Considerations for Using STAR™ with Educator Evaluation: Connecticut

Purpose
Renaissance Learning has developed this document in response to customer requests for information on how to use the data generated by STAR assessments (STAR Reading, STAR Math, and STAR Early Literacy) to support the teacher evaluation process in Connecticut.

Note: This document provides examples of ways that educators use STAR data. This information is not intended as a recommendation or to invalidate district policy. In addition, educators are always cautioned against placing too much emphasis on any one evidence source.

Improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes
We believe that the purpose of educator evaluation is to support effective teaching and improve student learning. Educator effectiveness refers to the degree of quality in specific dimensions of teaching, such as classroom management and a deep understanding of how learning progresses in a discipline. Educator evaluation, generally a summative measure determined from an examination of quantitative as well as qualitative data, refers to a degree of quality in overall performance and achievement for a particular school year or span of years. Effectiveness for all educators is the goal. Evaluation, as required by local, state, and federal legislation, is one pathway to achieve that goal, and is the focus of this document.

As an interim assessment, STAR provides educators with reliable data during the year so they can see the path ahead in time to impact it. This document will show how STAR can provide teachers with critical data for documenting instructional practice and building a body of evidence of student growth and achievement as part of their district’s educator evaluation process. STAR assessments can be administered multiple times throughout the school year, creating a trustworthy trend line that tells a story. Teachers and principals can demonstrate student progress toward incremental benchmarks, mid-course corrections in instruction and the resulting effects, efforts to screen and identify students in need of (and in response to) intervention, trends toward state proficiency, and patterns in learning.

Instruction is key to growth
Accelerating growth for all students requires ongoing focus on instructional practices to accomplish learning content goals and meet growth targets. Assessing students, setting targets, and monitoring growth aren’t enough; there must also be an instructional plan to advance learning. Quality instruction is key to achieving growth.

Student Growth Percentiles as reported in STAR
Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is an acceptable source of evidence for student growth for student learning objectives (SLOs) and other elective sources of data. With the updated SGP model, STAR is now even better at measuring within-year growth for educator evaluation purposes. STAR assessments continue to fully meet the requirements for measuring within-year growth for educator evaluation, including in states where it is approved for this purpose.
A Student Growth Percentile, or SGP, compares a student’s growth to that of his or her academic peers nationwide. Academic peers are students in the same grade with similar achievement history on STAR assessments. SGP is reported on a 1–99 scale, with lower numbers indicating lower relative growth and higher numbers indicating higher relative growth. For more information on SGP, see the Educator Effectiveness/Educator Evaluation FAQ and the SGP FAQ.

For SGPs to be reported in STAR, students must be tested within at least two of the following date ranges:

- Fall: August 1 – November 30
- Winter: December 1 – March 31
- Spring: April 1 – July 31

**Special considerations for K-3 teachers**

Over the course of a given school year, many K-3 students transition from “non-reader” to “reader” status. To get SGPs, students must pretest and posttest with the same assessment. In other words, students who test with STAR Early Literacy in the fall must test with STAR Early Literacy in the spring in order to get an SGP. Of course this does not preclude also testing with STAR Reading during the year as “non-readers” become “readers.” Please note that STAR Reading does not produce an SGP for kindergartners; STAR Reading reports SGP beginning in first grade.
### Process and Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecticut Teacher Evaluation Formula(^1)</th>
<th>Student Growth and Development Component (45%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Teacher Practice Related Indicators" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Student Outcomes Related Indicators" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher Performance and Practice (40%)</td>
<td>22.5% of the indicators of academic growth &amp; development shall be assessments administered over time, including interim assessments. All assessment data will be analyzed collectively to assist in determining teacher’s rating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parent Feedback (10%)</td>
<td>- Those without an available standardized indicator will select, through mutual agreement, an additional non-standardized indicator. Examples include: STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading and STAR Math.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student Growth and Development (45%)</td>
<td>For the other half (22.5%) of the indicators of academic growth and development, there may be:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Either Whole-School Student Learning or Student Feedback (5%)</td>
<td>- A maximum of one additional standardized indicator other than the state test (CMT, CAPT or SBAC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SLO Definition**

SLOs are carefully planned, long-term academic objectives. Each SLO statement should reflect high expectations for student learning at least a year’s worth of growth (or a semester’s worth for shorter courses) and should be aligned to relevant state, national or district standards for the grade level or course. SLOs are measured by Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGDs) which include specific targets for student mastery or progress.”

