

# PVAAS: Evaluating Growth, Projecting Performance

In 2006, school districts and charter schools across Pennsylvania received limited web-based reporting through the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS). Additional reporting in grades 4 through 8 in both mathematics and reading was added in 2007. The following year, in 2008, reporting also became available in mathematics and reading for grade 11; in science for grades 4, 8, and 11; and in writing for grades 5, 8, and 11. PVAAS is a new type of data that offers an objective and more precise way to measure student progress and the value schools and districts add to students' educational experiences. Pennsylvania is one of only several states providing this information to all school districts.

## What is PVAAS?

PVAAS is **not** another assessment. PVAAS is a statistical analysis of PSSA assessment data, and provides districts and their schools with progress data to add to achievement data. This new lens of measuring student learning provides educators with valuable information to ensure they are meeting the academic needs of cohorts of students, as well as individual students.

To help you understand PVAAS analysis, think of academic progress in terms of a child's physical growth, and the growth charts utilized by a child's physician. Growth charts are an important tool for monitoring a child's development, but they are *just one* of the indicators used by the physician to ensure a child is growing at the minimum expected level and on the trajectory to grow as expected. A physician would not use a growth chart in isolation to diagnose a child; however, the growth chart would provide valuable information that may warrant further exploration.

## PVAAS Reporting:

PVAAS provides two types of information, *value-added (or growth) data* on cohorts of students and student level *projection data*. The value-added, or growth, analyzes available data from previous years (looking back) to help schools evaluate how much cohorts of students have gained in a school year by answering questions such as: Did a group or subgroup of students make a year's worth of growth for a year's worth of schooling?

The projection data uses the data already analyzed to help schools project (looking forward) to the future by answering questions such as: What is the percent likelihood of a student being proficient on a future PSSA? Projection data can be used for intervention planning and resource reallocation.

PVAAS value-added or growth data are available for reading and math in grades 4-8 and 11 (this year's current 5th-9th and 12th graders). In addition, value-added or growth data are available for science and writing in grade 11 (this year's current 12th graders), as well as for science in grades 4 and 8 (this year's current 5th and 9th graders) and for writing in grades 5 and 8 (this year's current 6th and 9th graders). Student level projection data are available for students currently in grades 4-9, providing valuable information regarding the probability of a student's, or cohort of students', performance on a future PSSA.

PVAAS is one of the many tools provided to districts from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Districts and schools are using PVAAS, in conjunction with achievement data, to make sure all students are on the trajectory to proficiency. Utilizing all the data available (progress and achievement), educators are able to make data-informed instructional decisions to ensure the academic growth and achievement of **all** students.

The Department has developed numerous resources and materials to assist educators, school boards, parents, and communities in their understanding of Value-Added and its importance in student learning. For access to these materials, please visit the Department's website at: [www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us) or contact 717-606-1911.

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