

RENAISSANCE

TECHNICAL PAPER | 2022–2023 School Year

Relating Star Reading and Star Math to the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Tests



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Introduction

At Renaissance, we know that as an educator, chief among your responsibilities is making decisions about how to allocate limited resources to best serve diverse student needs. A good assessment system supports your efforts, by providing timely, relevant information to help address key questions about which students are on track to meet important standards and who may need additional assistance.

Assessments that identify early any students at risk of missing academic standards are especially useful, as they inform instructional decisions to improve student performance and reduce gaps in achievement. Assessments that do this while taking little time away from instruction are particularly valuable. *Interim assessments*, one of three broad categories of educational assessment,¹ indicate which students are on track to meet later expectations (Perie et al., 2007).

This linking study applied results from two interim assessments, Renaissance Star Reading® and Renaissance Star Math®, to help you predict whether individual students are on track or need more assistance to succeed on the year-end summative Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Tests in English language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8.²

Assessments that identify early any students at risk of missing academic standards are especially useful.

Main Findings

Results from the linking analysis revealed that Star Reading and Star Math are accurate predictors of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Tests, meaning as a Mississippi educator you can use Star scores to:

1. Identify early in the year students likely to miss reading and math yearly progress goals in time to make meaningful adjustments to instruction well before the year-end test.
2. Forecast the percent of students at each MAAP performance level to serve as an early warning system for building and district administrators and allow redirection of resources as needed.

¹ **Formative assessments** are short and frequent processes, embedded in instruction, that support learning and provide specific feedback on what students know and can do versus where gaps in knowledge exist. **Summative assessments** evaluate whether students have met a set of standards and serve most commonly as year-end state-mandated tests. **Interim assessments** represent the middle ground, in terms of duration and frequency and can serve purposes including informing instruction, evaluating curriculum and student responsiveness to intervention, and forecasting performance on high-stakes summative year-end tests.

² Technical manuals are available for Star Reading and Star Math by request to research@renaissance.com.

Study

To determine if Star Reading and Star Math can predict student achievement on the end-of-year Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Tests in English language arts and mathematics, we began by linking the score scales for each assessment.

Data collection

Using a secure data-matching procedure compliant with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Mississippi Department of Education policies, staff from eight Mississippi districts provided Renaissance with state summative test scores for students who had taken Star Reading or Star Math during the 2015–2016 school year. Each record included a student’s MAAP scores and was matched with all Star scores for that year.

Sample characteristics

Renaissance divided the Mississippi data into two samples. The **concurrent** sample included students’ scores for all Star tests taken within 30 days before or after the mid-date of the MAAP administration window. This sample numbered 13,823 students in grades 3–8 with matched MAAP and Star Reading scores and 10,483 students in those grades with matched MAAP and Star Math scores. In each grade, we then set aside scores from a subset of these students—10%—as a holdout sample to use only to evaluate the scale linkage.

The linking analysis revealed that Star Reading and Star Math are accurate predictors of the Mississippi State Tests.

The **predictive** sample, which included 13,590 students for reading and 10,954 students for math, included Star scores for tests taken more than 30 days before the mid-date in the MAAP testing window.

Correlations

Before linking Star tests with the MAAP, we ensured there was a strong relationship between the test scales. As seen in figure 1, the correlations were positive, averaging .79 and .80 between MAAP and Star Reading and Star Math, respectively.

Figure 1. Star Reading and Star Math scores highly correlate with Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Tests



Scale linkage

Renaissance then linked the score scales for the Star Reading/Star Math and the MAAP in English language arts and mathematics by applying equipercntile linking analysis (Kolen & Brennan, 2004) in grades 3–8. The concurrent sample (sans the holdout sample) was used in the linking (scores from all Star tests taken within 30 days before or after the MAAP testing mid-date), and the result was a table of MAAP scores for each possible Star score.

The predictive sample was then used to evaluate if the linking results could accurately predict student performance on the MAAP with Star data from earlier in the school year. To do so, we took students’ Star scores from tests taken more than 30 days prior to the MAAP testing mid-date and used national growth norms (Renaissance Learning, 2016a, 2016b) to project what their Star scores would be at the mid-date. Then the scale linkage table was used to look up the projected Star scores (or the average of the projected scores for students with multiple Star scores in the predictive sample) to see how they translated to the MAAP scale.

Mississippi cut scores and corresponding Star score equivalents

MAAP results are reported in scaled scores that describe each student’s location on an achievement continuum ranging from approximately 301 to 899 and using five achievement levels: *Level 1*, *Level 2*, *Level 3*, *Level 4*, and *Level 5*. A main purpose in linking Star Reading and Star Math to the MAAP was to identify Star scores approximately equivalent to the cut-off scores that separate the Mississippi achievement levels. Table 1 displays these equivalent Star Unified scores for grades 3–8. The corresponding MAAP cut scores can be found in the Appendix B.³

³ The linking sample came from eight school districts, so cut scores should be considered approximations to be updated with greater precision as more data become available.

