

Summary of 2008 Statewide Results from Colorado's Growth Model

Colorado's Growth Model provides a way for educators to understand how much growth a student made from one CSAP administration to the next. The Growth Model compares each student's performance to students in the same grade throughout Colorado who had similar CSAP scores in past years, and calculates a Student Growth Percentile. If the student grew as much or more than 60 percent of his peers, the student would have a 60th Growth Percentile.

Are Colorado's Students Making Enough Growth to Reach Proficiency?

Colorado's Growth Model tells us the growth percentile a student needs to reach proficiency within three years. This answers the question of how much growth is enough for a student and allows CDE to summarize the percentage of students that are making enough growth to reach proficiency within three years or 10th grade.

Statewide results for the percentage of students not yet proficient that were making enough growth to reach proficiency in 2008 was 30 percent in Reading, 25.7 percent in Writing, and 13 percent in math. Results for students already proficient or advanced that were making enough growth to maintain proficiency was 84.3 percent in Reading, 76.6 percent in Writing, and 66.5 percent in math.

Among students that scored Unsatisfactory in reading in 2007, 10.7 percent made enough growth in 2008 to catch up to proficiency within three years and 46.8 percent were on track to reach Partially Proficient. In Writing, six percent of students that scored Unsatisfactory in writing in 2007 made enough growth in 2008 to catch up to proficiency and 58.4 percent were on track to reach Partially Proficient. In math, three percent of students that scored Unsatisfactory in math in 2007 made enough growth in 2008 to catch up to proficiency and 21.7 percent were on track to reach Partially Proficient.

Do Gaps Exist in Student Growth over Time?

Student Growth Percentiles can be summarized at the grade, school, district, and state levels by determining the median score (the middle score if you rank the scores from highest to lowest). The statewide Median Growth Percentile is 50. The 50th percentile is also defined as typical growth, or “a year’s growth in a year’s time.”

By comparing the Median Growth Percentiles among different groups of students, we can determine if gaps exist in how quickly students are progressing. To close achievement gaps, we need to eliminate gaps in how children are growing and ensure that our neediest students grow faster—more than a year’s growth in a year’s time— so that they catch up. For the first time, Colorado can measure whether or not this is happening.

The 2008 statewide results show that we do have substantial gaps in the academic growth of our poor and minority students and boys in general. These gaps were most pronounced for poor and minority students at the grade 3-4 transition and diminished somewhat in higher grades. Gaps in reading growth closed most quickly. Gaps in mathematics growth diminished most slowly and were more persistent than in reading and writing. The largest poverty and minority growth gaps exist among students already scoring proficient or advanced, with small or no gaps among students scoring unsatisfactory.

The 2008 data also show encouraging results among English Language Learners. Gaps in growth existed among Non-English Proficient (NEP) students compared to other students but closed and sometimes reversed among LEP and FEP students. Where substantial growth gaps existed, they were among LEP students already scoring proficient in reading and writing—consistent with the findings for poor and minority students. These were not present for FEP students.

This encouraging news does not imply that our students are growing enough but rather indicates that the troubling gaps in growth rates that we see based on poverty or minority status are generally not present based simply on English language mastery. This suggests that some of our efforts are paying off but that we have a long way to go.