

## Ensuring Reading & Math Success Through "Well Checks"

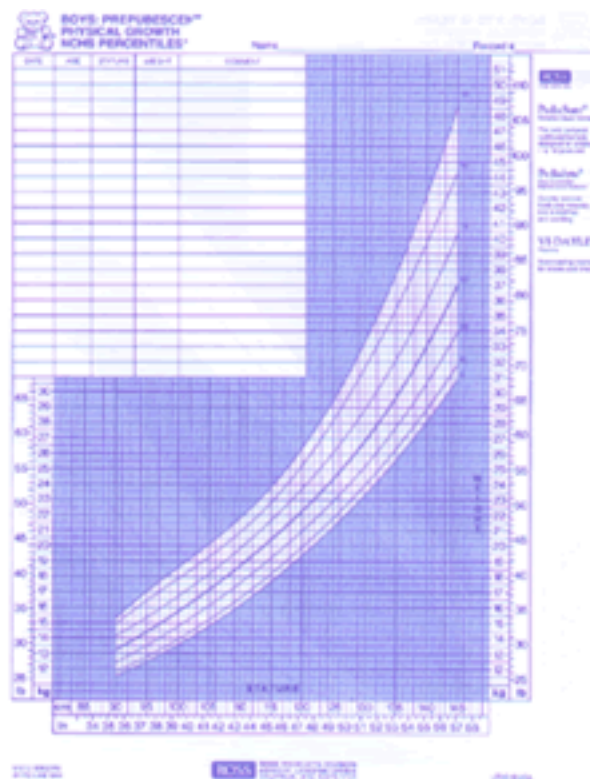
Dear Parent(s):

As our children grow, most of us see charts like the one to the right. Our doctors weigh our children and measure how tall they are. This information is put on a chart like the one to the right. This chart shows where our child stands compared to other children and how fast they are growing. These charts help doctors to understand if our children are growing properly or if something may be wrong, enabling them to do something to help as soon as possible.

Doctors use children's height and weight as "Well Checks", or vital signs of development. We all know how important it is for our children to "grow" in reading. In fact, successfully learning to read at an early age is probably one of the most important factors in a child's learning, both inside and outside of school. Math is another important academic area.

Because growth in the areas of reading and math is so important, on a regular basis, our school is going to give you "Well Check" information indicating how well your child is reading and mastering math. We now know what the goals of the reading and math "Well Checks" should be, and will give this information to you three times per year. Generally, the first "Well Check" is given within the first few weeks of school.

The reading and math "Well Checks" are simple and accurate. How we assess these skills varies across grade levels. For

