

**DEPARTMENTS OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE,
COMMUNICATIONS,
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION,
STUDENT AND SPECIAL SERVICES,
AND TECHNOLOGY,
WILMETTE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

INFORMATION ITEM

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Subject: District 39 Data Dashboard

OVERVIEW

We use many sources of data to *inform* our practices in District 39. This applies to ways we share important information about finances, academic assessments, instructional programming, professional development, and District 39 demographics. Reports and updates about these data are regularly provided to the Board of Education and the community, with most included in the Illinois Report Card posted on our website. However, for members of the community or families considering Wilmette Schools District 39, we are in the process of developing a *Data Dashboard* that is designed to provide brief, “at-a-glance” information.

Potential dashboard data are currently being identified, gathered, and formatted as we determine the content that will be of greatest interest and use for our public. Because financial information is always readily available, these data only required reformatting for presentation in a dashboard format; therefore, *Finance* is the most well developed dashboard category to date. Other categories of information have been shared in Board Reports, but a dashboard provides the opportunity to reconsider ways in which data are presented. This is especially true for demographics, academic achievement, student programming, and staff development.

Progress with District 39 Data Dashboard development is described below.

DASHBOARD CATEGORIES

Finance

Financial data provides important information that demonstrates the District’s financial position and stewardship of taxpayer dollars. While financial information is always posted on the District’s website in the form of legally required financial reports, the dashboard format provides an opportunity for increased transparency through informative graphs that are easily accessible and comprehensible.

For the launch of the District 39 Data Dashboard, several financial measures have been selected for display and will be presented in the demonstration to the Board. When appropriate, the Dashboard page includes links to more detailed financial information for those interested.

Demographics

To date, we have developed several graphs for this section of the dashboard, which provide information on enrollment and staffing. Other demographic data under consideration includes teacher education level (percent of teachers at various post graduate degree levels), average years of teacher experience, and students moving into the district. While one graph regarding English Language Learners (ELL) is included for the Board presentation, additional graphs could add important detail on this topic in the future. For example, District 39 succeeds in “graduating” ELL students from services at a faster rate than the state average; the addition of this metric could be a consideration for the dashboard.

Academic Achievement/Growth

Student achievement on standardized assessments is one measure that lends itself to presentation in a dashboard format. However, an important consideration is that past data from the Illinois Standards Achievement Test Academic (ISAT) may not yield reliable comparisons with the new PARCC assessments.

For the purpose of demonstrating the District 39 Data Dashboard, Performance Series data is used to present information about cohort progress in math and reading over time. The District’s data consultant recently completed longitudinal comparisons of our local Performance Series gains to expected growth, so additional details will likely be developed. After analyzing this new and important view of the growth data, we will explore inclusion of these representations of actual student growth for future dashboard updates.

Student Programming

Students in District 39 experience a full, rich curriculum, with opportunities to select classes in a variety of areas. For example, while all students receive instruction in a second language, Spanish, from kindergarten through grade 4, entering fifth graders at Highcrest Middle school may choose to either continue with Spanish or select a new World Language to pursue in grades 5-8: French, German, Latin, or Mandarin Chinese. Additionally, some students select the Academic Strategies class, as an alternative to a World Language, to meet their specific learning needs. The District 39 Data Dashboard currently shows the percentages of students selecting each of these options over the past three years.

Future information about *Student Programming* could include data about related arts selections, student support options, extra-curricular activities, wellness, early childhood enrollments, or data related to social emotional learning.

Staff Development

Professional development of staff is an extremely critical aspect of successful implementation for District initiatives, government education mandates, job requirements, and professional growth. District 39 provides a variety of staff development venues to achieve training needs:

- Academy 39, with required and elective classes presented by District 39 professionals
- District Institute Days, with required and elective sessions
- Required in-house professional development
- Out-of-District professional workshops and conferences

Using Academy 39 as a starting place for dashboard construction related to staff development, a tally of courses for the past three years will be presented by grouping courses in overarching categories. District 39 staff, based on their expertise and interest in teaching a course, present academy courses. Participation in courses, for the most part, is voluntary. Instructors and participants in Academy 39 may choose to receive continuing education credits or opt for a stipend. However, certain courses are required and therefore, not included in the course tally. These include mentoring training; *Non-violent Crisis Intervention* (providing required certification and recertification for staff working with students with special needs); and our *Essentials Learning Series* (an expectation for new teachers).

Future dashboard data for the *Staff Development* category could include tallies of required and optional Institute Day sessions, required in-house training, and professional development opportunities attended out of District 39.

CONSIDERATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Our journey into development of a District 39 Data Dashboard began by exploring the use of this tool in other districts. Of the 15 districts in our usual comparison group, only 2 had dashboards: Winnetka 36 and Morton Grove 70.

As a result, we also explored 22 other districts with dashboards--in Illinois and out of state--regardless of demographics. These districts revealed several pertinent findings:

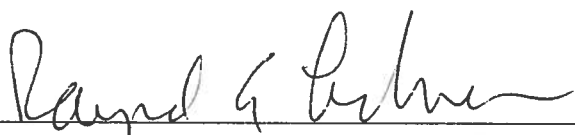
- Some districts simply link to the main menu of the district's Illinois School Report Card for viewing of relevant data.
- Others do not update their dashboards and are displaying significantly out-of-date information.
- Several have data that are poorly presented and not easily understood.
- And finally, several districts--with dashboard displays when we began this effort a few months ago--have withdrawn them completely from public view.

In District 39, our priorities in dashboard exploration are to ensure that displayed data reflect current, easily understandable, and meaningful information to the community as a whole. For some dashboard areas, this requires delving into our data in new ways for additional information. Consequently, a critical step prior to public presentation is for administrators, Board members, and teachers to have opportunities to reflect on new data and to process their implications for the District and for students. Any questions arising from the community can then be meaningfully addressed when the data are made available for public view.

Based on Board feedback about this report and presentation of planned data displays, we will post a link to the District 39 Data Dashboard for community exploration, noting that this format is still in development. We can then track usage and gather community response to guide next steps.

The Board may expect a follow-up on this topic in the early fall.

Recommended for presentation to the Board of Education,



Raymond E. Lechner, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools