



Commissioner of Education
President of the University of the State of New York
89 Washington Ave., Room 111
Albany, New York 12234

E-mail: commissioner@mail.nysed.gov
Twitter: @JohnKingNYSED
Tel: (518) 474-5844
Fax: (518) 473-4909

August 22, 2013

Dear Colleague:

Today NYSED is providing superintendents and district superintendents with state-provided growth scores for English Language Arts/Math teachers in grades 4-8 and for principals serving grades 4-8 and 9-12 (specifically principals in schools with ELA/Math teachers in 4-8 and principals of high schools serving all grades 9-12).

In the next few weeks, you will use these growth scores to:

- (1) complete your Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR); and
- (2) support all supervisors in discussing year-end APPR results with school staff, including individual growth scores with teachers and principals who have them.

The attached field memo describes how to access and use the State-provided growth data and provides important dates such as when educators will be able to access their individual growth scores and plans for public access to APPR results.

Despite the change in students who scored at proficiency on the 2012-13 ELA and math tests for grade 3-8, the student growth scores used in teacher and principal evaluation have resulted in similar proportions of educators earning each rating category (Highly Effective, etc.) for student growth compared to 2011-12. This is in large part because the State's student growth model takes changes in student performance compared to "similar" students (i.e. students with similar characteristics and academic histories) into account. In 2012-13, 7% of educators earned Highly Effective for the growth subcomponent, 76% earned Effective, 11% earned Developing and 6% earned Ineffective, substantially the same proportions as 2011-12.

We now know that the growth score results for 2012-13 show that about three-quarters of individual teachers will earn the same or better HEDI rating than they did in 2011-12. This is about the same percentage who earned the same or better HEDI rating between 2011-12 and the "beta test" results calculated in 2011 as the model was being developed. The new Common Core State tests did not change the year to year stability of growth ratings for individual educators.

This consistency in the proportion of educators in each HEDI rating category as well as the stability of individual educator ratings year over year is consistent with what my colleagues and I have been stressing with the media and public – that this year's grade 3 through 8 test results do not reflect a decrease in performance compared to last year by students or teachers.

Strengthening instruction and increasing the effectiveness of teachers and principals in every school is one of the most important activities you can undertake to help all New York students become ready for college and career. State-provided growth scores together with the multiple measures that make up each District's APPR ratings, help to provide insight needed so that you

can take steps to develop educators' skills and make better informed assignment and employment decisions.

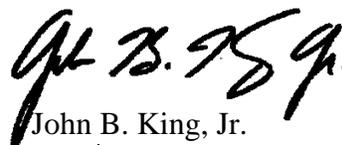
As you communicate this information, please consider emphasizing four key points:

- Growth scores are one of the multiple measures in New York's teacher and principal evaluation system. When addressing individual growth score results, it is important to consider the other evidence of educator effectiveness from your District's evaluation system and maintain focus on insight that can improve instructional and leadership practice.
- Growth scores measure the change in student learning between two points in time and are not just a single snapshot of achievement. While educators cannot control the characteristics of students who enter their schools and classrooms, they can influence the learning that happens over the course of the year. This is what growth scores measure.
- Growth scores measure student performance on State tests in the most recent year compared to results of students with similar prior academic history and student demographic characteristics. This ensures fairness regardless of the composition of one's schools or classrooms. This year we are also taking district-provided student enrollment and attendance into account in the teacher results, something educators strongly urged us to do.
- The change in New York's state tests to measure proficiency in the Common Core in 2013 establishes a new baseline for student learning going forward. But this change in the level of student proficiency did not change the relative percentage of educators earning each of the four rating categories (Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective) for their growth scores in 2013.

