

Communicating PVAAS to Your School Board and Community

School board and community members have a vested interest in improving student achievement. Value-added data is meaningful information for school boards and districts/LEAs. PVAAS reporting is complementary data to add information yielded from other data tools, such as PSSA Data Interaction by eMetric, Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDTs), benchmark assessments, and locally selected assessments.

Many board and community leaders are from business and industry. These leaders may already be familiar with the concept of value-added analysis in a business context. They recognize the benefits of using data to inform business decisions. Enlist their support in using PVAAS data to inform education decisions.

Communicating information about PVAAS to your board and the community can add a new dimension to understanding student performance in your district/LEA. LEAs/districts across the Commonwealth have shared PVAAS reporting with local school boards and community audiences. The following are suggestions for effective communication with your school board and community.

Develop an LEA/district implementation and communications plan.

Communicating the concept of value-added analysis and its benefits are important. PVAAS growth data is fundamentally different from achievement data. Many people are newer to using PVAAS/growth data for decision-making; therefore, constituencies may require different levels of understanding of the concept of growth data and the importance of using this information to get a comprehensive picture of student performance. Some constituencies may wish to see the actual LEA/district and school reports, while others will be interested in what your LEA/district plans to do with the data to continue with the successful growth and/or make changes to educational programs.

Plan carefully if your LEA/district decides to discuss the concept of teacher value-added reporting. Remember these are data which are used towards teacher evaluation, a confidential process. Act 82 states that "An employee's individual rating form shall not be subject to disclosure under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L. 6, No. 3), known as the "Right-to-Know Law."

It is important that you have a clearly defined implementation and communications plan in place

Considerations for a communications plan may include:

Define key audiences and constituencies

- Who needs information on the value-added analysis concept and its benefits?
- Who needs information on the local analysis of PVAAS district/school data and reports?
- Who needs detailed information on the district's data analysis, hypothesis building, and change implementation processes?

Define key influencers

- Identify members of your key constituencies who can assist you with communication efforts.
- Involve these “influencers” and provide training opportunities to build their understanding and support for the use of growth data as data to use with achievement data.

Keep your message simple.

PVAAS may be a new concept for some of your constituents. Be sure that your key message points are clear and easy to understand. Avoid education jargon and technical terms that are confusing. It may be helpful to determine two or three key message points in your PVAAS data and illustrate them using basic charts and graphs. By taking the PVAAS data and making it visually appealing, many people will be better able to understand what you are trying to communicate.

Suggested Approach: Go for the big ideas and remember the audience

- Start with the PVAAS scatterplots – achievement vs. growth
- Summarize data from key reports
 - ⇒ District Launchpad
 - ⇒ District Value Added report
 - ⇒ District Value Added Summary reports
 - ⇒ Projection Summary reports

Develop strategies to deliver your key message points and PVAAS information

How will you disseminate your message points to various audiences?

- ⇒ What information will be provided at a school board meeting?
- ⇒ What information will be provided in LEA/district newsletters?
- ⇒ What materials will be provided in print form?
- ⇒ How will the meaning of the results be communicated?
- ⇒ How will the plan of action regarding areas of strength be communicated?
- ⇒ How will the plan of action regarding areas of need be communicated?

Communicate district and building goals and objectives

- Communicate expectations for PVAAS data usage at the district and building levels to make data-informed decisions.
- Develop a process for report analysis at the district, building, grade and student levels.
 - ⇒ Identify personnel who will have access to PVAAS reports.
 - ⇒ Develop a timeline for the administrative team to analyze reports.
 - ⇒ Develop a timeline for analyses with staff.
 - ⇒ Develop a timeline for change implementation.

Highlight areas of strength and plan for areas of need.

PVAAS data demonstrates where progress is occurring. An initial focus on your LEA’s/district’s or school’s strengths shows where progress is being made and allows you to investigate and, perhaps, replicate the factors contributing to that progress. For areas of need be sure you are ready to communicate a plan for action for further investigating any area of need and sharing any action steps.

Additional Resources

- PVAAS Key Communication Messages: <http://tinyurl.com/PVAAS-DL-Communicate>
- Guide to Public PVAAS Reporting: <http://tinyurl.com/PVAAS-Public-Reporting-Guide>
- PVAAS e-Learning Modules – no cost online professional development resource located at <https://pvaas.sas.com/learningModules.html>