Overall, first quarter course failure rates were up from their totals and percentages in the 2019-20 school year. Approximately 14.4% of students (37,665) were failing at least one course or subject, more than twice the percentage (7.1%) and nearly twice the number (18,887) as the first quarter of the previous year. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School had the highest percentage of students failing at least one course or subject (88.1%). Six (6) schools had 0% of their students failing a course or subject – Cato Middle College, Cornelius Elementary, Hickory Grove Elementary, Metro School, Sterling Elementary, and Trillium Springs Montessori. An additional sixteen (16) schools had less than 5% of their students failing at least one course or subject.

Though the percentage and number of students receiving a D in at least one course or subject increased from last year's first quarter, the increase was not nearly as dramatic. Approximately 15.5% of students (40,592) received a D in the first quarter of 2020-21, compared to 12.2% (32,592) from the previous school year.

Reasons for first quarter course or subject failures varied from student to student. Primarily students failed courses or subjects due to low overall course performance or an abundance of missing assignments. The reasons for those missing assignments can be attributed to any number of reasons.

To reduce the number and percentage of students receiving a D or F in second quarter, schools are using an array of strategies. Strategies include, but are not limited to:

- **Redefining Use of Available Time**
  - Using SEL time to teach executive functioning skills (i.e., organization, time management, goal-setting, etc.).
  - Re-looping/re-teaching sessions for identified students.
  - Engaging students in one-on-one check-ins to assess work completion, identify barriers, and develop plans for improvement.
  - Teachers remaining on Zoom during asynchronous times to provide help and/or to have students make up tests/take retests.
  - Creating flex/remediation periods to help students catch up on work.

- **Standardizing Canvas for Students Across Classes**
  - Providing an assignment list on course/class homepages with due dates and links to assignments.
  - Ensuring modules are labeled with dates to help students/parents find the work for the day if absent.
  - Utilizing teacher professional learning communities (PLCs) to review Canvas courses/shells to identify the assignments that will be required for completion/grading/feedback. Likewise, using PLCs to determine the number of assignments to ensure students are not overwhelmed, and assignments measure students' mastery vs compliance.
  - Using PLCs to decide which homework grades are collected for completion, and which assignments count as formal/informal grades.

- **Adjusting School Grading/Grade Reporting Policies** *(CMS grading plan no longer has the provision for lowest grade being a 50 if work was attempted)*
  - Creating school-based policies that reflect no grades below a 50 to be recorded (like previous grading plans).

- o Using contracts to enable students to engage in "credit recovery" and show mastery on work from the previous quarter. Utilizing contract results in an adjusted Q1 grade.
- o Standardizing late work policies across the school to ensure they do not unnecessarily punish and/or discourage students from doing assignments that could enable teachers to see their level of mastery. (i.e., 15 point maximum loss for submitting late work vs 10 points off per day).
- o Allowing students to submit work outside of Canvas (i.e., photos, telephone calls, Zoom conferences, email).
- o Allowing students a window in Q2 to improve work/assessments from Q1 to achieve a maximum score on retests (students must attend tutorial sessions prior to retesting).

- **Proactively Communicating with Families**
  - o Scheduling parent conferences for students with Fs at mid-quarter.
  - o Sending notices in mail to parents of students who failed a course or subject in Q1, and continue to fail in Q2.
  - o Contacting parents every two weeks to keep them informed of students not completing work.
  - o Sending weekly Connect 5 messages to alert parents if students are failing a course.
  - o Utilizing digital tools like *Parent Square* to provide timely communication when students don't complete work.
  - o Using counselors to provide parent contact/parent meetings to help them understand/navigate Canvas.

The above strategies are being supported by learning community staff and Equity Superintendents, though school staff play the primary role in selecting and implementing course failure reduction efforts.