**IAGD Definition**

An Indicator of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD) is the specific evidence, with a quantitative target, that will demonstrate whether the SLO was met. Essentially, the IAGD is the “growth target” set for the SLO.

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SLO Ratings

| Exceeded (4) | All or most students met or substantially exceeded the target(s) contained in the indicator(s). |
| Met (3) | Most students met the target(s) contained in the indicators within a few points on either side of the target(s). |
| Partially Met (2) | Many students met the target(s), but a notable percentage missed the target by more than a few points. However, taken as a whole, significant progress towards the goal was made. |
| Did Not Meet (1) | A few students met the target(s) but a substantial percentage of students did not. Little progress toward the goal was made. |

Evaluation Model
Connecticut’s System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED)

Effectiveness Ratings
Four performance ratings required:
- Exemplary
- Proficient
- Developing
- Below Standard

Teacher Performance and Practice (40%)
The Teacher Performance and Practice component is a comprehensive review of teaching practice conducted through multiple observations, which are evaluated against this standards based rubric. It comprises 40% of the summative rating.

CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014 – AT A GLANCE

Evidence Generally Collected Through In-Class Observations

1. Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning
   - Teachers promote student engagement, independence and interdependence in learning and facilitate a positive learning community.
     1a. Creating a positive learning environment that is responsive to and respectful of the learning needs of all students.
     1b. Promoting developmentally appropriate standards of behavior that support a productive learning environment for all students.
     1c. Maximizing instructional time by effectively managing routines and transitions.

2. Instruction for Active Learning
   - Teachers implement instruction to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large.
     2a. Implementing instructional content that is aligned with standards, builds on students’ prior knowledge and provides for appropriate level of challenge for all students.
     2b. Planning instruction to cognitively engage students in the content.
     2c. Assessing student learning, providing feedback to students and adjusting instruction.

Evidence Generally Collected Through Non-Classroom/Reviews of Practice

3. Planning for Active Learning
   - Teachers plan instruction to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large.
     3a. Planning of instructional content that is aligned with standards, builds on students’ prior knowledge and provides for appropriate level of challenge for all students.
     3b. Planning instruction to cognitively engage students in the content.
     3c. Selecting appropriate assessment strategies to monitor student progress.

4. Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership
   - Teachers maximize support for student learning by developing and demonstrating professionalism, collaboration and leadership.
     4a. Engaging in continuous professional learning to impact instruction and student learning.
     4b. Collaborating to develop and sustain a professional learning environment to support student learning.
     4c. Working with colleagues, students and families to develop and sustain a positive school climate that supports student learning.

**Connecticut Student Learning Objective template**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLO focus statement describes a broad goal for student learning and expected student improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will improve their ability to read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline - Trend Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What data were reviewed for this SLO? How do the data support the SLO?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In review of the data for my school, I found that 35% of our students were at or above proficient in Reading on the SBAC last year. Our reading scores were similarly low on the CMT4 for the previous four years. Furthermore, the percentage of low-income students at or above proficient in reading was 24% last year and even lower in previous years (averaging 21% over the last 4 years).

Our STAR Reading data was consistent across 3 years. There were 39% of students reading at or above the benchmark this past year across all tested grades. The median Student Growth Percentile for students school-wide was 36.

This SLO supports our School Learning Objective related to reading and our district-level goal of improving student literacy rates. Increasing the median SGP in my classroom will require me to make adjustments to my instruction in order to facilitate higher levels of reading growth and achievement. The focus of my SLO will help grow and expand my knowledge of reading teaching methods so that I can improve my ability to design and deliver high quality instruction.

Baseline data from STAR Reading is attached. (See sample Screening Report on page 9.) I will use the fall STAR Reading Screening Report to readily determine the starting performance categories of each of my students, and provide instructional resources accordingly. States that have adopted SGP as a measure of growth consider 35–65 SGP to be the benchmark for typical growth for all students including English Language Learners, Special Education, and Gifted and Talented students. Since the growth across my subgroups was similar, I will need to work on improving reading instruction/learning for all students in my classroom rather than focusing on a particular subgroup.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who are you going to include in this objective? Why is this target group/class selected?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All 19 students in my 2nd grade classroom, including two students in special education and 3 students who are ELL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards and Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the standards connected to the learning content?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

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### Interval of Instruction

*What is the time period that instruction for the learning content will occur?*

Full academic year – baseline taken in September, midpoint taken in January, final taken in May.

