

ISBE 2021 Accountability Addendum Frequently Asked Questions

Questions Related to Accountability

- 1. Will ISBE consider using ACCESS growth for ELs? Exposure to instruction in all content areas support the skills measured on ACCESS and also reflect the direct support provided to those students. This may be more reflective of EL growth.**

This question has been forwarded to the US Department of Education (ED) for additional guidance on whether it would be permissible. Under normal circumstances, no, ISBE could not use ACCESS growth for ELs in lieu of ELA and math growth. ACCESS is an English Proficiency exam, not an assessment of ELA and math content mastery. Additionally, ESSA requires that the indicator be calculated the same way for all students and schools in the state (within a grade band).

- 2. Is there any talk about reviewing the use of Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) to calculate growth?**

At this time, ISBE is focused on developing the “skip year” SGP calculation methodology (i.e. taking a prior from 2019, skipping a year, and using 2021 as the current score) and validating its use for accountability. However, if this methodology cannot be validated or other factors of the spring 2021 assessment season render calculating SGPs impossible in the long term, ISBE will evaluate all available options regarding calculating growth¹.

- 3. Growth would be calculated for grades 5-8 only, not 4th, due to no 3rd grade testing in 2020, right?**

Growth will be calculated two ways, if the “skip year” methodology for calculating growth can be validated using the 2021 data. Growth will be calculated for grades 5 through 8 only using the 2021 Illinois Assessment of Readiness scores. A 2021 grade 4 SGP cannot be calculated because of a lack of prior 3rd grade score from 2020.

However, at the school level ISBE will calculate a Mean Student Growth Percentile (MSGP, i.e. the average of all individual SGPs) using only the 2021 data and an MSGP that is a three-year composite average of SGPs from 2018, 2019, and 2021 and will use the higher of these two calculations for scoring purposes. This will ensure there is adequate representation of grade 4 growth in these calculations. Additionally, for K-3 or lower grade schools that normally receive “backmapped” growth data, the 2019 MSGP will be used for scoring purposes.

- 4. What does the proposed shift of the timeline for identification of the next cohort to 2022 mean for the 2021 designations? Will the current designations remain for 2021 like this year?**

The designations issued in 2021 will not be like those issued in 2020 (i.e. a reissuance of the 2019 designation with no new calculation). They will be based on new calculations using data

¹ Changes to how Illinois calculates growth may require changes to our assessment system, which in turn would require significant development and/or procurement until they could be implemented.

from spring 2021 as well as prior years' data. The functional impact of the shift is that no school would be required to enter the 4-year cycle of school improvement based on the designation they receive in 2021.

For this reason, along with other concerns about over-interpretation of the 2021 designations, ISBE will also be contextualizing the 2021 designations when they are published on the Report Card. Although final decisions about language have not been made, each designation will be preceded with the qualifier "*Possibly Designation Name*" (e.g. *Possibly Commendable*, *Possibly Targeted*).

- 5. The current plan A for 5Essentials assumes that there are no changes in participation. In the past, we would bring parents in to increase participation. What will happen to districts with decreased levels of participation?**

Recall that for purposes of accountability, 5Essentials climate survey participation is calculated on student participation only. It does not consider parent or teacher participation in the calculation.

A suggestion has been received to have a plan B to adjust the effective scoring range for all indicators where the 2021 distribution of performance is in doubt. ISBE agrees this is a solid recommendation, so the final addendum will include this option to shift the scoring range if a significant shift in the distribution of 2021 student participation rates is detected. Under this scenario, schools and districts would receive a score that is similar to their prior scores for this indicator, assuming their decrease in participation was in line with other decreases across the state.

- 6. Has the 5Essentials been delayed until March 15 like the other assessments? When can we expect more direction about 5essentials administration guidance?**

The 5Essentials survey window has not been delayed until March 15. It has been delayed to the spring semester, and will launch on February 3, 2021 and close on April 2, 2021. Communication about 5Essentials administration will follow the normal cycle, beginning about a month prior to administration.

- 7. How is ISBE proposing to modify the chronic absenteeism calculations?**

Like other indicators such as graduation rate, 9th Grade OnTrack, and climate survey participation, ISBE is proposing to change the effective scoring range of these indicators in order to ensure that at least some schools are earning the highest score possible, and that no more than 5% of schools across the state earn 0 points. This will mitigate the impact COVID-19 and uncertainties around attendance during remote learning while still meaningfully differentiating school and student group performance.

However, unlike other indicators, for chronic absenteeism, ISBE is proposing to establish these scoring range adjustments separately for, at minimum, the K-8 grade band and the 9-12 grade band. The impact of COVID-19 on student attendance does seem to be presenting differently at different grade bands. A suggestion has been received to also calculate separate scoring ranges for the K-5 and 6-8 grade bands. ISBE agrees it is worth investigating to determine if it is technically feasible, necessary given the actual distribution of performance in 2021, and

appropriate in terms of the impacts it has on designations².

8. Since there will be a new state science test, most likely in 2022 or 2023, how will that impact ESSA requirements for that category?

ISBE will be fielding the new science test in 2021. In a normal year, this first administration would be followed by a standard setting, a complex process of convening subject matter experts to determine appropriate levels of proficiency based on the difficulty of test items. ISBE is proposing to substitute student participation rates for rates of proficiency at all grades (5, 8 and 11) for 2021 to incentivize as much participation as possible, so that a standard setting may still be conducted with as representative a population as possible.

Additionally, there were a number of questions related to Assessments which are not applicable to the Addendum at this time. These questions have been submitted to the Assessments department for response and reply and will be added to this FAQ when a response is received.

² Of concern is the number of schools that span the K-5 and 6-8 grade bands. These schools would, of necessity, receive two designations. Our Technical Advisory Committee would need to evaluate this proposal before implementation.