



To: Superintendents and District Superintendents

From: Assistant Commissioner Julia Rafal-Baer 
Assistant Commissioner Ira Schwartz 

Date: July 20, 2015

Subject: Update to the Potential Inclusion of Grade 8 Algebra I Regents Examination Results
in State-Provided Growth Scores for Relevant Educators in Grades 4-8
Original Issue Date: March 23, 2015

Background

In February 2014, the New York State Education Department (Department) notified you of the United States Department of Education's (USDE) renewal of the Department's request for an extension of the one-year waiver for the 2014-15 school year from certain provisions of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) [Sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i)] that require students who take Regents Examinations in Mathematics when they are enrolled in seventh or eighth grade to also take the NYS Common Core Mathematics Assessment for the grade in which they are enrolled. Under the waiver, teachers and schools were not required to prepare 7th and 8th grade students for the State grade level math assessment when they were receiving instruction in Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II/Trigonometry. Under this waiver, Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) were allowed to choose to administer only the Regents Examination in Algebra I, the Regents Examination in Geometry, or the Regents Examination in Algebra II/Trigonometry to these students, rather than administering both a Regents exam and the students' grade appropriate NYS Common Core Mathematics Assessment, thereby eliminating unnecessary testing in seventh and eighth grades.

The waiver has implications for Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) for the 2014-15 school year, including the calculation of State-provided growth scores for educators who had students taking only the Regents Examination in Mathematics in grades seven or eight.¹ In the 2013-14 school year, if a student did not take the grade appropriate NYS Common Core Mathematics Assessment, that student did not have a student growth percentile (SGP) calculated for him or her and was not included in the State-provided growth score for his or her teacher or principal.

¹ See Guidance on the Impact of the Department's Recently Approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver, available at <https://www.engageny.org/resource/guidance-on-recently-approved-elementary-and-secondary-education-act-waiver>.

Potential Expansion of Student Growth Model for Educators in Grades 4-8 to Include Results from Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core) for Grade 8 Students

In response to feedback from teachers, principals, superintendents, and other stakeholders in the field, the Department looked into preparing SGPs for students in eighth grade who took only the Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core) and did not take the NYS Common Core Mathematics Assessment for their grade. This would have allowed students enrolled in Algebra I in eighth grade to contribute to their teachers' and principals' State-provided growth scores.

To be prepared for expansion of the student growth model to include these additional students, the Department required districts to submit results from the Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core) by June 26, 2015. NYSED appreciates the high level of compliance with this early deadline, which will continue to be required in future years in order for NYSED to be able to calculate growth scores for 8th grade students taking the Algebra Regents and incorporate the results into final growth score calculations for educators in Grades 4-8, given that the USDE has now extended New York's "double testing" waiver through the 2018-19 school year.

Update for the 2014-15 School Year

During the 2014-15 school, the Department and its student growth vendor did develop an expansion of the student growth model that calculates SGPs for eighth grade students who take the Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core). However, this expanded model will not be implemented as part of the State-provided growth model for 2014-15 results. The Board of Regents has directed NYSED to create and convene an Evaluation Workgroup during the 2015-16 school year to consider and make recommendations on potential modifications to the State-provided growth model. NYSED has therefore decided to postpone any expansion of the current State-provided growth model until after the workgroup has completed its work and presented the Board of Regents with their recommendations.

Thus, for the 2014-15 school year, any educator in grades 4-8 with at least 16 SGPs attributed to him or her will still receive a State-provided growth score. This score will be based only on State assessments, and not Regents. As before, in the event an educator no longer meets the minimum requirement of 16 SGPs to receive a State-provided growth score, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) must be used for the State Growth or Other Comparable Measures subcomponent of their evaluation.² This will not impact any districts' or BOCES' currently approved APPR plans.

Related questions should be addressed to educatoreval@nysed.gov, with the subject line "Grade 8 Algebra student growth."

² Teachers who receive a State-provided growth score for students in other courses, but for whom fewer than 50% of students are covered in that growth measure, will also use SLOs; in this case, at least one SLO must use the State-provided growth measure. See Question D19 of APPR guidance for more details (<https://www.engageny.org/resource/guidance-on-new-york-s-annual-professional-performance-review-law-and-regulations>).