

What Should You Know about PVAAS?

Since 2002, PVAAS has provided Pennsylvania educators with a powerful tool to determine—grade by grade and subject by subject—whether all students have plentiful choices and increased opportunities for learning.

What is PVAAS?

- **PVAAS is Pennsylvania’s Value-Added Assessment System.** *Value added* is a statistical analysis used to measure a district’s, school’s or teacher’s influence on the academic progress rates of groups of students from year to year. Conceptually and as a simple explanation, a value added growth measure is calculated in the following manner: Growth=Current Achievement compared to all prior achievement, with achievement being measured by quality assessments such as the PSSA and Keystone Exams.
- **PVAAS is *not* another test.** It provides analyses based on existing student assessment data.
- **PVAAS measures student growth** from one year to the next using state assessments, and reports whether students made the *expected growth* based on their prior testing history.
- **Unlike achievement, PVAAS is *not* typically related to students’ socioeconomic or demographic background.** *Achievement* captures students’ performance at a single point in time while *growth* measures the change in achievement over time.
- **PVAAS uses a time-tested, externally validated approach to measuring student growth.** Independent, non-partisan researchers at RAND and WestEd have named the PVAAS approach as one of the most reliable. The methodology used by PVAAS is called EVAAS. Pennsylvania’s implementation of EVAAS is called the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS). The EVAAS methodology has been published since 1998 and has been nationally peer reviewed.

What is the difference between achievement and growth data?

- **Achievement measures a student’s performance at one single point in time**, and compares student performance to a standard. It is critical to a student’s post-secondary opportunities. Achievement is highly correlated with a student’s demographics.
- **Growth measures students’ academic performance across time**, i.e., across years, and compares a student’s performance to his/her own prior performance. It is critical to ensuring a student’s future academic success. Growth data typically shows little to no relationship to a student’s demographics.
- **By measuring students’ academic achievement AND growth, schools and districts have a more comprehensive picture of their own effectiveness in raising student achievement!**

How does PVAAS benefit educators?

- **PVAAS helps educators determine what works in their districts, schools, and classrooms.** It is more than just a single number; it is a comprehensive, interactive system that provides customized reporting regarding the effectiveness of curricular and instructional practices.
- **Pennsylvania educators use PVAAS to improve student outcomes.**
 - Kelly Byrne, supervisor in the Downingtown Area School District, said that *“PVAAS reports allowed us to really look at our middle school students and their math placements. We were able to better ensure that every student had the opportunity to be enrolled in the appropriate math course. It also helped us look at the much larger picture of getting more students in rigorous math courses in high school.”*
 - Principal Jeff Clinton of South Mountain Elementary noted, *“We were already a school engaged in rich data conversations. PVAAS helped us take that conversation to the next level.”*

How does PVAAS benefit students?

- **With PVAAS, the growth of every student matters, regardless of their achievement level and background.** The PVAAS reporting can help educators match students with teachers who have

demonstrated success with similar students in the past, *priming both the teacher and student for success.*

- **Research by value-added experts confirms the impact that teachers make in their students' life.** According to a recent Harvard study, students who have *high value-added* teachers, on average, *increase their test scores* immediately relative to the previous year as well as their *college attendance* and *incomes*, compared to students with low value-added teachers (Chetty, Raj et al. [2011] "The Long-Term Impacts of Teachers.").

How do educators use PVAAS?

PVAAS offers an objective, more accurate way to measure student growth and the influence Pennsylvania's public districts, schools and teachers have on students' educational experiences.

Districts, schools, and teachers are using PVAAS (growth data), in conjunction with achievement data, to make sure students are on the path to proficiency and beyond. With the information in PVAAS, educators are better able to:

- Monitor the growth of all groups of students from low-achieving to high-achieving, ensuring growth opportunities for all students
- Measure changes in student achievement as a result of the impact of educational practices, classroom curricula, instructional methods, and professional development
- Make informed, data-driven decisions about where to focus resources to help students make greater growth and perform at higher levels
- Modify and differentiate instruction to address the needs of all students
- Align professional development efforts in the areas of greatest need
- Network with other districts/schools that may be yielding different growth results
- Identify best practices and implement programs that best meet the needs of their students

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How is PVAAS different from a state's academic standards?

- **Unlike a state's academic standards, PVAAS is not a set of standards and does not require a specific set of standards to measure student growth.** PVAAS uses student scores from a variety of state assessments.

How is PVAAS used in Pennsylvania?

- **Every district, public school, and charter school has access to PVAAS** as a resource for district/school continuous improvement. Districts and schools can access PVAAS reports at <https://pvaas.sas.com>; the public can access PVAAS through the same site, by clicking on the "Public Access" button.
- **The Educator Effectiveness System (per Act 82 of 2012) and the School Performance Profile** use PVAAS reporting as one of multiple measures.

What specific types of PVAAS reports are available to districts, schools, and teachers?

PVAAS provides two types of information: value added (growth) data on groups of students and student-level projection data.

- **Value added, or growth, information analyzes available data from previous years (looking back) to help districts, schools, and teachers evaluate how much groups of students have gained academically in a school year.**
 - Value added reports can help answer questions such as, "Did a group or subgroup of students meet or exceed the standard for PA Academic Growth?"
 - PVAAS is available in the grades and subjects/courses assessed in Pennsylvania's statewide assessment system, beginning in Grade 4. This includes reporting for mathematics and English

language arts (Grades 4-8), science (Grades 4 and 8), and Keystones (Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology).

- **Projection information uses the data already analyzed to help schools project (look forward) to the future.**
 - Projection reports can help answer questions such as, “What is the likelihood of a student being proficient on a future state assessment (PSSA or Keystone exam)?” “What is the likelihood of a student reaching a specific benchmark on a college/career readiness assessment including Advanced Placement exams, PSAT, ACT and SAT?”
 - Projection data can be used for intervention planning, enrichment planning, college/career readiness planning, course placement decisions, and resource allocation.
- **In early fall, all public school districts, charter schools, cyber charter schools, and full time career and technology centers across the Commonwealth receive web-based reporting through PVAAS.** PVAAS data is also provided on a Public site at <https://pvaas.sas.com>
 - PVAAS is one of several tools provided to districts from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Where can I find additional information?

- Visit the PVAAS reporting site at <https://pvaas.sas.com>
- Visit the PVAAS Statewide Team’s *Resources* site at <https://sites.google.com/a/iu13.org/pvaas-pl-resources/>
- Contact the PVAAS Statewide Team at pdepvaas@iu13.org or (717) 606-1911.