A “Student Centered” Growth Model for School Accountability

Background
Growth models measure learning, as demonstrated on statewide assessments, in order to determine the degree to which schools are helping their students make significant progress toward meeting standard. The “Student Centered” Growth Model is the culmination of a 14-month process, and it has achieved broad stakeholder approval.

Model Development
Development of the model occurred from January 2008 to October 2008, and included the development and discussion of several alternative models. Groups involved include:
- The internal cross-office ODE Growth Model Team
- The Accountability Advisory Committee
- American Institutes for Research (contractor)

Model Review and Presentations
Groups that have reviewed the technical aspects of the model, all reacting favorably:
- The Assessment Advisory Committee (multiple occasions)
- ESD Instructional Leadership Council
- WESD Willamette Curriculum Coalition

The model has been presented at the following meetings, with very positive response:
- Oregon Law Conference
- The Superintendents Professional Educators Advisory Team
- COSA conference at Salishan
- Annual Charter School Conference
- Oregon DATA project Trainings (multiple sites)
- Salem Keizer School District
- Educational Improvement and Innovation All-Staff
- Six WebEx meetings that reached over 120 district staff.

Challenges
Some of the growth models under initial consideration were statistically sophisticated and proved problematic, despite attempts to adapt them to Oregon’s data. Issues with these models included lack of transparency, and overly optimistic evaluations of student growth. The “Student Centered” model is transparent, reproducible by districts, and provides realistic assessments of student progress.

“Student Centered” Model Description
The model is based on the idea that students are given an individual “growth target.” Features of these targets include:
- The target may be below standard, but represents significant closure in the student’s achievement gap.
- Targets typically require the “gap” to reduce by 40% or more.
- Low performing students must exhibit more growth.
- The targets are aggressive, yet achievable, for all students.


Sample Reading Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Grade Score</th>
<th>4th Grade Target</th>
<th>Expected Growth</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>195</td>
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<td>204</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>7</td>
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Use in Accountability
Accountability will use a combination of students meeting/exceeding and students meeting their growth targets. Schools will be rewarded for growth in students below standard, which will provide schools with a “bump” in their percentage met, or in their school rating.

Next Steps
Growth will be integrated into the Report Card for Fall 2009. ODE presented the Growth Model and proposed modifications to the school report cards in April 2009. We are awaiting new guidance from the USED before applying for approval to use growth in AYP.