



## Frequently Asked Questions about the CORE Data System

### **PART I - General Questions**

#### *What is CORE Districts?*

The eight CORE Districts are recognized nationally for their collective efforts to improve outcomes for the one million students they serve. Part of this work includes the creation of a comprehensive school improvement and accountability data system under a federal No Child Left Behind waiver. The districts share a fundamental belief that all students can achieve at high levels, and they are deeply committed to providing learning opportunities that will help them do so. They are situated in Fresno, Garden Grove, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Santa Ana.

#### *What is the CORE Data Collaborative?*

The CORE Data Collaborative is a network of local educational agencies working together to inform school improvement and accountability decisions. The network launched in 2015 when the CORE Districts opened its data system to serve all urban, rural and suburban schools. For the 2016-17 school year, school districts in Sacramento, Ventura and Riverside counties, San Bernardino City Unified School District, a consortium of districts in the Silicon Valley (the East Side Alliance coordinated by the Silicon Valley Education Foundation), the Sweetwater Union High School District, Aspire Public Schools, Green Dot Public Schools, and the founding CORE Districts are supported by this network.

#### *How does the CORE Data Collaborative support its members?*

In addition to virtual meetings, the Data Collaborative brings together its members in person twice a year to share learnings and to better analyze performance and outcome data. By being able to compare schools' performance on multiple measures to the performance of similar schools throughout the state, educators get clearer picture of strengths and challenge areas. The CORE Data Collaborative is voluntary, and it is growing because the CORE data system includes measures of school improvement that are not collected by or available from the state.

#### *What measures are included in the CORE data system?*

The CORE Districts' data system includes state-collected information on test scores, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, suspension rates, and data about English learners. To help provide educators a more complete picture of school and student progress, the system also includes locally-generated data, not collected by or available through the state, such as student-level academic growth, 8th grade readiness, students' social-emotional skills and schools' culture climate. In the CORE data system, there are two domains – the Academic Domain Social-Emotional Culture-Climate Domain.

## *How was the CORE data system developed?*

Developed by educators and experts working with the CORE Districts, the data system offers more and better information to help schools and teachers help students learn. Grounded in the shared values and continuous improvement philosophy of the CORE Districts, the data system is based on a system of multiple measures including academic achievement and school culture-climate factors, as well as the nation's first use of measurements of social and emotional learning. It also incorporates measurements of levels of academic performance and growth. The data system represents a fundamental shift in school accountability, away from blame, to a better understanding of the needs of students and schools. Key principles include:

- **Information as "flashlight"**: The data system is designed to help school communities identify strengths to build upon and challenges to address. Supports and interventions are focused on building the capacity of schools through peer learning and collaborative action.
- **From a narrow focus to a holistic approach**: The data system contains a broader basket of measures including academic, social-emotional and culture-climate indicators.
- **Making all students visible**: At the heart of the data system is a focus on eliminating disparity and disproportionality. The Index includes results for any student group with 20 or more students.
- **From just achievement to achievement and growth**: The data system includes measures of individual student growth over time on state assessments in English Learning Arts and Mathematics.

## *How reliable is the CORE data system?*

Hundreds of educators participated in the development of the data system. Each of our participating districts has at least one individual with doctoral level training and a wealth of experience in educational measurement. These individuals are supported by other members of their district teams. We have also worked with our research partners at places like Stanford's John Gardner Center for Youth and the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University to further its development. The CORE Oversight panel that includes representatives from such organizations as the Association of California School Administrators, the California School Boards Association, Ed Trust West, Policy Analysis for California Education and the California PTA have also reviewed the data system.

## *How is the data used?*

Individual schools and districts use the data system information to examine the needs of their students and consider ways to better meet their needs. They also can consider findings about other schools, and use that information in collaborative efforts to strengthen teaching and learning. Through a partnership with Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), qualitative and quantitative data provides important insights into schools that are excelling and the strategies they are using, as well as help to identify schools in need of additional support.

## *Why is English Learner Re-Designation in the social-emotional/culture-climate domain?*

While many of the factors that determine whether or not an English Learner meet the criteria to re-designate as fluent English proficient are academic in nature (e.g., performance on the



state's English Language test, performance in English Language Arts on standardized tests), the CORE Districts have currently placed this indicator in the social-emotional/culture-climate domain. Undergirding this decision is the notion that ultimately the re-designation decision is a decision made by adults in the student's life and not based purely on student performance on select tests. Particularly with our emphasis on re-designating youth before they become Long Term English Learners (LTELs) and our subsequent focus on re-designating those LTELs as soon as possible, placement in the social-emotional/culture-climate domain underscores the role of school-level discretion, teacher perceptions, and the subjective beliefs or expectations of parents and educators that may be impacting the progress of higher risk English Learners.

## PART II - Questions about the Measures, Reports and Index Calculations

### *How do I learn more about each of the measures?*

Metric descriptions can be found here: <http://coredistricts.org/core-index/>.

