



Illinois State Board of Education

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Frequently Asked Questions: Value Table Growth Model

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1. Q: Why is Illinois changing its assessment and accountability system?

A: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) are the current system that determines whether a school or district hits a given performance target on standardized tests. However, Illinois education leaders do not think AYP provides as useful information as it could. AYP only reflects how schools and districts perform at one point in time and does not reflect how students are learning. Additionally, we have seen many good schools, including nationally-ranked schools, not make AYP. In 2012, only 11 high schools out of 671 made AYP based on test scores. Illinois is therefore seeking a waiver to the NCLB accountability system. The waiver proposes using multiple measures to evaluate schools, including the use of a growth model to track student progress.

2. Q: What is a growth model?

A: A growth model tracks a student's progress over two years and focuses on the change itself instead of one test score for a given year.

3. Q: What are the benefits of using a growth model for student assessment?

A: These models provide valuable and meaningful information to educators, parents and policy makers about our students' and schools' ongoing progress. Education experts believe this is a more nuanced approach that will improve our understanding of school improvement by showcasing growth rather than just achievement at one point in time.

4. Q: How was the growth model selected?

A: In May 2010, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) created a Growth Model Working Group made up of district superintendents, technical advisers and representatives from more than 10 education organizations to research and recommend a growth model for Illinois. This working group studied three models: Student Growth Percentile Rankings, Value Added Models and Value Table Models. In January 2012, the working group recommended the Value Table Model, which the State Board of Education approved.

5. Q: Why is the Value Table approach the right growth model for Illinois?

A: Value Tables are transparent and relatively easy for educators and the public to understand. Specific levels of individual student growth, or performance categories, are assigned a value that is universal for all students. ISBE believes Value Tables will measure student growth in a meaningful and more informative way and provide an understandable goal for student progress.

6. Q: How do Value Table Growth Models work?

A: Individual student growth metrics are established and points are awarded to individual students based on their growth between performance categories on statewide achievement tests over two years. Student performance from year-to-year is studied, and each student is assigned a growth metric based on the relationship between last year's performance level and the current year's performance level. These individual student metrics are averaged over all the metrics for a school or for a district to obtain a growth score. Improving and faster-paced progress earns higher scores (for example, moving from the Meets Standards performance category to the Exceeds Standards performance category), while worsening or slower-paced progress receives lower scores (for example, scoring in the Below Standards category for two consecutive years).

7. Q: How will the Value Table be used in Illinois?

A: The Value Table Growth Model will be used in 2013-14 on an advisory basis to calculate student growth at the school and district level in grades 3 through 8 based on two years of performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

8. Q: How was Illinois' Value Table designed?

A: ISBE staff worked with education experts across the state, including teachers, principals and superintendents, to set growth scores for the Value Table. The Value Table awards more points to students who maintain or increase achievement at the meets standards or exceeds standards levels.

9. Q: What are the performance levels of the Value Table?

A: Illinois' Value Table has four performance levels: Academic Warning, Below Standards, Meets Standards and Exceeds Standards. Each performance level is broken down into two subcategories, A and B, which more precisely show growth. Students who show greater progress, such as moving from Meets Standards to Exceeds Standards, earn higher growth metrics. Students who do not show progress by continuing to perform in the Below Standards categories or dropping to lower performance levels receive lower metrics.

10. Q: How will the Value Table be used to evaluate districts and schools?

A: ISBE will use the Value Table to determine a growth score for each district and school. This growth measure will be established by calculating a growth metric for each individual student and averaging these individual growth

metrics to obtain a school or district score. For example, if a district has 1,000 students, each student is placed within the table based on their individual scores from two years of ISAT or PSAE performance, resulting in 1,000 growth metrics for students. These metrics are added together and then divided by 1,000 to get the average growth score. This average growth score would be the growth score for the district. For example, if the sum of all of the students' growth metrics totaled 1,255, then the growth score for the district of 1,000 students would be 125.5.

11. Q: What does a school or district's growth score mean?

A: The growth score simply shows the average amount of growth for students in a district or school and adds more context to the AYP measure. It provides another way to measure the effectiveness of academic programs at the school and district level. Individual student growth metrics are only used to calculate a school or district growth score and so are not meaningful information for students and parents.