Throughout the school year, I will monitor student growth using STAR’s Growth Proficiency Chart (shown below), which provides a real-time snapshot of my students’ performance and growth in relation to the benchmark proficiency level.

### Assessments

*How will you measure student growth of your SLO?*

- Assess students with the STAR computer-adaptive assessments for fall, winter, and spring screening.
- Administer and score the constructed-response items and performance-based tasks that are available in STAR’s learning progression. These items are similar to State assessment items.
- Using STAR Custom, customize and administer assessment items that target specific skills, to gauge progress in areas taught during Guided Reading.
- The Growth Report provides SGP scores for individual students, and for the class as a whole, for growth reporting, student learning objectives (SLOs), and program analysis.
- Quarterly Running Records for all students, and as often as bi-weekly for my struggling readers.

### Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGDs) / Growth Target(s)

*What are the quantitative targets that will demonstrate achievement of the SLO?*

I reviewed my previous years’ data to determine how grade 2 students have historically grown in my classroom. Over the last four years, the median SGP of my students has been: 38 SGP in 2012, 37 SGP in 2013, 35 SGP in 2014, and 39 SGP in 2015. Based on my students’ growth over the years as it is reflected in the SGP metric, I will set a minimum growth target this year of 40 SGP. I recognize that this is higher than my previous SGPs and have purposely set a high expectation for myself. I will use the SGP reported in STAR Reading to document growth for my SLO.

### Instructional Strategies / Supports

*What methods will you use to accomplish this SLO? How will progress be monitored? What professional learning/supports do you need to achieve this SLO?*

- Use the STAR Reading learning progressions and STAR resources to plan instruction for Guided Reading groups.
- Consult with Title I, GT, Special Ed, and ELL teachers once a month to discuss student progress and plan coordinated instruction across these environments.
- Throughout the school year, monitor student growth using STAR’s Growth Proficiency Chart, which provides a real-time snapshot of my students’ performance and growth in relation to the benchmark proficiency level.
- Provide students with the meaningful practice necessary for developing an understanding of specific text structures of informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts.
- Provide hands-on instructional experiences that help deepen understanding of how word choices shape meaning and tone.
- Guide students to check-out books from the library that are within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) range, as found on the STAR Reading Diagnostic Report.
- I will investigate and then incorporate best practices related to primary literacy instruction in both whole group and small group settings.
- Attend training on STAR Reading and how to most effectively pull data from the various reports.
How to incorporate STAR data into an SLO

For schools in first year with STAR data
I will use STAR Reading’s SGP to measure the growth of the students in my classroom. My STAR Growth Report has a summary table at the end which includes the number of students who met the SGP growth expectation.

This is my first year using STAR data. Therefore, to set a goal for student growth this year, I will use historical data from Connecticut to provide perspective (see table below). I will set a minimum growth target this year of 40 SGP. This means I expect my students’ SGP to be at least 40 SGP. In future years, as I become more familiar with STAR data, I will create my growth target based on the way students typically grow in my classroom.

An SLO is calculated by determining the percentage of students in a class who meet a growth target. The table below illustrates the percentage of classrooms in which a specified percentage of students hit the 35, 40, and 50 SGP growth targets in Connecticut, based on data collected by Renaissance Learning. The table on page 4 is the SLO scoring matrix provided by the state.

Note that the final row in the table shows that 68% of individual Connecticut students will meet the 40 SGP growth target. However, SLOs are calculated by determining the percentage of students within a classroom who meet the SLO target.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecticut Comparison Data for STAR Reading</th>
<th>Growth targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who meet the growth target</td>
<td>35 SGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual students hitting SGP (n = 60,728 students)</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecticut Comparison Data for STAR Math</th>
<th>Growth targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who meet the growth target</td>
<td>35 SGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% of students hitting target per classroom:</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual students hitting SGP (n = 56,138 students)</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educators should consult their own school and district baseline data, when available, to set growth targets. Note that 40 SGP is used in the sample SLO for demonstration purposes only. It is not a recommendation.
**Student Learning Objective Scoring Matrix**

While Renaissance Learning does not recommend a specific goal or growth target, we can provide guidance based on data collected and information gathered from other states. Illinois, Georgia, Ohio, and New York have published matrices that are used in their SLO process. The tables below show the percent of students needed to meet the SLO growth target in order to achieve a specific rating in these four states.

