



Office of P-12 Education
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Explaining Student Growth Scores to Teachers and Principals: Key Discussion Points

In 2015-2016, approximately 34,500 teachers in ELA/math in grades 4-8 and 4,500 principals (with ELA and math educators in grades 4-8 as well as 9-12 principals) received a State-provided Growth Rating and Score.

The following questions were assembled based upon inquiries made directly by principals and superintendents across the state. For details about how State-provided growth scores are calculated see [APPR Guidance](#) Section D, specifically questions D1, D51-54, D71-D95, and D97 of the §3012-c Guidance and questions D2, D9-D35, D87-D90, and D92 of the §3012-d Guidance. For instructions of what to do in the event that teachers do not receive State-provided growth scores as expected, see question D99 of the §3012-c Guidance or D93 of the §3012-d Guidance.

Section A: Questions about Changes to the State-Provided Growth Model during the Transition Period

1. If we are in a transition period, why did I receive a State-provided growth rating and score and what do I do with it?

In December 2015, the Board of Regents adopted regulatory amendments to add §30-2.14 and §30-3.17 to the Rules of the Board of Regents, which provide a four-year APPR transition period during which time State-provided growth scores will not be used for employment purposes and will be used for **advisory purposes only**. Although the transition period will last through the 2018-19 school year, Education Laws §3012-c and §3012-d still require that State-provided growth results be incorporated into Annual Professional Performance Reviews for educators.

Effective June 14, 2016, transition scores and ratings, calculated pursuant to Sections 30-2.14 and 30-3.17 of the Rules of the Board of Regents, must be provided to teachers and principals no later than September 1st of the school year immediately following the school year for which the teachers' or principals' performance is evaluated during the transition period. Original final ratings (which may include State assessments) for such teachers and principals must be provided by September 1st or as soon as practicable thereafter during this time period. Please note that this flexibility applies equally to districts implementing §3012-c and §3012-d APPR plans during the 2015-16 school year.

2. How do I determine my HEDI score was assigned using the appropriate scoring band?

HEDI scores (0-20) and ratings (HEDI) are assigned to teachers, principals, and schools separately. In all cases, the respective educators are first assigned to a HEDI rating based on the mean and standard deviations of the MGPs for their group statewide. For teachers, HEDI ratings are assigned based on the mean and standard deviation of teacher MGPs statewide. For principals, they are assigned based on the mean and standard deviation of principal MGPs statewide. For schools, they are assigned based on the mean and standard deviation of school-level MGPs statewide.

Next, using scoring bands determined by the Commissioner for Education Laws §3012-c and §3012-d, HEDI scores of 0-20 are assigned to each educator based on his/her MGP within a particular HEDI rating category. This step is completed for all educators statewide using the §3012-c scoring bands and also the §3012-d scoring bands. Then, educators are assigned a final HEDI score using the scoring bands for the APPR plan implemented by their district (i.e., an APPR plan consistent with either §3012-c or §3012-d).

You can refer to the [Resources about State Growth Measures page](#) of engageny.org for updated slides that explain the 2015-16 classification rules for growth ratings and scores for all groups (teachers, principals, and schools).

Because the mean and standard deviation of MGPs are calculated separately for teachers and for principals, the same MGP can result in a different HEDI rating and therefore also a different HEDI score for teachers and principals.

To determine which APPR plan your district has implemented, please see [the approved APPR plan page](#) on the nysed.gov website.

3. My students took the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English Language Arts (ELA). Why aren't they included in my growth results?

For the 2014-15 school year, as the Department began the phase out of the Integrated Algebra Regents Exam, the State-provided growth model for grades 9-12 included only the Algebra I (Common Core) version of the Regents Exam in the grades 9-12 Mean Growth Percentile (MGP) measure. ELA MGPs, however, continued to include both the Regents Comprehensive Exam in English and the Regents Exam in ELA (Common Core). For students who took both versions of the ELA Regents exam in 2014-15, the higher of their two SGPs was incorporated into principals' MGPs.

In 2015-16, the MGPs for grades 9-12 will include only versions of the Algebra I and ELA Regents Exams measuring the Common Core Learning Standards, as the Department continues to phase out the earlier assessments and will no longer include the Regents Comprehensive Exam in English in the computation of growth results.

4. My high school students completed an alternative pathway. How are their results captured in the Growth in Regents Examinations results?