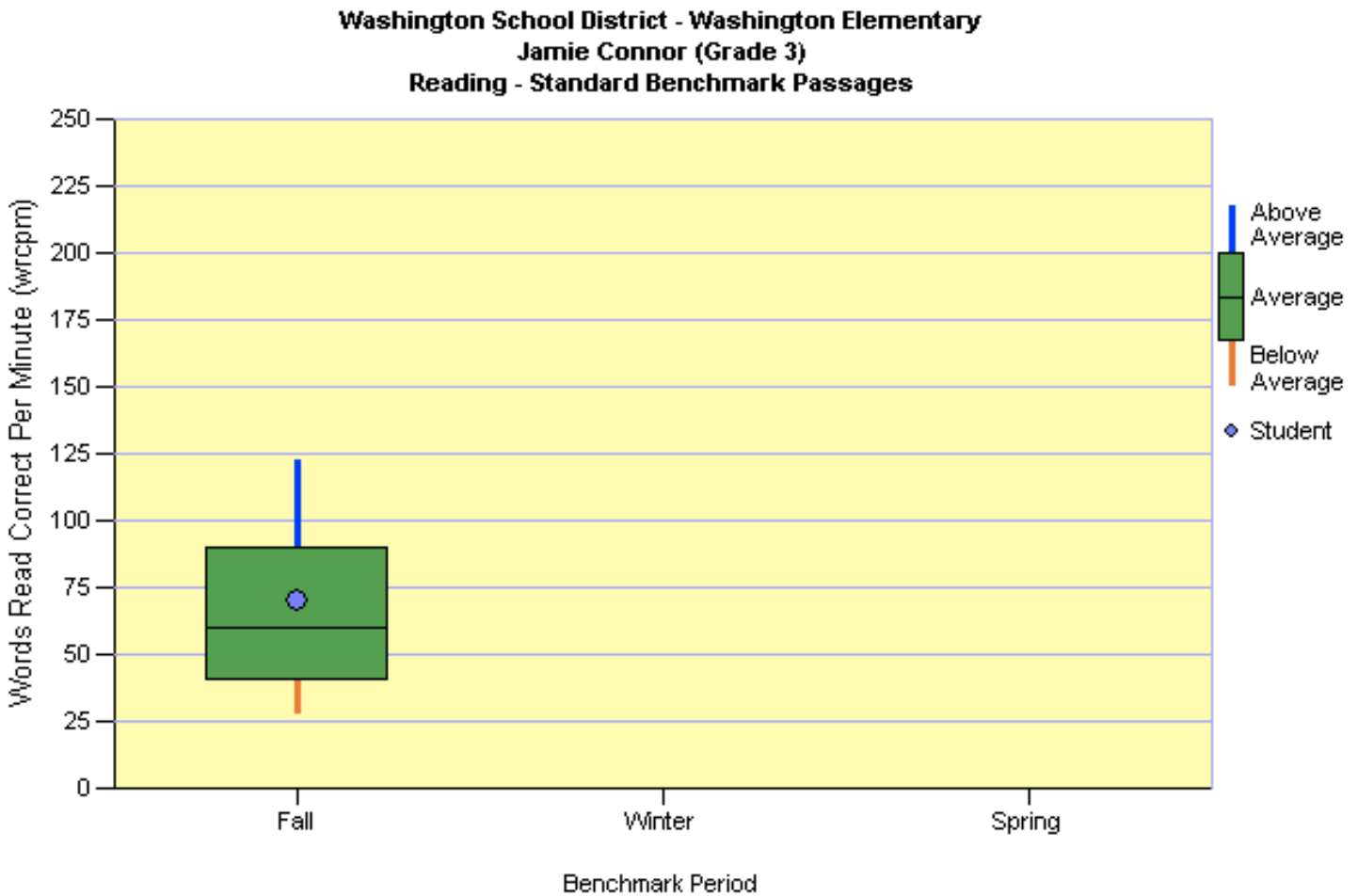


reading in grades K-1, our primary focus is assessing early literacy skills (letter naming fluency, letter sound fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, and nonsense word fluency). For grades 1-8, our reading assessment involves assessing oral reading fluency (number of words correctly read in one minute).

For math, at grades K-1, we assess early numeracy skills (oral counting, number identification, quantity discrimination, and missing number). For grades 1-3, we assess math computation skills, while at grades 4-8 we assess math concepts and applications.

Teachers will use these "Well Checks" to help them plan their reading and math instruction. This information will also help them individualize for students who are above or below average in their reading and math abilities. The "Well Check" information for your child will be put on a chart like the one below, and your child's teacher will be able to explain it to you at conference time.

