Measuring Student Growth in Achievement: Recommendations for Next Steps
Final Version: 5/3/10

*Submitted to the Missouri Commissioner of Education by the
"Missouri Model for Measuring Teacher/Leader Effects" Work Group

1) Missouri should utilize the methods for calculating and reporting student growth in achievement that best meet our stated purposes. Both Value-Added Models and Student Growth Percentiles appear to have promise (as well as limitations) in terms of meeting our needs. For example, we could use Value-Added Models to meet building-level accountability purposes and to begin to examine teacher-level effects (in keeping with all of the cautions and caveats cited in the literature), while we could use Student Growth Percentiles to provide an easily understood description of student growth at all levels, to inform instruction at the individual-student level, and to inform judgments about teacher and leader accountability (in keeping with emerging research findings about this approach). In addition, we may need to continue to implement our Growth-to-Standards Model to meet AYP purposes and, in the future, we may want to consider using this model as one way to track students' college/workplace readiness.

   Recommendation 1 Vote Tally: 22 yes; 5 no
   (Two "yes" votes were sent by email after the 4/22/10 meeting concluded. These voters were unable to cast their votes on this recommendation during the webinar because of technical difficulties with the polling system.)

2) DESE should continue to support research initiatives that focus on growth data. We need much more information about how longitudinal MAP scores (and scores from other assessments) can be used to measure growth, which the work underway at OSEDA/MU, at the MU Department of Economics, and at other research centers (as well as Park Hill School District's use of EVAAS data) will provide. Our colleagues' investigations will help us answer a multitude of technical questions pertaining to the quality of data linkages, suitability of score scales, fit of model to purpose, reliability and validity of growth estimates, etc.

   Recommendation 2 Vote Tally: 25 yes; 0 no

3) DESE should also establish and convene a Growth Model Technical Advisory Committee to help us articulate and resolve the technical issues associated with implementing growth models and to help us move this work forward. This committee would be comprised of nationally recognized researchers who have demonstrated expertise in this area.

4) DESE should also establish and convene a Growth Model Practitioner Advisory Committee that includes representatives from all pertinent stakeholder groups (e.g., teachers, administrators, teacher/leader educators, policymakers, parents) to provide input about important field-related issues pertaining to longitudinal data analyses and to help us move this work forward.

   Recommendations 3 and 4 Vote Tally: 23 yes; 1 no

   Note about Recommendations 3 and 4: The Work Group is recommending that DESE <u>establish</u> these two groups. We understand that the Commissioner will determine how the groups <u>function</u> (i.e., whether they meet separately or jointly; how the two groups interact with one another and with DESE staff, etc.).

5) DESE should work with both of these advisory groups and all pertinent stakeholder groups to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for educating stakeholders about the power of longitudinal data analyses and about how to appropriately interpret and use growth data (including cautions and caveats). Professional development in interpreting and using growth data is critical.

   Recommendation 5 Vote Tally: 22 yes; 0 no

6) DESE should use a collaborative and transparent approach to designing and implementing teacher/leader evaluation systems and educator-preparation program evaluation systems that utilize student growth data (as one of many indicators). This work should include open discussions with representatives from all pertinent stakeholder groups, and it should address relevant policy and practice issues, including those having to do with the evaluation of the large number of educators whose primary responsibilities are not directly tied to currently tested subjects.

   Recommendation 6 Vote Tally: 23 yes; 0 no

7) DESE should encourage educator-preparation programs to strengthen degree requirements/course offerings in assessment and evaluation, so that professionals entering the field will have the necessary knowledge and skills to interpret and use growth data.

   Recommendation 7 Vote Tally: 22 yes; 1 no

**Each recommendation was endorsed by a large majority of Work Group members who participated in the April 22, 2010, meeting. Thirty-one members (or their representatives) were in attendance at the beginning of the meeting, although several members signed-off prior to adjournment. Then, between April 27 and April 29, all Work Group members had the opportunity to review and approve recommendations. No team member responded with negative feedback or opted to file a "minority report."*

Summary Note:

Members of this Work Group were charged with recommending one or more approaches for measuring student growth in achievement that will yield valid and reliable data—data that will be used to inform a variety of educational decisions, including, but not limited to, the evaluation of teachers and principals. We believe that our seven recommendations meet our assigned task.

Our recommendations are informed by published research findings and policy statements, as well as by commentary from experts. Thus, we believe that Missouri's next steps must also be grounded in the literature and guided by expert judgment. Moreover, we urge DESE staff to keep in mind that the quality of growth data is dependent upon two important factors: 1) the accuracy and completeness of the longitudinal data linkages; and 2) the technical characteristics of the assessments and the meaningfulness of the score scales.

Prepared by Sharon Ford Schattgen, Ph.D., Work Group Leader, OSEDA/MU (schattgens@missouri.edu)