There are currently two different measures of student growth used in the Growth Model for principals of grades 9-12. The Mean Growth Percentile (MGP) is based on student growth on the Regents Exams in ELA (Common Core) and Algebra I (Common Core). The Comparative Growth in Regents Exams Passed (GRE) measure is based on student progress from one year to the next towards passing up to eight Regents exams. Both measures currently consider only the performance of students on Regents examinations.

The Department plans to explore the possibility of expanding the model to also incorporate measures of student performance in advanced coursework aligned with college-readiness standards in order to recognize efforts to encourage student participation and success in college preparation courses.

While the Department cannot yet say with certainty that any exploration will lead to the eventual adoption of an expanded growth model for grades 9-12, plans are in place to begin beta modeling

such an expansion. In order to do so, districts must submit results from participation in AP, IB, dual, and continuous enrollment courses and final exam scores, and participation in Blue Ribbon Panel endorsed CTE courses and final exam scores beginning in the 2016-17 school year. Timelines for submitting results for these alternative college- and career-readiness aligned assessments will be communicated by the NYSED Office of Information and Reporting Services.

5. Why can't I access my information on the online Growth Reporting System?

In previous years, New York State's vendor for growth measures, American Institutes for Research, hosted the secure online Growth Reporting System (GRS), which allowed authorized teachers, principals, and district personnel to access State-provided growth results. Due to low usership relative to the cost of providing this service, NYSED is no longer supporting the GRS, and it is no longer available. As a result, it is the responsibility of districts and BOCES to provide educators with their growth results and rosters.

Section B: Questions About This Year's Results and the Impact of the Opt-Out Rate

6. In general, how were results of the State-provided growth model impacted by student opt-outs in 2015-16?

While there were fewer students included in growth results in 2015-16, overall the number of students included in the analysis remains very large (from about 225,000 – 300,000 student scores per grade in the grades 4-8 model). As a result of having fewer students in the model, fewer teachers and principals had sufficient numbers of student scores to receive State-provided growth results in 2015-16 than in 2014-15. About 1,300 fewer teachers and 200 fewer principals serving students in grades 4-8 received scores in 2015-16. As noted below in question seven, however, the decline in student scores included in the model and in the number of teachers receiving growth scores did not lead to a decrease in the stability of the model's results. In addition, the model's technical characteristics – specifically, model fit and statistical reliability of educator MGPs – are nearly identical to last year. We continue to see no systematic relationships between teacher or principal MGPs and the percent of students with disabilities, English language learners, or economically disadvantaged students in classrooms or schools, indicating that the model continues to enable all educators to receive any growth score result, regardless of the characteristics of their students.

7. Some of my educators had large portions of their students opt out of State assessments. How can their State-provided growth scores be considered accurate?

Growth scores are accurate for the students included in the model; that is, an educator's results reflect their contributions to student learning for the students who were tested and received a student growth score. We cannot measure growth for students who did not take the test. In addition, New York State's growth model has always included a minimum sample size requirement (16 SGPs) to ensure that educators with very few students do not receive HEDI growth ratings. Finally, all growth ratings are computed using a confidence range. That is, in assigning HEDI ratings, New York State's system takes into account statistical uncertainty that may be partly due to the numbers of students included in an educator's score.

As in the past, if fewer than 50% of a teacher's total students are covered by a State-provided growth score then the teacher's State Growth or Comparable Measures Subcomponent, or Student Performance Category score, as applicable, will be computed using SLOs. Each SLO is weighted proportionately based on the number of students included in the measure, regardless of whether the SLO utilizes a State-provided growth score or not. The State will provide a State-

provided growth score for such a teacher; however, this score must still be weighted proportionately with the other SLO(s) if fewer than 50% of the teacher's total students are covered by State-provided growth measures. Please see Example Model 1(B) in [SLO Guidance \(§3012-c\)](#).

8. The students opting out in my class/school were my highest performing students. How can my State-provided growth score be considered accurate?

It is important to keep in mind that New York State's growth model measures growth, not proficiency. That is, a student with a high prior test score will not necessarily receive a high student growth percentile (SGP). New York's growth model has always assessed a student's progress relative to students with a similar academic history and other defined characteristics, meaning that if high performing students are included, they are compared to other high performing students, and will earn a range of SGPs.

Historical data suggest that there is essentially no relationship between average student prior scores and teacher MGPs. Previous years' growth model results show that teachers with many high performing students and teachers with few high performing students receive similar ranges of MGPs. Therefore, the fact that previously high performing students may not have participated in testing is not necessarily relevant to a teacher's growth score in 2015-16.