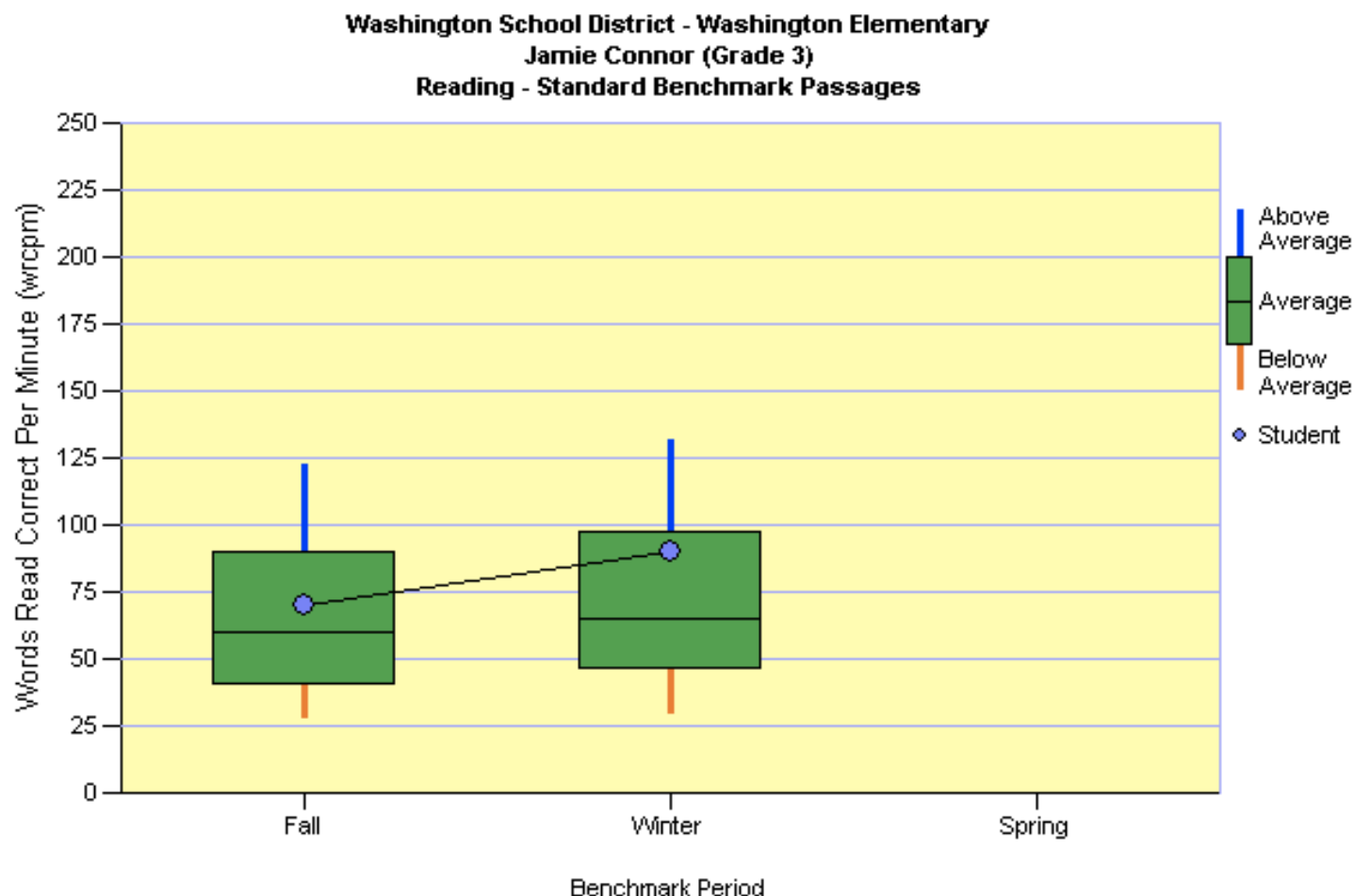
In the example below, the chart shows how one student read the stories compared to other classmates in the same grade. This chart also displays how well an average third-grade reader at this school reads a third-grade story at the beginning of the year (Fall). The number of words this child read correctly in 1 minute is indicated by a blue dot. The black horizontal line is the score of what the **very middle** student read and the green box displays scores of **average** readers in this grade. Scores within the blue line are **above average** readers, while scores within the red line are **below average** readers. This graph indicates the student read about 70 words correctly in 1 minute. The average reader in this grade read about 65 words correct per minute.



In January (Winter), the district will do another "Well Check" to see if improvements in your child's reading and math ability have been made. Another chart, similar to the one below, will then be given to you. This chart will indicate what your child's score was in the fall and what

your child's score is in Winter.

The reading "Well Check" chart below shows the rate of progress of an average student in the third grade. The lines connecting the **blue** dots show the rate of progress. Notice an improvement from 70 words correct in Fall to about 90 words correct in Winter. This reader is growing at a slightly faster rate than other students in this school. This information shows success!



These reading and math "Well Checks" will be done again during the last several weeks of school (Spring) and the results will be shown to you. We will then be able to inform you of how much reading and math growth your child has made throughout the year, and what may be needed in order for your child to become truly successful in reading and math.

As a school staff, we are excited about our ability to know where all of our students are at on their path to being successful readers and learners. We hope that you are excited as well. We also look forward to seeing and talking with you regarding the progress of your child. If you have any questions about our Reading & Math Improvement Report Cards and our Reading & Math Well Check Program, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.