Academic Growth

What is academic growth?

Simply stated, academic growth is an increase in student learning. Idaho measures this growth among students in grades 4 through 8 using student performance on the statewide Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics.

Why is academic growth important?

Measuring academic growth provides valuable information about students' mastery of standards and system level effects beyond that which can be evaluated by looking at proficiency levels alone. It is important to not only understand whether students are proficient, but also if student improvement from year to year is leading to mastery of grade level content standards.

How is academic growth calculated in the accountability system?

A student's score on the ISAT is reported in one of four achievement levels: Level 1 (Below Basic), Level 2 (Basic), Level 3 (Proficient), and Level 4 (Advanced). Each of these performance levels is associated with a scale score specific to each grade.

To calculate a student's academic growth target, a student's scale score from the prior year will serve as a baseline. Next, the score that the student needs to reach Level 3 (Proficient) on the statewide assessment **three years in the future** is identified and called a target scale score. A simple subtraction of the target scale score and the baseline score results in the necessary growth needed to meet proficiency in three years. This number is then divided by three, providing an annual growth target.

$$\frac{\textit{Target scale score in 2021}- \textit{ISAT baseline scale score in 2018}}{3}$$

The change between a student's 2018 and 2019 ISAT scale score is compared against his or her annual growth target. If the student's actual growth was greater than or equal to the annual growth target, the student is "on track". The "on track" status is calculated for all students with regular ISAT scores in both years. Growth calculations are figured separately for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics.

Academic growth is used to help identify the lowest-performing K-8 schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement. Low levels of academic growth among particular student groups may also lead to identification for targeted support and improvement.

DATA SOURCES

The academic achievement indicator is based on ISAT summative assessments administered between March 18 and May 24, 2019, and appealed by school district and charter administrators July 8 - 19, 2019, and associated to student enrollment and demographic information district and charter schools submitted in June 2019 ISEE reports.