9. Even if a similar proportion of educators are effective or better this year compared to last year, how stable are an individual educator's results this year compared to last year?

In 2015-16, more than two-thirds (69%) of individual teachers earned the same rating they did in 2014-15, and 84% earned the same or better HEDI rating than they did in 2014-15. These are similar percentages to those who earned the same or better HEDI rating between 2012-13 and 2013-14, and between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Our results continue to be somewhat more stable from year to year for individual educators than has been found by some other research such as the Measures of Effective Teaching Study (<http://www.metproject.org/reports.php>).

Section C: Questions about Communications

10. What are the key points district and school leaders should use when talking about Growth Scores?

The most important points to remember about educator Growth Scores used in evaluation are that:

- State-provided growth scores are just one of multiple measures in New York's teacher and principal evaluation system and are to be used for informational purposes only during the transition period. When talking about an educator's Growth Score results, it is important to keep these results in context with the other evidence of educator effectiveness from your District's evaluation system.
- State-provided growth scores measure change in learning between two points in time, not just a single-point level of achievement. While educators cannot control the characteristics of students who enter their schools and classrooms, they can, and they do, influence the learning that happens over the course of the year. This is what the New York State-provided growth scores measure.
- State-provided growth scores measure student performance in the current year compared to that of similar students statewide. By similar students, we mean students with similar prior academic history and student demographic characteristics. This ensures that all

educators have a chance to do well regardless of the composition of their schools or classrooms.

- NYSED has developed an animated video and a professional development turnkey kit for administrators to use as they explain to educators in their community how New York State calculates student growth based on State tests. These and other resources are available on the [Resources about State Growth Measures page](#) on EngageNY.

Section C: Questions About Reports and Data

11. Why do some of my educators in grades 4-8 not have growth scores?

There are a number of possible reasons why an educator in grades 4-8 may not have a growth score including:

- Growth scores are only provided for those teachers and principals with students in grades 4-8 ELA and math. Educators must have the minimum number of student scores (16) attributed to them to receive a growth score.
- Students must meet the minimum enrollment duration required to be attributed to a teacher (60% of the course) or a principal (enrolled on BEDS day and the first day of the 4-8 subject assessment window or Regents assessment period).
- NYSED uses data for students, assessment scores, and enrollment and attendance duration submitted by districts and BOCES as of the deadlines set by NYSED for each data submission. Data submitted or changed after the deadline will not be included in the current-year growth scores.
- For additional information and detail about this topic, please see [APPR Guidance \(§3012-c or §3012-d\)](#).

For districts that implemented §3012-c APPRs during the 2015-16 school year, NYSED recommended that **all** educators set back-up SLOs for comparable growth measures, particularly for those educators who are close to the minimum n size (not enough students or scores), or if there are unforeseen issues with the data that might prevent the generation of a State-provided growth score (see question [D99 of APPR §3012-c Guidance](#)). For districts implementing Education Law §3012-d during the 2015-16 school year, back-up SLOs were required to be developed (see question [D93 of APPR §3012-d Guidance](#)).

12. Which students are included in the calculation of a grades 4-8 or high school principal's MGP?

To be included in the calculation of a grade 4-8 principal's State-provided growth score, a student must be attributed to the school using NYSED's rules for inclusion in institutional accountability (please see [NYSED Student Information Repository \(SIRS\) Manual](#) for more details) and have an SPG score calculated in either ELA or math. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, staff assignment records are used to link principals to schools and grades, which then are used to attribute students to the principals. Each principal in these grades and subjects will receive an MGP for each grade and subject for which they are responsible. This is the simple average (or mean) of all the SGPs from students meeting the minimum enrollment rules for principals in each grade and subject. The SGPs are then combined and averaged to determine an overall MGP that includes all grades for which the principal has a staff assignment record. The principal must have a minimum of 16 SGPs to receive an MGP. See [APPR Guidance](#), specifically questions D1, D54, and D75 of the §3012-c Guidance or questions D2, D90, and D15 of the §3012-d Guidance for details.

