User Guide for the 2014-15 Teacher Median Student Growth Percentile Report

Background

On March 22, 2016, the New Jersey Department of Education ("the Department") published a broadcast memo sharing secure district access to 2014-15 median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP) data for all qualifying teachers. These data describe student growth from the last school year, and comprise 10% of qualifying teachers' 2014-15 evaluations. This guide explains how mSGP scores are calculated and used and includes an overview of the following components:

- The Use of Growth Measures
- Calculating SGP from the NJ ASK to the PARCC Exam
- Qualifications for Receiving mSGP Data
- Calculation of mSGP Scores and Conversion to Evaluation Scores
- Understanding the Individual Teacher mSGP Report
- Suggestions for Sharing and Effectively Using mSGP Data
- Certifying mSGP Data and the Summative Rating
- Additional Resources and Contact Information

The Use of Growth Measures

A central tenet of AchieveNJ is that educators are never evaluated on a single factor or test score alone, but on multiple measures of both effective practice and student learning. While each district is responsible for developing the contours of its evaluation system, the state has committed to developing measures of student growth as required under the *TEACHNJ Act*. By using a growth methodology to calculate student learning, the Department recognizes that students enter each grade level at varying starting points and with unique challenges and that we should focus on student improvement, rather than simply how many students attain proficiency.

New Jersey measures growth for an *individual student* by comparing the change in his or her achievement on the state assessment from one year to the next to the student's "academic peers" (all other students in the state with similar historical test results). This change is reported as a Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and indicates on a scale from 1 to 99 how an individual student's growth compares to those academic peers. To determine the mSGP for an *individual teacher*, district course roster data is used to create an ascending list of SGPs of the qualifying students who were assigned to the teacher by the district. Since 2010, New Jersey has taken several steps to prepare and distribute SGP data to district-assigned NJ SMART users and will continue to offer resources and trainings in the future. Please see this SGP Timeline for more information.

Calculating SGP from the NJ ASK to the PARCC exam

The state has shifted to the PARCC exam because PARCC more accurately captures a student's proficiency on New Jersey's academic standards than the prior NJ ASK tests. In turn, the level of a student's absolute achievement (e.g. partially proficient, proficient) on the different assessments is not comparable. However, SGPs are based upon the relative change in the students' performance from NJ ASK to PARCC as compared to their academic peers. The choice of SGP as one measure of student achievement was originally made in part because of the metric's robustness to a change in assessment program. *Because all students in New Jersey have participated in the same testing programs at the same time—that is, all 6th graders took the 5th-grade NJ ASK and the 6th-grade PARCC assessment—academic peers refers to the same concept that it traditionally has.* Further, due to the careful work that the Department has undertaken over the last several years to align the NJ ASK to state academic standards, technical experts confirm that SGP in the 2014-15 school year is comparable to SGP in the 2013-14 school year. Please refer to the updated SGP Video and SGP Overviews (Narrative and Presentation) for more detailed explanations of the calculations.

Qualifications for Receiving mSGP Data

For mSGP to be part of a teacher's evaluation in 2014-15, the teacher must have been:
- Assigned to a grade 4-8 language arts course or grade 4-7 math course for 60% or more of the year prior to the date on which the state test was administered, and
- Assigned 20 unique students by the district through the Course Roster Submission in 2014-15 alone, or in 2013-14 AND 2014-15 combined.
  - These students must have been enrolled for 70% or more of the course duration prior to the administration of the test.

State requirements allow for the use of multiple years of mSGP data for educator evaluations within the same district. Given that 2013-14 was the first year of AchieveNJ implementation, 2014-15 is the first evaluation cycle when multiple years of data can apply. Therefore, a teacher may qualify to receive the mSGP score based on a total of qualifying students from up to the previous two years *in the same district* that reaches or exceeds the minimum number of 20 students. For example, if a teacher has 18 qualifying students from 2013-14 plus 19 from 2014-15, this totals 37 students, enough to qualify the teacher to receive the mSGP this year even though the teacher did not receive it last year. This means that more teachers qualify to receive the mSGP score in 2014-15 than did last year. If a teacher has both a median score from 2014-15 and from 2013-14 and 2014-15 together, the higher of the two scores will count toward the 2014-15 evaluation. Please see this Guidance on Multiple Years of Data for mSGP for more information.

