

UNDERSTANDING PVAAS GROWTH REPORTS IN 2021

In 2020, the pandemic brought traditional teaching and learning to a halt, and educators adjusted their practices to address new challenges. Although most assessments were not administered in 2019-20, instruction continued in many varied and non-traditional forms. Most students were able to take assessments during the 2020-21 school year, and PVAAS growth measures can be calculated despite the unique circumstances.

The calculations and interpretation are slightly different than in a typical year but still provide insights into student learning.

1 What is different about this year?

Due to the pandemic, PVAAS is missing most assessment data for the 2019-20 school year.

Student learning conditions varied more than usual over the past two years.

Although most students were able to take assessments in 2021, in some cases fewer than usual completed them.

3 How can results be interpreted?

For assessments typically given consecutively, growth in 2021 reports is measured across two years. For example, growth results from Grade 7 represent the change in achievement since Grade 5.

For assessments given non-consecutively, such as high school Keystone exams, measuring growth is similar to a typical year except that 2020 assessments were not available to use as predictors.

PVAAS always recommends that growth measures be used in combination with other data and local knowledge. This will be even more important for using 2021 growth reports.



2 How is growth measured?

In a typical year, PVAAS compares current year results to student testing data from past years, including the immediate prior year.

For the 2020-21 reporting, PVAAS uses student testing data from past years up through the 2018-19 school year.

Regardless of this difference, the calculations are the same, and the growth standard is always based on the average growth observed among test takers in that year.

4 How does PVAAS support student progress?

PVAAS 2021 growth reports can still be used to answer the following questions:

What was students' growth in our schools and districts during these unusual times? Do we have evidence that students met, exceeded, or fell short of the growth standard?

Did some student populations have more success than others? How did we contribute to that success, and how can we apply what we learned to future instructional programming?

Did some student populations have less success? What factors contributed to those results, and how can we help students recover from any incomplete learning?