To be included in the calculation of a high school principal's State-provided growth score, a student must have a grade 7 or 8 NYS ELA or math test score and be enrolled in a school with all

of grades 9-12. Note that students who transfer into NYS schools in grade 9 from other states or countries will not be included if the baseline test scores from NYS assessments are not available. If a student is in his/her 5th through 8th year after entering high school, the student will still be included in the principal's State-provided growth score calculation. A high school principal will only receive a State-provided growth score if the principal is responsible for all of grades 9-12, has a staff assignment record submitted for all of grades 9-12, and has a sufficient number of student scores attributed to him or her to calculate these measures. See [APPR Guidance](#) questions D78, D84, and D86 of the §3012-c Guidance, or questions D18, D24, and D26 of the §3012-d Guidance for details.

13. Why are my grade 8 Algebra I (Common Core) students not included in my State-provided growth score?

During the 2014-15 school year, the Department and its student growth vendor developed an expansion of the student growth model to calculate SGPs for eighth grade students who take the Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core). However, this expanded model was not implemented as part of the State-provided growth model for 2014-15 or 2015-16 results. Consistent with the Department's intent to maintain stability in the State-provided growth model during the transition period (2015-16 through 2018-19 school years) as we move to a revised State-provided growth model, the Department decided not to move forward with this expansion of the growth model this year. Therefore, Algebra I Regents Exam data were not included in the growth model for grade 8 students, and in 2015-16, students who take only the Regents Exam and do not take their grade level math assessment will remain excluded from the State-provided growth model.

14. I'm a principal at a BOCES and received a Grades 9-12 State-provided growth score. What do I do with my results?

State-provided growth results provided to Grades 9-12 BOCES principals and locations are for informational purposes only. Results should only be used as the State Growth or Comparable Measures Subcomponent measure, or in the Required subcomponent of the Student Performance Category, as applicable, for principals responsible for BOCES programs for grades 9-12. Students who take Regents exams while participating in BOCES programs count for their home school principal for the purposes of State-provided growth measures (see Question 9 of the *Explaining Student Growth Scores to Teachers and Principals* document available here: <https://www.engageny.org/resource/faq-explaining-student-growth-scores-teachers-and-principals-key-discussion-points-2014-15>).

15. What if there are errors in the district data provided to the State for inclusion in growth scores? What if principals or teachers find errors in the data included in the report?

State-provided growth scores are calculated using student assessment, linkage, enrollment, and attendance data provided by Districts to NYSED as of the various deadlines established by NYSED. Districts, BOCES, and charter schools were required to submit 2015-16 Teacher Student Data Linkage (TSDL) data by June 3, 2016, and certify the accuracy of the data by the June 10 deadline. Sections 30-2.3 and 30-3.3 of the Rules of the Board of Regents require that teachers and principals be involved in data verification efforts for APPRs completed pursuant to Education Law §3012-c and §3012-d, respectively. As with all other school data, if the information displayed in the reports is incomplete or inaccurate, the data should be corrected in the local source system (e.g., the student management system) and submitted again to NYSED, where possible and before the data submission deadline. State-provided growth scores will not be re-calculated for 2015-16, but if errors in data are changed and verified by the district by the deadlines established

by NYSED, these changes will be included in the data delivery to the growth model vendor for inclusion in the 2016-17 data analysis and calculation.

The failure to submit complete and accurate data on or before the deadline is **not** a valid basis for an appeal of the State-provided growth score to the State. Districts must consult with their local counsel on how to address the issue, consistent with Education Law §§3012-c and 3012-d.

16. Where can I get help answering questions about these data?

NYSED has provided a variety of materials to help districts and educators understand and use the State-provided growth scores. The growth model vendor (American Institutes for Research—AIR) recorded a webinar that gives specifics about how Growth Scores and Ratings are determined. The slides and links for these webinars are available on the [‘Resources about State Growth Measures’ page](#) on EngageNY. Educator-specific brochures are also available on this site. Section D of [APPR Guidance \(§3012-c and §3012-d\)](#) contains additional information about these measures. A technical report from AIR will be published later this school year and will document the statistical and technical details of NYSED’s educator growth measures. If further questions arise, districts can send an email to:

- datasupport@nysed.gov (for questions about data collection), or
- educatoreval@nysed.gov (for questions about APPR).

In addition, your district/BOCES leaders are a source of information and further training on State-provided growth scores. Note: For additional questions and answers about teacher and principal growth scores for use in educator evaluation, please see Section D of [APPR Guidance \(§3012-c or §3012-d\)](#).

NOTE: If there are any discrepancies between the information presented in this document and statute, regulations, or APPR Guidance (§3012-c or §3012-d), the language in the statute, regulations, or APPR Guidance (§3012-c or §3012-d) must prevail.