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To: Board of Education  
From: District Accountability Committee  
Re: DAC Recommendations for Proposed UIP for 2025-2026  
Date: Sept. 24, 2025

On September 23, 2025, the District Accountability Committee (DAC) received a presentation from Laura Cotsapas on the 2024–2025 Academic Growth and Achievement Report. The findings show successes in areas of focus for the district and continue to raise significant concerns regarding student academic growth and achievement across Summit School District.

Key Observations from the DAC:

- **CMAS ELA and Math results** remain a concern for students in Grades 3–8.
  - Fewer than 50% of students are meeting **grade-level expectations in ELA**, a persistent challenge.
  - Encouragingly, **elementary ELA growth** has exceeded 50% for three consecutive years, offering promise for future achievement gains.
  - **CMAS Math achievement and growth** are improving among elementary students, which the DAC applauds.
  - **Grades 6–8 ELA growth and achievement** show inconsistent trends, with no clear upward trajectory.
  - **Middle school math growth** was impressive last year, but achievement remains a concern. Continued momentum is essential.
  - The **achievement gap across student populations** is not closing—and in some cases, it is widening.
- **PSAT/SAT EBRW and Math results** for Grades 9–12 are the DAC's primary concern this year.
  - Less than 50% of high school students are meeting grade-level expectations in EBRW and Math.
  - Year-to-year growth in these areas is inconsistent and insufficient to close existing gaps.

DAC Input for Budget Priorities for 2025–2026 was:

### **Tier 1 Instruction**

- Maintain a strong focus on high-quality classroom instruction for all students.
- Maximize teacher presence in classrooms.

### **Individualized Support**

- Address the diverse needs of English Learners (ELs), Special Education (SPED), and Gifted and Talented (GT) students.

### **Family and Community Partnerships**

- Strengthen the role of school-family liaisons to deepen relationships.
- Develop a robust volunteer program to leverage community resources.
- Ensure consistent, transparent communication with families through tools like regular newsletters.
- Celebrate student achievements across academics, extracurriculars, and personal growth.

The DAC identified the following issues to investigate that could be impacting student growth and achievement:

#### **A. Grade Inflation and Readiness Concerns**

- Evidence of grade inflation in high school may obscure true student proficiency.
- Standards-based grading practices may contribute to misalignment between grades and actual preparedness.
- Consequences include students being underprepared for subsequent coursework, grade levels, and college expectations.

#### **B. Instructional Gaps and Equity Challenges**

- Persistent gaps in foundational skills, particularly in math, are limiting student progress.
- Overreliance on computer-based work may hinder deeper learning and skill development.
- Multilingual Learner (MLL) populations require targeted support, especially at the high school level.

The DAC recommended strategies for improving student performance for the UIP are:

#### **A. Closing Learning Gaps**

- Focus on the basics, especially through handwritten math practice.
- Reduce computer dependency in instructional settings.
- Increase presence of paraprofessionals in classrooms to provide individualized support.

- Assign dedicated counselors to support MLL students and address their unique needs.

## **B. Strengthening Instructional Support**

- Expand co-teaching models to foster collaborative instruction and differentiated support.
- Provide ongoing professional development (PD) and mentorship for teachers, focused on content and student needs.
- Support teachers in identifying and addressing multi-level student competencies within Tier 1 instruction.
- Develop a uniform communication plan, particularly for elementary settings, to ensure consistent messaging across school-home connections.

## **C. Enhancing Family Engagement**

- Increase parent involvement through structured communication strategies.
- Monitor homework levels to ensure they are developmentally appropriate and equitable.
- Eliminate non-instructional computer use (e.g., games) during school hours to maintain academic focus.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these recommendations. The DAC appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the district's ongoing efforts to ensure meaningful academic growth and equitable outcomes for all students in Summit School District.

Sincerely,

Lorna Frey  
DAC Chair