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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Jennifer Bauer, Interim Executive Director  
Katie Broughton, Director of Authorizing  
**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item 6: Academic Performance Recommendation  
**DATE:** October 13, 2023

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As the Authority is aware, the Nevada Department of Education recently released the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) results for the 2022-2023 school year. All public schools in the state of Nevada are issued a star rating when all data points are available.

There are several considerations that make the 2022-2023 NSPF ratings unique. First, this is the first-time star ratings have been released since the 2018-2019 school year. Additionally, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education are still impacting student growth and performance data. The Nevada Department of Education issued a memo (attached) related to the growth measure on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Their analysis indicated that the growth measure was impacted by substantial non-participation in 2021 and the negative impact on student scores due to pandemic disruptions to testing.

Any schools demonstrating underperformance (as defined in [NAC 388A.350](#)) that have the potential to trigger revocation proceedings in the next 3-5 years should performance not improve should be issued a formal Notice to ensure the school and board are aware of the concerns ([NRS 388A.300](#) and [388A.330](#)). As a reminder, the Authority has three levels of intervention when schools do not meet academic standards. These levels are as follows:

- Notice of Concern
- Notice of Breach
- Notice of Intent to Terminate

Based upon this information, the Authority has three options to determine which schools will receive a Notice:

- **Option 1:** Issue Notices to any schools demonstrating underperformance (schools with a 1- or 2-star NSPF rating AND Below or Does Not Meet Standard in SPCSA Academic Performance Framework).
  - This option is the method the Authority has utilized in the past, but schools may dispute Notices based upon their concerns around the NSPF data.
- **Option 2:** Do not issue any Notices to schools.
  - This option acknowledges the pandemic and growth data disruptions but further delays Authority accountability and oversight of schools with academic performance concerns.
- **Option 3:** Issue Notices to schools with a 1-star NSPF rating AND Below Standard in SPCSA Academic Performance Framework.
  - This option acknowledges the pandemic and growth data disruptions and allows the Authority to identify and hold accountable schools with the most significant academic performance concerns.

It is the recommendation of the State Public Charter School Authority staff to issue Notices **this year only** to schools with a 1-star NSPF rating AND Below Standard in the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework. This option balances the data disruption with academic accountability measures.

Finally, it is the recommendation of staff to lift any Notices to schools who were previously on Notice based upon academic performance and are now rated 3-stars or higher on the NSPF and Meets or Exceeds Standard in the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework.

**Proposed Motion: Approve the recommendation of SPCSA staff to:**

- **Issue a Notice to schools with a 1-star NSPF rating and Below Standard in the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework and**
- **Lift the notice of any school who was previously on notice and is now rated 3-stars or higher on the NSPF and Meets or Exceeds Standard in the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework.**

Attachments: Nevada Department of Education SBAC Growth Scores Memo  
Student Growth Targets

**Joe Lombardo**  
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**Jhone M. Ebert**  
Superintendent of  
Public Instruction



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**TO:** District Superintendents  
State Public Charter School Authority

**FROM:** Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**DATE:** September 2023

**SUBJECT:** **SBAC Growth Scores**

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The Department of Education has received inquiries related to this year's Growth scores and the language in the file layout that is provided to all school districts. Based on these inquiries, the Nevada Department of Education (Department) has investigated concerns raised by stakeholders and has identified the root cause of those concerns.

The attached information is intended to provide information around the Growth Measure and the student-level Growth Targets on the Elementary and Middle School preliminary Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). It is important to remember that the Nevada Growth Model has not changed; it is the same Nevada Growth Model approved by stakeholders and the United States Department of Education (USDOE) and used in the Nevada School Performance Framework to generate Star Ratings in 2018, 2019, and 2023. The question then can be asked, if the Growth Model has not changed, what might be causing the fluctuations in this year's Growth scores? The attached document, "Student Growth Targets" details what we are seeing. The two major factors amplifying the data are: 1) substantial non-participation in 2021 and 2) the negative impact on student scores due to pandemic disruptions to testing.