### *What is included in the School Reports?*

The following metrics are part the reports -

- Academic Domain: ELA & math performance and growth, four-year, five-year and six-year cohort graduation rates, and high school readiness rates of 8th graders
- Social-Emotional & Culture-Climate Domain: Chronic absenteeism, suspension/expulsion rates, English Learner re-designation rates and Student, Family and Staff surveys, and Social-Emotional Skills

### *How were Index performance thresholds established for each of the metrics?*

By school level and by metric, we utilize the following statistical procedures:

1. Calculate the metric for the school level in question for the "all students" group.
2. Rank order schools from the strongest performance to the weakest performance.
3. Assign each school a percentile rank.
4. Identify the performance level for the 10th percentile school, the 50th percentile school, and the 90th percentile school.
5. To establish the range from 1 to 10:
  - a. For metrics where an increase is stronger performance, set the high of level 10 at the largest possible outcome (e.g., 100) and the low of level 1 at the smallest possible outcome (e.g., 0).
  - b. For metrics where an increase is weaker performance, set the high of level 10 at the smallest possible outcome (e.g., 0) and low of level 1 at the largest possible outcome (e.g., 100).
6. Set the high of level 1 using the performance of the 10th percentile school.
7. Set the low of level 6 using the performance of the 50th percentile school.
8. Set the low of level 10 using the performance of the 90th percentile school.
9. For levels 2 to 5, set the performance thresholds so as to have consistent ranges in performance to advance from one level to the next.
10. For levels 6 to 9, set the performance thresholds so as to have consistent ranges in performance to advance from one level to the next.



**Example of a metric where an increase is stronger performance: Elementary School EL Re-Designation**

1. Calculate the metric for school level in question for the “all students” group.
2. Rank order schools from the strongest performance to the weakest performance.
3. Assign each school a percentile rank.
4. Identify the performance level for the 10th percentile school, the 50th percentile school, and the 90th percentile school.

**10th percentile:** 35%

**50th percentile:** 54%

**90th percentile:** 72%

5. To establish the range from 1 to 10:
  - a. For metrics where an increase is stronger performance, set the high of level 10 at the largest possible outcome (e.g., 100) and the low of level 1 at the smallest possible outcome (e.g., 0).

**High of level 10:** 100

**Low of level 1:** 0

- b. For metrics where an increase is weaker performance, set the high of level 10 at the smallest possible outcome (e.g., 0) and low of level 1 at the largest possible outcome (e.g., 100).

**High of level 10:** (N/A)

**Low of level 1:** (N/A)

6. Set the high of level 1 using the performance of the 10th percentile school.

**High of level 1:** 35

7. Set the low of level 6 using the performance of the 50th percentile school.

**Low of level 6:** 54

8. Set the low of level 10 using the performance of the 90th percentile school.

**Low of level 10:** 72

9. For levels 2 to 5, set the performance thresholds so as to have consistent ranges in performance to advance from one level to the next.

**Range of performance thresholds for levels 2 to 5:** 3 or 4, alternating from level to level

10. For levels 6 to 9, set the performance thresholds so as to have consistent ranges in performance to advance from one level to the next.

**Range of performance thresholds for levels 6 to 9:** 3 or 4, alternating from level to level

Metric	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5		Level 6		Level 7		Level 8		Level 9		Level 10	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
EL Re-Designation (ES)	0	35	36	39	40	44	45	48	49	53	54	57	58	62	63	66	67	71	72	100

**Example of a metric where an increase is weaker performance: High School Chronic Absence**

1. Calculate the metric for school level in question for the “all students” group.
2. Rank order schools from the strongest performance to the weakest performance.

3. Assign each school a percentile rank.
4. Identify the performance level for the 10th percentile school, the 50th percentile school, and the 90th percentile school.

**10th percentile:** 28%

**50th percentile:** 17%

**90th percentile:** 7%

5. To establish the range from 1 to 10:
  - a. For metrics where an increase is stronger performance, set the high of level 10 at the largest possible outcome (e.g., 100) and the low of level 1 at the smallest possible outcome (e.g., 0).

**High of level 10:** (N/A)

**Low of level 1:** (N/A)

- b. For metrics where an increase is weaker performance, set the high of level 10 at the smallest possible outcome (e.g., 0) and low of level 1 at the largest possible outcome (e.g., 100).

**High of level 10:** 100

**Low of level 1:** 0

6. Set the high of level 1 using the performance of the 10th percentile school.

**High of level 1:** 28

7. Set the low of level 6 using the performance of the 50th percentile school.

**Low of level 6:** 17

8. Set the low of level 10 using the performance of the 90th percentile school.

**Low of level 10:** 7

9. For levels 2 to 5, set the performance thresholds so as to have consistent ranges in performance to advance from one level to the next.

**Range of performance thresholds for levels 2 to 5:** 1 or 2, alternating from level to level

10. For levels 6 to 9, set the performance thresholds so as to have consistent ranges in performance to advance from one level to the next.

**Range of performance thresholds for levels 6 to 9:** 1 or 2, alternating from level to level

Metric	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5		Level 6		Level 7		Level 8		Level 9		Level 10	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Chronic Absence (HS)	100	28	27	26	25	23	22	21	20	18	17	16	15	13	12	11	10	8	7	0

The full set of preliminary thresholds can be found here: <http://coredistricts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/thresholds.pdf>.



## How does the Index look at results across school levels (e.g., elementary vs. middle vs. high)? How does the Index deal with schools that span multiple levels (e.g., K-8s, K-12s, 6-12s)?

In general, we examine performance separately by school level. Elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools each have a common set of metrics and corresponding performance thresholds.

For schools that span multiple school levels (such as K-8, 6-12, and K-12 schools), reports are provided separately for elementary, middle and high school grades. As mentioned above, each school level has different metrics and performance thresholds, so we wanted to be fair to these span schools.

Here is how we define the school levels:

- [Elementary school:](#) Generally refers to performance in grades K to 5. For schools where grade 6 is the highest grade, grade 6 is included in elementary school performance.
- [Middle school:](#) Generally refers to performance in grades 6 to 8. For schools where grade 5 is the lowest grade, grade 5 is included in middle school performance. For schools where grade 9 is the highest grade, grade 9 is included in middle school performance. For schools where grade 6 is the highest grade, grade 6 is included in elementary school performance.
- [High school:](#) Generally refers to performance in grades 9 to 12. For schools where grade 9 is the highest grade, grade 9 is included in middle school performance.

