The CORE student growth measure

A closer look at the model that sets us apart

Student academic growth is one of several measures in the CORE data system. Combined with test scores, English learner progress, chronic absenteeism and other indicators, growth shows a more complete picture of school progress.

The CORE growth measure sets us apart. It was created by education and data experts to measure the impact schools are having with students compared to students like them, in schools like them, with performance like them.

The measure answers a vital question that cannot be answered with any other publicly available data: How much did our students grow last year, and is that good? The measure looks at the impact of our educational programs on individual students by doing a cohort analysis. It measures the school system's effect on learning in that year,

adjusting for prior knowledge and other student characteristics that influence student growth. Educators in the CORE data network are using it not only to understand whether schools are likely to succeed over time, but to investigate improvement through the lens of equity and access for all.

Low performing schools, specifically schools that serve lots of low income students, English Learners and other historically disadvantaged groups have an equal chance of showing strong growth as high performing schools with mostly non-poor students across the CORE data network.

Our data network and our learning continue to expand because this growth model is so powerful. Test results no longer stand alone. We can now also examine how specific student groups and schools are improving from year to year.

The specifics: The CORE growth measure takes into account students' prior test history and status as economically disadvantaged, disabled, English learner, homeless or in foster care. Not only are these adjustments made at the student level, but our growth model also adjusts for concentration of these characteristics within the school. This ensures that schools and grade levels serving students with different prior achievement levels and characteristics have an equal chance of showing high growth.

Policy recommendations

The CORE Districts have been calculating and using student level growth data for several years. Based on what we are learning across our network, we recommend the state pursue a residual gain growth model similar to the CORE model that controls both for student prior achievement and for peer effects.

A residual gain model can level the playing field for schools by accommodating multiple predictors. We agree that controlling for student prior level achievement is the most important, but it does not level the playing field based on our analysis.

A well specified residual gain model will let educators, stakeholders, and parents see who is impacting growth most for our historically underperforming students.
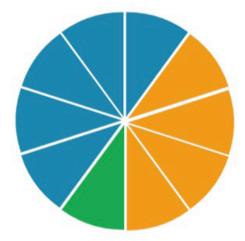

Growth Shows a Complete Picture of a School Progress

STATE MEASURES
✓ Student Test Results
✓ English Learner Progress
✓ Chronic Absenteeism
✓ Suspension Rates
✓ Graduation Rates

CORE'S LOCALLY DRIVEN MEASURES
✓ Student Academic Growth
✓ Student Social/Emotional Learning
✓ School Culture and Climate
✓ High School Readiness
✓ College and Career Readiness

What educators are saying about the growth measure

Participants in the CORE Data Collaborative use the CORE growth measure to assess progress across schools and districts. The Data Collaborative unites CORE's eight districts with dozens of other urban, rural and suburban districts. There are two ways these districts can view student academic growth: CORE's dashboard and CORE's "shiny app." Among the features is an LCAP view that shows school and student group comparisons. Here is what educators are saying about the growth measure:

• Chris Steinhauser, Superintendent, Long Beach Unified School District

"Long Beach voluntarily shares its data and learning, along with dozens of other urban, rural, and suburban districts and charter schools, within the CORE network that now serves more than 2 million California students. The CORE system is more robust than the state's dashboard because, in part, it takes into account student level growth.

"On growth, in particular, our data account for various student demographics including poverty, and we account for the level of poverty at school sites. This means that low-performing schools, specifically schools that serve lots of low-income students, students of color, and other historically disadvantaged groups have an equal chance of showing strong growth as high-performing schools with mostly non-poor students. We purposely share easy-to-use CORE reports with educators and parents as part of our annual analysis and goal-setting processes and to determine where resources should be spent. A substantial piece of the goal-setting process is student level growth, data that ought to be available statewide to help close achievement gaps."

• Jim Feffer, Director of Assessment and Data Analysis, Palm Springs Unified School District

"The growth measure, in combination with other measures such as status and change, allows our district to better understand the progress being made at each school and guide productive discussions when analyzing our summative assessment results.

"For most of our school sites, the greatest challenges and opportunities continue to be among English learner students. The growth measure helps us consider more ways to improve outcomes for our English learners, for example, by identifying schools and grade levels where growth among these students is on pace as predicted by the model, lagging, or higher, so we can learn more."

• Joel Rabin, Assistant Superintendent, Natomas Unified School District

" **"**The CORE growth measure answers a vital question, that can't be answered with any other publicly available data.... 'How much did our students grow last year, and is that good?'

"It does something similar that the old Similar School Rankings did by giving us data about how we are doing to schools like us, but even better, it looks at the impact of our educational programs on individual students by doing a cohort analysis.

"A district research department could do half of that, and determine individual student growth from year to year, but the CORE data provides us perspective because it answers the other half of the question, 'is that good?' by giving us the comparative data to similar students across California.

"The CORE Growth measure is the single most important piece of data we get from CORE because we can use it to help high performing schools realize that high scores may not be good enough if their students are not growing at the same rate as similar students in other school districts.

"It is also a powerful tool for communicating to a low performing school that has made significant gains with their students in comparison to similar students in other districts. It can help all principals determine how well they're doing in comparison to how well they 'should be' doing."

Growth is compared across schools and grade levels

Slower Growth | Average Growth | Faster Growth
0 | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100

Overall	45
6th	55
7th	77
8th	30

This grade-level team is producing…
- typical growth for their students
- faster-than-average growth for their students
- slower-than-average growth for their students*