group of students?

DEBRA JOHNSON: I don't know if there's been a lot of thought into that. But one of the things that I have really heard a lot of from superintendents in varied-sized schools that young children need to be in school. They need their teacher, they need that hands-on, they need to be here.

So, as we're planning and trying to figure out what we're going to do here, I think one of our priorities if possible is, how do we have these young children here for sure? What are we going to do? How can we do this?

And I think so much of that assessment with young children is, it's just continual in those lessons. When I observe in kindergarten, first, second grade classrooms, that the teachers are so in tune to what those kids are doing and how they're learning that some of that assessment can't be put on a screen, or a computer, or in any type of a paper/pencil thing that mom and dad would be able to help with. It is just so much a part of what they do every day in their activities. And I do know that there's some standardized benchmarks out there, There are things that we can look at, but I see that as a real challenge for those young children. Yeah. Norm?

NORM ALERTA: Yeah, we've started looking at the standards for online learning, because of that possibility that we've been saying hybrid, but what if we go remotely, what would that look like? And there's some things that for early learners what they talk about is assessing by using more technology. So, having kids do a task and again, this would involve parents. So how accessible is this to all of our families, that's always a thing that we would have to consider.

But filming students' activities, having do more performance tasks, and then having parents assist by setting things up. I think what was interesting, an interesting perspective that I had, that I don't think many people had, was my wife is a teacher of the visually-impaired students.
[INAUDIBLE]

DEBRA JOHNSON: Whoops. We lost Norm. Hmm.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: OK.

DEBRA JOHNSON: Well, he'll come back with his wife being a teacher. [CHUCKLES]

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Well, I'll jump in. I want to ask one more question to Deb while we wait for Norm to come back. And then we'll try to get to one more Q&A question. Just so you know, if we don't get to your Q&A question online, we will be looking at those and sending some information out answering those after this webinar. So thank you for all of those question and answers that are-- or questions that are coming in.

So Deb, really, we've talked a little bit about teachers, obviously the essential part of making all of this work. And I'm kind of wondering, what do you see? What resources can we provide for educators and teachers between now and the start of the school year, and as the school year continues? What do they need so that they can effectively use the assessment data?

DEBRA JOHNSON: Well, I think a lot of, I'm pretty practical in what I do with our staff, and try to be just on the level of, OK, can we accomplish this? Can we do this? So in some cases, it's going to depend on the experience of the teacher. What resources do teachers need?

I like what Norm said about the PLCs. That's kind of how we do it, too. You have your grade level team, you have your subject area. And so I think we need to keep in mind that some of our best resources are going to be our teachers. We have some high fliers, we have teachers of the year, we have a lot of people who are very talented and we need to use them as a resource. So I don't think that we should always think we need to come up with something to give them.

They can ask the questions, they can help us. But we're going to get started this summer with giving teachers some time. And I think that's very important, that resource of time and being able to do some planning, being able to come together. They can social distance, they can Zoom, whatever they want. But we do have some staff development funds where we're going to be able to have, allow them to work together and talk about what they're going to do with the assessments as it comes down from the district level, what they can do with their students in their classrooms.

But looking at specific resources that they may need, as I talked a little bit about what we might be able to do, or what we're thinking of with our series here, is giving them guidelines to follow with what they might be doing. I think there needs to be accountability level, too, that we are going to assess students, and we are going to find out where they are at.

I don't think we can just put it out there and then not to expect to see anything as administrators. We want to know where our kids are at. It's important to me, as the superintendent, to know. Maybe not every single student, but the data needs to be in somewhat of a format that I know, too, how our kids are doing, so that I can be able to give some resources back.

But I think there'll be some recommendations, some intervention strategies. Do people need other resources like that they want to use once they've assessed? I think putting together those learning goals. And we say that they can be ambitious, but they need to be attainable. We don't want to have things way out there. We need to see where kids are at.

There are a lot of good tools to use, and a lot of resources. When we do a curriculum review, such as we had math this year, the number of actual tangible or online resources out there are, it's mind boggling. I think a lot of administrators found that when all of this happened, the number of emails that we were receiving on all of the resources we could be using, oh my gosh, that would be a full-time job going through all of that. But I would go back to our teachers are our most valuable resources, and we're going to give them time this summer to be able to go through some of the things that they need to, so that they are comfortable when we get to the point of, are we going to have to do some of this online, or are kids going to be here?

So that would be my response to that. And give me-- I also think, too, if we need some training, the teachers say, I just don't know what to do with this data, then, can we have a lunch and learn? Can we do something after school? Can we do something before school? What about getting six people together at a prep time?

Let's think about that staff development differently, too. As things come up this fall that teachers need help with on how they put their data together, what they may want it to look like, let's give them the help that they need. They will ask good questions and I consider them the experts with our children. And they'll be able to help us with that information.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: OK, thank you. So we are running close on time. So Norm, I'm going to see if you can give me the golden answer in 60 seconds or less. What do we need to do to support educators to use data effectively as we come back to school?

NORM ALERTA: I think one of the things that we've really been talking about in our district is just assessment literacy. So we're trying to put modules together and make them available to our teachers, but really understand how to build assessments, especially as we talk about this implementing a scope and sequence in helping teachers build instructional units, but really, how to use different types of assessments to monitor student learning. And then, as Deb mentioned, really, how do you look at this data and figure out what it means?

And if it's something that comes from teachers where they're having discussions, especially in PLCs about what evidence students should be demonstrating in order to determine if they're learning something, teachers are having that. I think it automatically just builds the capacity of our teachers as well, just to go through that process. And I apologize that I got cut off, but my computer, I was sitting in my backyard, and my computer got really hot. It just shut down. So I had to run inside and get it cooled off. But it's working now.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. Thank you for jumping back on with us.

NORM ALERTA: Sure.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: And thank you for everyone that has stayed with us. I do see that we have come to the end of our time and we're a couple of minutes over. I do want to mention that the RELs have collaborated on pulling together some COVID-19 products. And you can go to this link to find those.

And with that, I just want to say thank you. We will review the questions that we didn't get to. We have a great list. And we will send out a recording and some information on those questions and answers in the next week or a couple of weeks. So thank you. Have a great afternoon.

NORM ALERTA: Thanks.

DEBRA JOHNSON: Thank you.

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