

School-Wide and/or Student Group?

Where to Focus Your School's Plan

There are several reasons why your school may want to consider looking at school-level data, as well as student group data, *together*:

- Your school was federally designated for improvement (A-TSI or TSI)
- Your school board or a community group is raising concerns
- Your school is focusing on areas of need with student groups, such as lower growth and/or lower achievement
- Your school hears statements like those to the right, indicating misperceptions about growth data.



*Do you hear statements like these in your school?
Your team may need to consider a whole school
and/or student group level focus.*

Asking the key questions

There are some key questions that a school can begin with, to shine a light into potential areas of focus:

- *Is the growth of **a student group** the same or different than **the whole group**?*
- *Is growth different **within the student group** for students at various achievement levels?*



Depending on your role at the LEA/district level, you will likely have different questions based on your perspective! For example, those in the roles of directors or supervisors/coordinators of special education programs (even ELD or Gifted) often have different questions when looking at the data, than those of other district leaders. It is good to start with questions that you are each asking – each perspective is unique and important. Integrating multiple perspectives can give a new view of the academic performance of a school.

<i>Superintendents or Assistant Superintendents may ask:</i>	<i>Directors of Special Education may ask:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the data tell us about achievement AND growth across grades, subjects or courses?• What are areas of success?• Where are our challenges or priority needs?• Are there specific student groups for priority focus? Which groups?• What trends/patterns do I see across schools?• What are our highest priorities for this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the data tell us about growth and achievement of students in specific student groups, K-12?• How does this compare to growth and achievement of ALL students?• Is a specific academic program (Special Education) working?• What are the patterns/trends across grades and subjects or schools with students with IEPs? How about with ALL students?

Identifying the patterns

You want to identify patterns across and within each subject, and across grades, across schools, and across student groups.

Finding patterns is important, and something you generally want to examine historically — over time — by comparing current data with prior-year data. This helps identify areas where things are going well, where students are achieving and growing, or where things are not going well.



A school wants a consistent pattern of student learning and improvement each year, across all grades, subjects, and buildings. They do not want to see a pattern of students *not* doing well year after year, in a particular grade or subject or in a particular school or program. Investigating these patterns will help you identify if there is a need in any one of these areas, including needs for a specific student group, like students with IEPs. Or, it may reveal a need across a number of these, which could indicate a larger system need.

Let's revisit the two key questions from the previous page:

- *Is the growth of a student group the same, or different, than the whole group?*
- *Is growth different within the student group for students at various achievement levels?*

Listening to the data

Let's get ready to see what story the data is telling us. Our task is to investigate whether the current academic program is working for all students, K-12 — and particularly for students with IEPs. We are doing this because we want to identify our priority areas for improvement, and evaluate what's working.

What patterns do we see in our **IEP student group**?

- By grade level
- By achievement group
- Across years



How does student group data compare to **all students**?

- What does our Curriculum Team see?
- Where are patterns the same or different?

We start by looking at patterns in our IEP student group. We'll look by grade level and subject, across years, and by achievement levels. And, we will want to compare that to the entire (all) student group. Are the patterns the same, or are they different? When completing this task, you'll want to collaborate with your curriculum team to assess patterns of student growth.

Example: ELA

This is an LEA/district-level example for ELA. (Note that PVAAS reporting views are the same for a school-level system and for student groups.)

Step 1

First, look at patterns of growth first in the IEP student group – **across grades**. The PVAAS Growth of Student Groups report allows you to do this easily. There are two ways of organizing the data. For this purpose, **View Growth by Subject Area** so you can specifically investigate **ELA**. Click on **Collapse** (this will turn to Expand once selected) so you do not see all of the data. **Expand** (using the small triangles) for only the **Students with IEPs** information for **PSSA** and **Keystones**. Note what this data reveals in terms of growth for students with IEPs.

English Language Arts				
Expand				
Student Group	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Growth Index	Growth Color Indicator
▶ All Students				
▶ Asian				
▶ Black				
▶ Economically Disadvantaged				
▶ English Learner				
▶ Hispanic				
▶ Lowest performing 33% of students				
▶ Students with GIEPs				
▼ Students with IEPs				
▼ PSSA			0.67	Meets
4th Grade	4.1	1.7	2.47	Well Above
5th Grade	7.5	1.3	5.76	Well Above
6th Grade	-0.3	1.6	-0.19	Meets
7th Grade	-6.8	1.4	-4.73	Well Below
8th Grade	-2.2	1.5	-1.48	Below
▼ Keystone			-6.54	Well Below
Literature	-21.3	3.3	-6.54	Well Below
▶ Two or More Races				
▶ White				

Step 2

Next, compare this to the **all student** group — the entire population. You can stay on this same Growth of Student Groups Report as the All Students group is listed first. **Expand** this group again (using the small triangles) for the All Students data for **PSSA** and **Keystones**. Note what this data reveals in terms of growth for all students.

