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To: Superintendents, District Superintendents, and Charter School Leaders

From: Ira Schwartz *Ira Schwartz*

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Subject: Updated data collection requirements for State-provided growth scores

This memo provides an overview of State-provided growth model and related data requirements for the 2015-16 school year. For the current school year, the New York State Education Department (NYSED or “the Department”) intends to minimize changes to the growth model while continuing to prepare for a broader review of the model and its underlying methodologies. The State-provided growth model, which generates growth scores, will therefore be implemented in the same way for the 2015-16 school year as it was in the 2014-2015 school year. Key points of clarification are detailed below.

### **Growth Model for Grade 8 Algebra Students**

Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, New York State received a waiver from the United States Department of Education (USDE) that permits Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to no longer “double test” students who receive instruction in a Regents-level mathematics course and take the corresponding Regents examination. Prior to receiving this waiver, such students would have been required to also take the grade level NYS Common Core Mathematics Test, and as such would have been included in the State-provided growth model results for their relevant teachers, principals, and schools. As a result of the waiver, in LEAs that no longer require these students to take their grade level assessment, these students are not included in the growth model.

During the 2014-15 school year, the Department and its student growth vendor determined that it is possible to include eighth grade students who take the Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core) in the State-provided growth model for teachers and principals of grades 4-8. Earlier communication from the Department indicated that the State-provided growth model would be expanded beginning in 2015-16 to incorporate Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) for these 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra students (see:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/memos/documents/2016ReportingMemoFebruary2016.pdf>).

Consistent with the Department’s intent to maintain stability in the State-provided growth model during the transition period (2015-16 through 2018-19 school years) as we move to a revised State-provided growth model, the Department has decided not to move forward with this expansion of the growth model this year. Therefore, Algebra I Regents Exam data will not be included in the growth model for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and in 2015-16 students who take only the Regents Exam and do not take their grade level math assessment will remain excluded from the State-provided growth model.

### **Sunsetting the Incorporation of the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English Language Arts (ELA)**

For the 2014-15 school year, as the Department began the phase out of the Integrated Algebra Regents Exam, the State-provided growth model for grades 9-12 included only the Algebra I (Common Core) version of the Regents Exam in the grades 9-12 Mean Growth Percentile (MGP) measure. ELA MGPs, however, continued to include both the Regents Comprehensive Exam in English and the Regents Exam in ELA (Common Core). For students who took both versions of the ELA Regents exam in 2014-15, the higher of their two SGPs was incorporated into principals' MGPs.

In 2015-16, the MGPs for grades 9-12 will include only versions of the Algebra I and ELA Regents Exams measuring the Common Core Learning Standards, as the Department continues to phase out the earlier assessments, and will no longer include the Regents Comprehensive Exam in English.

### **Future use of Regents Alternatives in Growth Model for Grades 9-12**

There are currently two different measures of student growth used in the Growth Model for principals of grades 9-12. The Mean Growth Percentile (MGP) is based on student growth on the Regents Exams in ELA (Common Core) and Algebra I (Common Core). The Comparative Growth in Regents Exams Passed (GRE) measure is based on student progress from one year to the next towards passing up to eight Regents exams. Both measures currently consider only the performance of students on Regents examinations. The Department plans to explore the possibility of expanding the model to also incorporate measures of student performance in advanced coursework aligned with college-readiness standards in order to recognize efforts to encourage student participation and success in college preparation courses.

While the Department cannot yet say with certainty that any exploration will lead to the eventual adoption of an expanded growth model for grades 9-12, plans are in place to begin beta modeling such an expansion. In order to do so, districts must submit results from AP exams, IB exams, SAT subject tests, and Blue Ribbon Panel endorsed CTE exams beginning in the 2015-16 school year. Timelines for submitting results for these alternative college- and career-readiness aligned assessments will be communicated shortly by the NYSED Office of Information and Reporting Services.

### **Transition to Multi-Year State-Provided Growth Scores**

NYSED is committed to an ongoing review of the State-provided growth model during the transition period and adopting modifications to the growth model methodology as appropriate. After three years of implementation of the State-provided growth model, based on the "similar student" characteristics first approved by the Board of Regents for inclusion in the 2012-13 school year,

NYSED is exploring the adoption of State-provided growth results based on three years of data. Research indicates that stability in growth results are greatly increased when growth models incorporate two or more years of data. NYSED is working with its vendor to develop processes to evaluate the feasibility of including up to three years of student results in State-provided growth scores.

More information about the potential move to multi-year growth scores will be communicated as it becomes available, and information regarding the student growth model will be updated as applicable to provide details on the computation of multi-year growth scores.

For questions about the 2015-16 State-provided growth model, please contact [educatoreval@nysed.gov](mailto:educatoreval@nysed.gov).

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