Calculation of mSGP Scores and Conversion to Evaluation Scores

In order to determine the mSGP score for each qualifying teacher, the Department aligns state assessment results with course rosters provided by each district to the Department as follows:
1. Districts submit and certify Course Roster Submission Data through NJ SMART during the summer following each school year (since 2011-12). This submission lists the students assigned to each teacher for that school year.
2. SGP scores are calculated for each student following completion of the assessment.
3. The Department links district Course Roster Submission data with relevant SGP scores for each qualifying teacher to determine his/her mSGP score. Districts are responsible for ensuring that their data is accurate when submitted to NJ SMART and teachers are encouraged to work with their supervisors to verify the accuracy of their rosters prior to submission.
4. The Department provides mSGP scores to districts to share confidentially with teachers.

To calculate a teacher's final evaluation rating, 2014-15 mSGPs are converted to a 1.0 - 4.0 score, then weighted at 10% and tabulated with the teacher practice score (70%) and SGO score (20%). The following scale translates mSGP scores from a 1 - 99 scale to the 1.0 - 4.0 score:

2014-15 mSGP Conversion Chart

mSGP Score	Evaluation Rating	mSGP Score	Evaluation Rating	mSGP Score	Evaluation Rating	mSGP Score	Evaluation Rating
1 - 20	1	35	2.5	50	3	65	3.5
21	1.1	36	2.5	51	3	66	3.5
22	1.2	37	2.6	52	3	67	3.5
23	1.3	38	2.6	53	3	68	3.6
24	1.4	39	2.7	54	3	69	3.6
25	1.5	40	2.7	55	3	70	3.6
26	1.6	41	2.8	56	3.1	71	3.7
27	1.7	42	2.8	57	3.1	72	3.7
28	1.8	43	2.9	58	3.2	73	3.7
29	1.9	44	2.9	59	3.2	74	3.8
30	2	45	3	60	3.3	75	3.8
31	2.1	46	3	61	3.3	76	3.8
32	2.2	47	3	62	3.4	77	3.9
33	2.3	48	3	63	3.4	78	3.9
34	2.4	49	3	64	3.4	79	3.9
						80 - 99	4

The 2014-15 Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide provides a detailed explanation of the conversion chart, information on scoring the other evaluation components, and the final summative rating scale.

District leaders have been provided secure access to a summary of all teacher mSGP scores, as well as individual reports for each teacher indicating his/her 2014-15 mSGP score. School principals and supervisors are asked to share these confidential reports with each teacher with the goal of finalizing the 2014-15 summative evaluation score, as well as connecting the mSGP to elements of the teacher's practice and professional learning. The individual teacher's mSGP report provides brief background information about the use of SGPs and mSGPs, lists the teacher's score (as illustrated in the following three examples), and offers suggestions for use, as well as additional resources.

In Example 1 below, Mr. Albert was assigned 22 students for 2014-15, all of whom took the language arts and math assessments. Those students are arrayed in an ascending list for each subject, resulting in a median SGP of 46 for language arts and a median SGP of 68 for math. When all 44 student SGP scores (22 for language arts and 22 for math) are arrayed in an ascending list, the median value is 52. This number is Mr. Albert's overall mSGP for 2014-15. Note that 52 is the median across all 44 student SGP scores, not the average of Mr. Albert's language arts and math mSGPs. Then, all of Mr. Albert's student scores from math and language arts from both 2014-15 and 2013-14 are arrayed in an ascending list (with 40 students each taking both tests, this is 80 scores). The median value from this list is Mr. Albert's multi-year mSGP – 60. Because this value is higher than Mr. Albert's 2014-15 mSGP of 52, 60 is the value that will be used for his evaluation. Based on the conversion chart, Mr. Albert's mSGP value of 60 converts to an mSGP score of 3.3, as shown in the last column.