### New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEDI Rating</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scoring Range</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Students Meeting SLO Target</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Illinois

- Unsatisfactory: Less than 25% of students met the indicated Growth Target(s)
- Needs Improvement: 25% – 50% of students met the indicated Growth Target(s)
- Proficient: 51% - 75% of students met the indicated Growth Target(s)
- Excellent: 76% - 100% of students met the indicated Growth Target(s)

### Georgia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO Rating</th>
<th>Overall Student Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>&lt; 50% demonstrates expected or high growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>50-64% of students demonstrated expected/high growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>65-89% of students demonstrated expected/high growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>≥ 90% of students demonstrated expected/high growth and ≥ 30% high growth on the SLO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ohio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of students that met or exceeded growth target</th>
<th>Descriptive rating</th>
<th>Numerical rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Most Effective</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Approaching Average</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 or less</td>
<td>Least Effective</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Determining student growth
STAR assessments include an easy-to-read Growth Report that displays each student’s SGP score. The following sample report shows the outcome of the sample SLO. Fifteen out of nineteen students (84%) met or exceeded the growth target of 40 SGP.

Key questions to ask based on this data and other information:
- Did my students demonstrate sufficient growth this year?
- Did students in certain demographic subgroups show as much growth as other demographic subgroups?
- How did these students grow compared to how students historically grow in my classroom?
- What impact did my professional practice have on my students this year?
Using the STAR™ Screening Report to gather baseline data

This report can be run at the student, group, class, or grade level. The report can also be customized to show performance by demographic subgroups (e.g., English learners, Title I, gifted, etc.)

Subsequent pages of the report show which students are at each performance level.

Key questions to ask based on this and other information: Are you satisfied with the number of students at the highest level of performance? Next, consider the level or score that indicates proficiency. Which students just above proficiency are you “worried about” and what support within or beyond core instruction is warranted? What support is needed for students just below? Do all students represented by your lowest level need urgent intervention?
The STAR Growth Proficiency Chart is helpful for getting an overview of both growth and proficiency.

In STAR, SGP provides a way of quantifying growth. With SGP, students are compared to and expected to keep pace with their academic peers (students who started out at the same place). Note: In order to “catch up” to grade-level peers starting at a higher preparedness level, students starting out at a lower achievement level will need a higher SGP target, as well as the resources to meet that target.

The STAR Growth Proficiency Chart is helpful for getting an overview of your whole class because it displays both SGP growth and proficiency in one view. This chart is especially important after winter screening so you can see which students are below benchmark (the green line) and also have low growth (on the far left). Each blue circle represents the intersection of the most recent scaled scores and the SGP for each student. The proficiency level can be set using the state, district, or school benchmark.
### Assessment Activity Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Year</th>
<th>Assessment Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fall         | • Assess students with the STAR computer-adaptive assessment for fall screening.  
               • The STAR software generates Screening and Instructional Planning Reports in real time. |
| Fall–Winter  | • Administer and score the constructed-response items and performance-based tasks that are available in STAR’s learning progression. These items are similar to State assessment items.  
               • Using STAR Custom, customize and administer assessment items that target specific skills, to gauge progress in areas taught during Guided Reading. |
| Winter       | • Assess students with the STAR computer-adaptive assessment for winter screening.  
               • The STAR software generates Screening, Instructional Planning, and Growth Reports in real time.  
               • The Growth Report provides SGP scores for individual students, and for the class as a whole, for mid-year analysis. |
| Winter–Spring| • Administer and score the constructed-response items and performance-based tasks that are available in STAR’s learning progression. These items are similar to State assessment items.  
               • Using STAR Custom, customize and administer assessment items that target specific skills, to gauge progress in areas taught during Guided Reading. |
| Spring       | • Assess students with the STAR computer-adaptive assessment for spring screening.  
               • The STAR software generates Screening, Instructional Planning, and Growth Reports in real time.  
               • The Growth Report provides SGP scores for individual students, and for the class as a whole, for growth reporting, SLOs, and program analysis. |

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