In addition, the Department acknowledges a legitimate concern involving explanatory language found in the file layout. After looking into this, the Department has taken the action needed to modify the explanatory language to address and resolve the concern. As with the calculation criteria already mentioned, this is the same language provided to districts in previous years but only came under question this year because of the visible pandemic related data effects on Growth scores. While this language did not represent an obstacle in calculating Growth scores, it certainly did affect an understanding and interpreting of this year's Growth scores. We apologize for any confusion this language caused and can confirm this language has already been edited to describe that data point more accurately. The Nevada Growth scores continue to provide an accurate picture of student Growth given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If needed, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Zutz directly, [pzutz@doe.nv.gov](mailto:pzutz@doe.nv.gov). Thank you for your patience and understanding.

cc: Ann Marie Dickson, Deputy Superintendent, Student Achievement Division  
Peter Zutz, Director, Peter Zutz, Director, Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management (ADAM)

Attachment

# Student Growth Targets

## Understanding differences between 2022 and 2023 growth targets on Nevada's SBAC assessments

The pandemic impacted education in numerous ways and its effects are still being felt. Due to the pandemic's impact on student testing in Nevada, one manifestation of the pandemic is showing up as discrepancies in student growth targets based upon the SBAC assessment.

Student growth targets are calculated each year in two ways: Current growth targets and lagged growth targets. Current growth targets indicate the growth needed for a student to reach or maintain proficiency within three years or by eighth grade starting from their current score. Lagged growth targets indicate the growth needed for a student to reach or maintain proficiency within three years or by eighth grade starting from their prior score. Both targets use student growth percentile (SGP) growth norms in the calculation. Because growth norms can change from year-to-year, growth targets can change solely because the growth of students in the state has changed.

This is what occurred when discrepancies were noted by practitioners between current growth targets from 2022 and lagged growth targets from 2023. If growth norms did not change between years, then the current growth targets from 2022 would equal the lagged growth targets from 2023. One manifestation of the pandemic was to distort the growth norms in 2022 leading to these discrepancies between student growth targets in 2022 and 2023.

Growth norms in 2022 were distorted because of two-factors:

- Substantial non-participation in 2021
- Negative impact on 2021 student scores due to pandemic disruptions to testing

Both factors contributed to a scenario where the SGP growth norms calculated in 2022 presented a picture of student growth that over-estimated what would have been observed had the pandemic disruptions not occurred. Simply, because of test participation and other testing factors, students in the state appeared to be learning at faster rates than they really were. When those student growth norms were used to produce student growth targets, the results were targets that were, in reality, too low. Had norms that accurately captured student growth in the state been available, targets would have been higher.

And this is exactly what happened when moving forward a year to 2023. With student growth norms available from 2023 representing more normal education and testing conditions, we have student growth norms that more accurately reflect the learning of students in Nevada. Absent the inflated norms from 2022, we see higher growth targets in 2023.

It is important to note that the trajectory for students to reach proficiency hasn't changed, only our interpretation of the difficulty (the student growth target tells us the difficulty of hitting our target) of maintaining that trajectory. In 2024, with student growth norms stabilizing, discrepancies between current targets in 2023 and lagged targets in 2024 should be minimal.

## Bullet Points

- Differences between 2022 and 2023 targets are the result of different growth norms used to create the targets in 2022 versus 2023. Growth norms model the relationship between a student's current and prior achievement scores. The student growth targets associated with the trajectories depend upon the growth norms.
- 2021 to 2022 growth norms over-estimated student progress resulting in lower targets. This was the result of substantial non-participation on assessments in 2021 and the negative impact on 2021 student scores due to pandemic disruptions to testing.
- 2022 to 2023 student growth norms saw a return to more normal rates of student growth leading to higher targets.