Example 1

Mr. Albert	2014-15 mSGP	2014-15 STUDENTS ASSIGNED	MULTI-YEAR mSGP	MULTI-YEAR STUDENTS ASSIGNED	HIGHER SCORE	mSGP SCORE (1.0-4.0)
Language Arts	46	22	54	40		
Mathematics	68	22	62	40		
Overall	52	22	60	40	60	3.3

In Example 2, Ms. Luca was assigned 19 math students for 2014-15. In 2013-14, she was assigned 18 math students, resulting in a total of 37 students across the two years. Because she did not have the minimum number of 20 separate *students* for either school year alone, she did not receive the mSGP for 2013-14 or for 2014-15 as separate years. However, because over two years she was assigned more than 20 students, she now receives a multi-year mSGP based on her students' scores from both 2013-14 and 2014-15. This value is calculated by arraying each SGP of her 37 total student scores in order and taking the middle value. Based on the conversion chart, Ms. Luca's mSGP value of 58 converts to an mSGP score of 3.2. This is the score used for her 2014-15 evaluation, as shown in the last column.

Example 2

Ms. Luca	2014-15 mSGP	2014-15 STUDENTS ASSIGNED	MULTI-YEAR mSGP	MULTI-YEAR STUDENTS ASSIGNED	HIGHER SCORE	mSGP SCORE (1.0-4.0)
Language Arts	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Mathematics	n/a	19	58	37		
Overall	n/a	19	58	37	58	3.2

In Example 3, Mr. Lee was assigned 17 students for 2014-15, all of whom took both the language arts and math assessments. In 2013-14, he was assigned 19 students who took both assessments, resulting in a total of 36 students across the two years. Because he did not have the minimum number of 20 separate *students* for either school year alone, he did not receive the mSGP for 2013-14 or for 2014-15 as separate years. However, he now receives a multi-year mSGP based on his 36 students' scores from both 2013-14 and 2014-15. This value is calculated by arraying each SGP of his 36 total students in order and taking the middle value. Based on

the conversion chart, Mr. Lee's mSGP value of 61 converts to an mSGP score of 3.3. This is the score used for his 2014-15 evaluation, as shown in the last column.

Example 3

Mr. Lee	2014-15 mSGP	2014-15 STUDENTS ASSIGNED	MULTI-YEAR mSGP	MULTI-YEAR STUDENTS ASSIGNED	HIGHER SCORE	mSGP SCORE (1.0-4.0)
Language Arts	n/a	17	59	36		
Mathematics	n/a	17	64	36		
Overall	**n/a**	**17**	**61**	**36**	**61**	**3.3**

Suggestions for Sharing and Effectively Using mSGP Data

In consultation with principals, the chief school administrator (CSA) should review the district's mSGP reports and determine a strategy to share this information consistently across district schools. While this may happen in a variety of ways, below are some optional suggestions based on approaches that districts have used when sharing mSGP data over the past several years.

Alleviate Miscommunication Surrounding mSGPs
Districts can share the SGP video and other resources found on the AchieveNJ website with all district staff, the local school board, and the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) to ensure stakeholders hear the same information. Using such a proactive communications strategy will help dispel common myths about mSGPs, many of which are addressed in the following table:

Misconception	Fact
The transition from the NJ ASK to the PARCC exam in 2014-15 means that mSGP scores are not valid.	SGPs are based upon the relative change in the students' performance over time as compared to their academic peers. *Because* **all students in New Jersey have participated in the same testing programs at the same time—that is, all 6th graders took the 5th-grade NJ ASK and the 6th-grade PARCC assessment**—*academic peers refers to the same concept that it traditionally has.* Due to the careful work the Department has undertaken over the last several years to align the NJ ASK to state academic standards, technical experts[1] confirm that SGP in the 2014-15 school year is comparable to SGP in the 2013-14 school year.
Students who don't participate in or don't try on standardized tests will hurt a teacher's score.	The Department has taken a thoughtful, careful approach to analyzing the first year of PARCC results and the resulting SGP information. **We have worked with technical experts[2] to examine any potential cases of abnormalities in scores or scoring, including districts with lower participation rates, and we have confirmed that no such abnormalities were found.** For a teacher to qualify to receive the mSGP, he or she must have at least 20 qualifying SGP students over the previous two years (**those who did not participate in the test did not get an SGP**). Also, the *median* **is used rather than the average because it is less susceptible to outlier scores**. These design factors mean that a student not "trying" on the test will have limited effect on the teacher's mSGP. Finally, AchieveNJ is designed with multiple measures to ensure a robust picture of teacher effectiveness. **In order for the mSGP score (weighted at 10%) to negatively impact the overall final evaluation score, the teacher must have also scored below average on the teacher practice measure and the Student Growth Objective measure**.

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[1] The Department consulted the Technical Advisory Committee, a group of independent measurement experts who offer advice to ensure measures are valid and reliable, in addition to Damian Betebenner, Associate at the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, for this analysis. More information on the methodology is found on the SGP web page.
[2] See footnote 1.

Misconception	Fact
mSGP scores will pit teachers in a school against each other.	Students are not compared with others in the class or in the school only, but rather with students around the state, so **an improvement by one teacher in a school would not necessitate a decrease for another**.
A special education teacher's score will suffer if those students don't do as well on tests.	**All students are capable of learning and a teacher makes the largest in-school contribution to student academic growth**. This academic growth is factored into the teacher's evaluation through the SGP measure, and is determined by comparing the student's change in test performance over time to that of other students in the state with a similar performance history. If a student scores better than his or her statewide academic peer group on the current test, regardless of the actual score, he or she will have a higher SGP and vice versa.
mSGP scores won't help teachers improve their teaching.	A thoughtful analysis of the mSGP in conjunction with teacher practice information and other student growth measures can provide **insight into areas where teachers can continue to grow**.
If the mSGP score differs greatly from the teacher practice and SGO scores, this proves the mSGP is not a valid measure of effectiveness.	AchieveNJ includes multiple measures of teacher practice and student learning because **no one factor alone can fully demonstrate teacher effectiveness**. While each component offers valuable information, the final summative rating is what counts for the evaluation. In cases where the mSGP score is very different from the other scores, the teacher and supervisor together should examine potential concerns with all components and how to address these concerns going forward.
Parents or reporters will be able to see a teacher's mSGP score.	Evaluation data of a particular employee is confidential in accordance with the *TEACHNJ Act* and *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-120*, is not subject to the *Open Public Records Act*, and **will not be released to the public**.
If a district made an error with a course roster, the mSGP score will be incorrect, which is unfair.	The Department has provided guidance to districts for correcting inaccurate mSGP scores based on district course roster errors. **Teachers can work with their supervisors to provide the proper documentation to correct the mSGP score**. In cases where this is not possible, an incorrect mSGP score will be removed from the final summative rating. (see Certifying mSGP Data and the Summative Rating)

