

Response Received from MCPS Administration

Starting with the 2026-2027 school year, identified elementary students will access accelerated math content through cluster grouping. What metrics will be used to evaluate fidelity of implementation and efficacy of the accelerated math cluster grouping model?

For the 2026-2027 school year, cluster grouping will be implemented only with rising Grade 4 students. The following school year, Grades 3-5 will implement Cluster Grouping. The Division of Teaching and Learning will provide schools with initial student data outlined in the [Cluster Grouping Criteria Document](#). These data will support schools in placing students into appropriate learning clusters within classrooms.

To support successful implementation and monitor fidelity, the following measures will be in place:

Initial Student Placement

- Schools will use district-provided criteria and data to determine student placement within instructional clusters.
- Cross-Functional Team members will collaborate with school teams during classroom articulation and placement discussions for the 2026-2027 school year.

Family Communication and Transparency

- Families will receive communication outlining their child's initial cluster placement, along with a copy of the cluster grouping criteria document to ensure transparency and understanding of the process.

Monitoring Implementation Fidelity

- Cross-Functional Team members, directors from the Division of School Leadership and Improvement and the Division of Teaching and Learning, and school administrators will conduct classroom walkthroughs throughout the school year.
- Walkthroughs will focus on:
 - Whether students are being instructed within their identified clusters;
 - The level of instructional challenge and differentiation being provided; and
 - Whether students are receiving appropriate opportunities for enrichment, intervention, or acceleration.

Assessment and Progress Monitoring

- Students receiving above-grade-level instruction will also be assessed using above-grade-level standards and instructional expectations.
- Following district assessment windows, principals will review student performance data with teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of cluster placements and instructional supports..

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- Schools will make instructional and grouping adjustments based on student performance and academic growth data.

Measuring Effectiveness

- District assessment data, classroom performance, and walkthrough observations will be used throughout the school year to monitor implementation and instructional effectiveness.
- Ultimately, student performance on the state assessment will serve as a key measure of instructional effectiveness and the impact of cluster grouping on student achievement.

These measures will help ensure that cluster grouping is implemented consistently, monitored regularly, and adjusted in response to student learning needs.