To support you and your staff in these important conversations, we have assembled a collection of resources including (but not limited to): an FAQ on explaining the growth scores, a coaching protocol that your principals can use with teachers, and customizable presentations that you can share with large groups. I encourage you to review our latest resource, a 7-minute video describing the how the teacher growth measures are calculated (See <http://www.engageny.org/resource/animated-video-student-growth-on-state-tests-2012-13>). These resources can be found at <http://www.engageny.org/resource/resources-about-state-growth-measures> and we trust you will find them of value.

Thank you for your leadership during this first year of implementation of the APPR. With your continuing commitment, the APPR process will be a critical tool to help you recruit, develop, retain and reward the outstanding educators our students deserve. Our work is vital to ensure that every New York student has access to the high quality instruction reflecting the rigor of the Common Core and a future that is secured by the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and careers.

Sincerely,



John B. King, Jr.
Commissioner

Attachments:

- (1) Memo: Delivery of 2012-2013 Educator State-Provided Growth Results
- (2) FAQ: Explaining Student Growth Scores to Teachers and Principals: Key Discussion Points

Resources are available on EngageNY.org to help educators understand and interpret growth scores. Please see <http://www.engageny.org/resource/resources-about-state-growth-measures> for:

- **[Animated video: Student Growth on State Tests](#)**. This animated video provides a simplified explanation of how New York State calculates student growth based on state tests for SY 2012-13 and 2013-14.
- **[Professional Development Turnkey Kit: Getting Smarter on State-Provided Student Growth Scores](#)**. This kit was introduced at July 2013 NTI and may be used by administrators to explain growth scores to your school community. Materials in this kit include:
 - ✓ PowerPoint presentation and recorded webinar explaining growth measures for ELA/Math teachers in grades 4-8 and their principals and for principals of grades 9-12
 - ✓ Activity to practice interpreting sample scores and ratings
- **[Frequently Asked Questions about State-Provided Student Growth Scores](#)**
- **[Guides to Interpreting State-Provided Growth Scores](#)**. These guides provide an in-depth explanation of how New York State calculates student growth based on state tests. Also included is an explanation of how the statistical model works even with the change in state assessments in 2013 and different scale scores across years.
 - ✓ [Teacher's Guide to Interpreting State-Provided Growth Scores, Grades 4-8](#)
 - ✓ [Principal's Guide to Interpreting State-Provided Growth Score, Grades 4-8](#)
 - ✓ [Principal's Guide to Interpreting State-Provided Growth Score, Grades 9-12](#)
- **[2012-13 Classification Rules for Growth Ratings and Scores](#)**. These slides illustrate how growth measures are used to determine Growth Scores (0-20) and Growth Ratings (HEDI) for use in evaluations of:
 - ✓ [ELA/Math teachers in grades 4-8](#)
 - ✓ [Principals with ELA/Math teachers in grades 4-8 and/or 9-12 \(all grades\)](#)

Resources are available on EngageNY.org to help principals and superintendents lead and manage APPR in their school and district. Please see <http://www.engageny.org/resource/leading-appr> for:

- **[Professional Development Turnkey Kit: Leading APPR: Communications Training for Superintendents and Principals](#)**. This kit was introduced at July 2013 NTI and

contains materials to support school, district, and regional administrators to effectively communicate about, lead, and manage the APPR efforts, such as:

- ✓ Customizable PowerPoint presentation and accompanying facilitator's guide on: the rationale for teacher evaluation in New York State, an overview of APPR, and how teachers are evaluated under the district's APPR plan
 - ✓ Protocol for sharing APPR results with individual teachers
 - ✓ Additional resources such as the Evidence Collection Tools and Observation Tracker to help systematize classroom observation and feedback cycles
-
- [**APPR Planning and Design Resources**](#). These materials include new and updated resources from the summer of 2013 to help leaders reflect on decisions made in the past and steps to take in the future to continuously push for refinements of your systems.
 - [**Recorded Webinar: Teacher Effectiveness Research**](#). This webinar provides an overview of the recent national research studies that showed the importance of measuring teacher effectiveness and influenced the design of New York State educator evaluation system.