Provide Specific Support for Teachers Receiving mSGPs
The Department recommends the following approach for sharing mSGP reports with teachers:
1. Principals familiarize themselves with the updated SGP video and 2014-15 Teacher Evaluation Scoring Guide, as well as this User Guide.
2. Principals email teachers the links to key SGP materials listed above and any others deemed appropriate.
3. Principals answer any questions at a faculty or team/PLC meeting using the guidance documents provided on the AchieveNJ website.
4. Principals then meet with individual teachers to discuss mSGP scores either at an observation post-conference or at a separately scheduled time after communicating expectations for the conference in advance. During the meeting, they might take the following steps:
   - Address any of the teacher's outstanding questions about the SGP process.
   - Share the teacher's mSGP score and the mSGP Conversion Chart showing how the mSGP rating converts to a 1.0 - 4.0 score, using this User Guide as a reference.
   - Share the calculated summative rating and show how the mSGP score fits with the other two components of teacher evaluation (teacher practice ratings and SGO scores) to generate an overall score. The 2014-15 Summative Rating Calculator may be used for this purpose, along with the 2014-15 AchieveNJ Optional mSGP Annual Summary Conference Form (supervisors can update the form if partially completed in the personnel file, or use a clean form to finalize the 2014-15 summative rating).
   - Discuss the teacher's mSGP score in relation to evaluation information gathered so far for 2015-16.
   - Discuss the teacher's current Professional Development Plan (PDP) and opportunities to address any relevant areas or standards indicated by the mSGP results and finalized summative evaluation rating. If the final rating is Partially Effective or Ineffective (2.64 or below), ensure the teacher is placed on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP),

CAP Procedures

If changes to an educator's summative rating result in a new rating of Partially Effective or Ineffective, then a CAP must be created to replace the PDP within 15 working days following the district's receipt of the summative rating, which will be provided by the Department through the Evaluation Score Certification Tool (ESCT). In order to ensure CAP educators receive all the necessary supports they are due, please consult this Summary of Legal Requirements for Evaluation and Tenure Cases. Also, educators on a CAP must

- Remain on the CAP until they receive their next summative rating;
- Be observed by multiple observers; and
- Receive at least one observation in addition to the number required. Educators should receive the additional observation for every year they are on a CAP, even if the CAP only applies to part of the year.

Please see the Guidance on Corrective Action Plan Procedures 2015-16 and the Office of Professional Development website for more resources.

Handling and Storing mSGP Data

The Department strongly recommends that districts store mSGP data in each teacher's personnel file or in another secure manner that is easily accessible to the teacher (either electronically or on paper). The data should be handled in the secure manner you would treat, handle, and store any part of a confidential personnel record. Evaluation data of a particular employee shall be confidential in accordance with the *TEACHNJ Act* and *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-120*, is not subject to the Open Public Records Act, and shall not be accessible to the public.

Certifying mSGP Data and the Summative Rating

The quality of the mSGP data that the Department produces depends entirely on the accuracy of Course Roster Submissions by districts. If districts submitted inaccurate course roster data for teachers qualifying to receive the mSGP, they may encounter errors with individual mSGP scores. This issue is addressed below, along with information on certifying the final summative evaluation rating for each teacher.

Accessing Full Course Roster Data

The mSGP reports include the total number of qualifying students assigned to the educator in language arts and/or math along with the mSGP score, based on data submitted by the district during the NJ SMART Course Roster Submission. Educators who wish to access their full historical student roster should consult their supervisors to request the information from the individual(s) who manage the district's NJ SMART data submissions. Please note that such rosters may take some time for data managers to provide, and are based on district assignments and priorities. In response to feedback from the 2013-14 mSGP score release, the Department has improved the functionality of mSGP score reports for districts to make it easier to derive full course roster histories.

Addressing Potential Corrections to the mSGP Score and Certifying Final 2014-15 Evaluation Scores

In the coming days, the Department will open the ESCT for use in certifying final 2014-15 evaluation scores for all educators. As it did last year, this interface will allow districts to review evaluation data, correct any errors that occurred in the original NJ SMART submission, and certify the accuracy of each staff member's final score. Districts will have approximately one month to complete this task after receiving instructions for accessing the tool. Guidance on data verification and correction procedures will be released when the ESCT opens.

Additional Resources and Contact Information

- The AchieveNJ website includes several resources about teacher evaluation in general and SGPs specifically. Please visit the AchieveNJ SGP Page for additional information.
- Please contact the Office of Evaluation directly at 609-777-3788 or educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us to share questions or feedback.