

Student Growth

The big question for all of us is this: “Specifically, how can I assess student growth at my school in time for the March 1 summative rating report for the principal?”

Statutes, Rules, Requirements & Givens

1. **Student growth** is defined as a “change in a student’s or group of students’ knowledge or skills, as evidenced by gain and/or attainment on two or more assessments, between two or more points in time” (23 Il. Admin. Code 50.30).
2. **Assessment** means any instrument that measures a student’s acquisition of specific knowledge and skills. Assessments used in the evaluation of teachers, principals and assistant principals shall be aligned to one or more instructional areas articulated in the Illinois Learning Standards (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.Appendix D) or Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards – Children Age 3 to Kindergarten Enrollment Age (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 235.Appendix A), as applicable. For the purposes of this Part, assessments will be defined as the following types.
 - a. **Type I Assessment** means a reliable assessment that measures a certain group or subset of students in the same manner with the same potential assessment items, is scored by a non-district entity, and is administered either statewide or beyond Illinois. Examples include assessments available from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Scantron Performance Series, Star Reading Enterprise, College Board’s SAT, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate examinations, or ACT’s EPAS[®] (i.e., Educational Planning and Assessment System).
 - b. **Type II Assessment** means any assessment developed or adopted and approved for use by the school district and used on a district-wide basis by all teachers in a given grade or subject area. Examples include collaboratively developed common assessments, curriculum tests and assessments designed by textbook publishers.
 - c. **Type III Assessment** means any assessment that is rigorous, that is aligned to the course’s curriculum, and that the qualified evaluator

and teacher determine measures student learning in that course. Examples include teacher-created assessments, assessments designed by textbook publishers, student work samples or portfolios, assessments of student performance, and assessments designed by staff who are subject or grade-level experts that are administered commonly across a given grade or subject. A Type I or Type II assessment may qualify as a Type III assessment if it aligns to the curriculum being taught and measures student learning in that subject area (see Section 50.110(b)(2) of this Part).

3. Growth is the change in what a student or group of students knows or is able to do between two points in time using the same/similar measure.
 - a. A school and district have maximum flexibility in determining what groups of students will constitute a cohort group for purposes of the principal or assistant principal's evaluation.
 - b. Only students who have been at the school for at least two assessment dates are to be included.
 - c. There is no requirement to assess all students in the school - may focus on specific groups as determined at the local level.
4. State rules provide that the chosen assessments must "best measure the impact of a principal, school and school district...on students' success" (23 Ill. Admin. Code 50.310). The law further requires that schools and districts select from two general types of assessments. Districts may use two Type I assessments, two Type II assessments or one assessment from each category. In a school where no Type I or Type II assessments are given, growth shall be measured using two Type III assessments.
5. The most recent assessment data available must be for the evaluation of the principal. "The results from the most recent administration of a selected assessment shall be used as the ending point at which the level of student growth is calculated" See section 50.310 (b) (3).
6. "For an assistant principal, a qualified evaluator may select student growth measures that align to the individual's specific duties (e.g., improvements in attendance, decrease in disciplinary referrals)" See section 50.310 (c).

7. “The school district shall consider how certain student characteristics (e.g., special education placement, English language learners, low-income populations) shall be used for each assessment and target chosen to ensure that they *best measure the impact that a principal, school and school district have on students’ academic achievement.*” (Section 24A-7 of the School Code)

Assessing Student Growth for Principal Evaluation

Step #1: Identify growth target areas

Review past student performance data to identify areas to be targeted for improvement as part of district and/or school improvement priorities. Ensure student growth expectations reflect and are aligned to established local priorities and school improvement plans.

Step #2 Identify students and/or cohort groups to be targeted

Student growth is defined as a “change in a student’s or group of students’ knowledge or skills, as evidenced by gain and/or attainment on two or more assessments, between two or more points in time” (23 Il. Admin. Code 50.30). In accordance with this definition, a school is required to identify a cohort group of students to measure student growth. A school and district have maximum flexibility in determining what groups of students will constitute a cohort group for purposes of the principal or assistant principal’s evaluation.

Step #3 Determine specific student growth measurements to be used

The student growth definition calls for “two or more assessments” to measure growth. After identifying cohort groups it is critical to determine what student growth measurements are best suited to assess growth in these particular groups of students. State rules call for 2 Type I, 2-Type II, 1 Type I and 1 Type II, or 2 Type III assessments be utilized.

Step #4 Determine data points/assessment dates

It is required that student progress be measured over “two or more points in time.” The difference between a beginning or baseline score and a final score is a measure of student growth. Keep in mind that this requires:

- The exact same students are used for each assessment.
- The assessment must be the same or similar.
- The final assessment must be completed in time for use in completing the March 1 summative evaluation.

Step #5 Determine what constitutes adequate student growth

If a school district adopts its own student growth plans in accordance with the guidance in this document, student growth must constitute at least 25% of a principal or assistant principal’s evaluation for the 2012-13 school year. Schools and districts have flexibility in determining what constitutes adequate student growth. It is critical to determine what constitutes adequate student growth and how student growth will be translated into a score on the principal or assistant principal’s evaluation. It is also critical that an assistant principal’s evaluation is specifically tailored to the assistant principal’s specific job responsibilities and impact on the growth of students in the selected cohort groups. To this end, a principal and assistant principal may have different cohort groups and different target areas that are used to measure student growth on their respective evaluations.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Does this mean that ISAT scores cannot be used?* No, ISAT scores can be used as long as the same students are being tested. It would not be acceptable to compare this year’s 5th grade results to last year’s 5th grade scores as these are different students. The comparison would have to be this year’s 5th grade results to last year’s 4th grade for all those students who were in both groups.

2. *State test scores are not received until summer. How can such scores be used?* After this first year, growth targets and goals may well be established in the spring as part of the principal's summative evaluation conference. State test scores for that year could become part of the goal setting for the next year. Anthony Ragona, United Township High School principal, points out that this is similar to property tax. It is always a year behind as it is assessed one year with taxes payable the next.

3. *How about new students?* A student must be in attendance at the school for two assessment dates in order to be part of the cohort.

4. *Is there any way to use PSAE since it is only given once to each student?* In isolation, PSAE is an attainment score that does not lend itself to measuring growth. The EPAS measures are all constructed on the same framework and use a constant scale. These can be used for student growth. To use these similar measures we need to compare this year's results with the same student's results from a previous year such as 2012 PLAN (10th grade) compared to 2010 EXPLORE (8th grade). Also, may use the College Readiness Benchmark Scores as a means to establish 'predicted' scores for comparison with most recent scores. See table below.

EPAS College Readiness Benchmark Scores

	EXPLORE	EXPLORE	PLAN	PLAN	ACT
Subject Test	<i>Grade 8</i>	<i>Grade 9</i>	<i>Grade 10</i>	<i>Grade 11</i>	<i>Grade 11</i>
English	13	14	15	17	18
Mathematics	17	18	19	21	22
Reading	15	16	17	19	21
Science	20	20	21	23	24