One thing to note is that the All Students group does include the students with IEPs (so it's not mutually exclusive). What if I did want to look at that — to dig a little deeper into this growth? Would the same pattern appear?

NOTE: The "All Students" group includes the students with IEPs!

English Language Arts				
Expand				
Student Group	Growth Measure	Standard Error	Growth Index	Growth Color Indicator
▼ All Students				
▼ PSSA			-6.57	Well Below
4th Grade	-0.6	0.5	-1.09	Below
5th Grade	2.9	0.6	5.23	Well Above
6th Grade	-1.5	0.6	-2.48	Well Below
7th Grade	-8.0	0.7	-12.22	Well Below
8th Grade	-1.5	0.6	-2.54	Well Below
▼ Keystone			-9.78	Well Below
Literature	-15.6	1.6	-9.78	Well Below

- **Gr. 4 & 5 IEP:** Exceeded growth standard (*Gained ground*)
- **Gr. 6 IEP:** Met growth standard (*Maintained*)
- **Gr. 7 & 8 + Literature IEP:**
- Did not meet growth standard (*Lost ground or fell behind*)

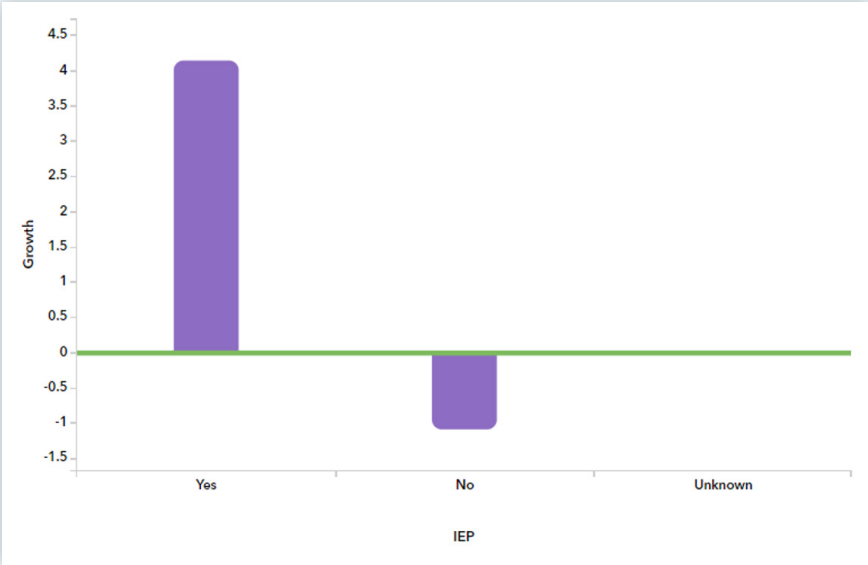
DIG DEEPER: Is the growth of students with IEPs the same or different than for those students without IEPs?

Step 3:

We can use the PVAAS Diagnostic Report to look at each grade, and look specifically at these two mutually exclusive groups. You can see the options we’ve chosen in the filter panel (in the system, this filter panel is on the left side of the screen). After choosing **2023** and **ELA grade 4**, we’ve chosen to view the **measure of growth** and changed the Student Grouping Option to **IEP**.

Notice that you now see growth displayed in these two bars — one for **Yes, students with an IEP** and the other for **No, students without an IEP**. The general trend you see here is that the **Yes IEP group** is showing positive growth (above the green growth standard line), while the **No IEP group** is showing negative growth (below the green growth standard line).

Another way to visualize and see this growth using the growth colors is the table below the graph. Notice that we can quickly see how many students are in each of these mutually exclusive groups — and can quickly see the difference in growth between these groups.



2023 PSSA English Language Arts 4th Grade			
Growth	IEP		
	Yes	No	Unknown
Average	4.14	-1.09	--
Standard Error	2.00	0.68	--
Student Count	59	522	0
Percentage of Students	10.2	89.8	0.0

- **Gr. 4:** Did not meet growth standard (*Lost ground or fell behind*)
- **Gr. 5:** Exceeded growth standard (*Gained ground*)
- **Gr. 6, 7, 8 + Literature:** Did not meet growth standard (*Lost ground or fell behind*)

The data story told by these three data views may lead you to a better understanding of your students, student groups, and whole school. This understanding can lead to important pivots in your planning – your priority need may be in the bigger system, not just with a specific student group.

Visit [the PDE PVAAS Webpage](#) for additional resources on this topic.