Table 1. Star Reading and Star Math Unified score equivalents for each MAAP achievement level range

Star Reading Unified cut-score equivalents					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	< 879	879 – 951	952 – 1009	1010 – 1070	≥ 1071
4	< 912	912 – 986	987 – 1036	1037 – 1108	≥ 1109
5	< 958	958 – 1004	1005 – 1055	1056 – 1122	≥ 1123
6	< 972	972 – 1036	1037 – 1083	1084 – 1130	≥ 1131
7	< 984	984 – 1037	1038 – 1100	1101 – 1147	≥ 1148
8	< 997	997 – 1046	1047 – 1107	1108 – 1170	≥ 1171
Star Math Unified cut-score equivalents					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	< 902	902 – 966	967 – 1009	1010 – 1053	≥ 1054
4	< 939	939 – 1005	1006 – 1051	1052 – 1100	≥ 1101
5	< 947	947 – 1008	1009 – 1083	1084 – 1115	≥ 1116
6	< 956	956 – 1043	1044 – 1102	1103 – 1163	≥ 1164
7	< 974	974 – 1059	1060 – 1117	1118 – 1172	≥ 1173
8	< 993	993 – 1085	1086 – 1134	1135 – 1173	≥ 1174

Results

Accuracy of scale linkage confirmed

In evaluating the accuracy of the scale linkage, we used two methods to examine the differences between students' observed (actual) MAAP scores and our Star equivalents: (1) computing the RMSEL (the root mean squared errors of linking) using the scores from the linking study, and (2) applying the holdout sample, consisting of the subset of concurrent scores not used in the linking, to the linking results. Results showed that our linking computation performed as intended.

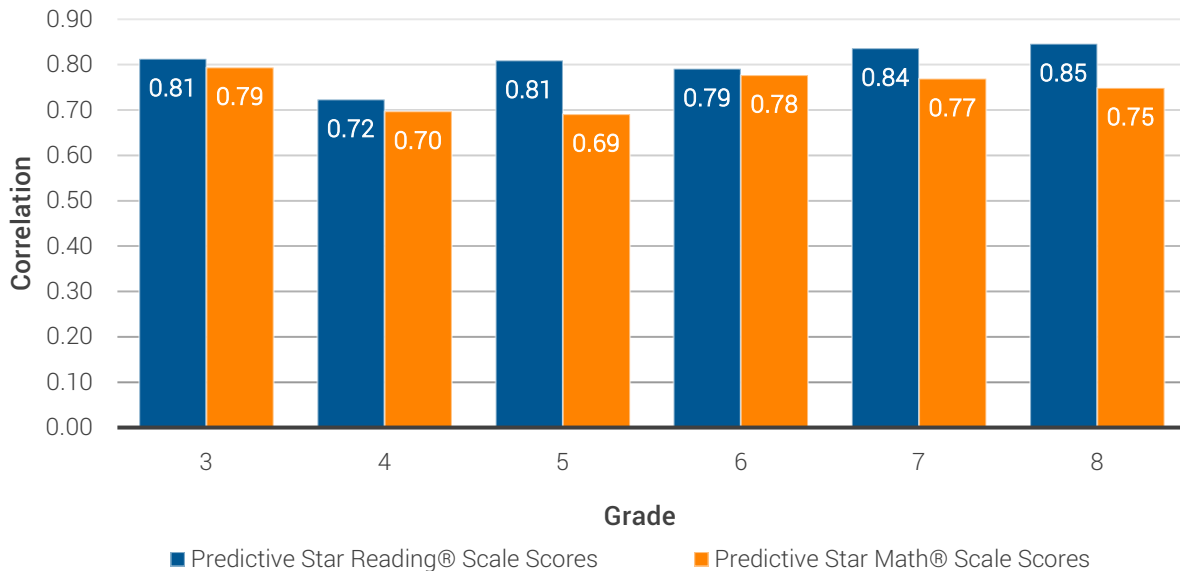
Predictive Star scores correlate highly with actual MAAP scores

To summarize the predictive power of Star Reading and Star Math, we calculated raw correlations between observed (actual) MAAP scores and projected Star scores. As figure 2

shows, the predictive correlation showed a strong relationship between the assessments (similar to the correlations from the concurrent sample, see figure 1, p. 4), indicating that earlier Star scores have a strong relationship with end-of-year MAAP scores. For reading, the correlations averaged .80 and for math, the associations were also high, averaging .75.

Star scores have a strong relationship with end-of-year MAAP scores.

Figure 2. Projected scores from Star Reading and Star Math highly correlate with Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Test scores



Star scores discriminate well between students who score proficient or not

Using the sample of actual MAAP scores, we were able to compare how our projected Star scores aligned with the observed Mississippi scores. Table 2 displays classification diagnostics about whether students were correctly or incorrectly classified as proficient or not on the MAAP using projected Star scores. On average, students were correctly classified (i.e., overall classification accuracy) 84% of the time for reading and 85% of the time for math.

For Area Under the ROC Curve (AUC), a summary measure of diagnostic accuracy, Star Reading and Star Math both averaged .92 (also displayed in table 2). The AUCs far exceed the .85 standard set by the National Center on Response to Intervention to indicate convincing evidence that an assessment can accurately predict another assessment result or outcome.

Table 2. Proficiency forecasting using Star Reading and Star Math scores yields accurate results

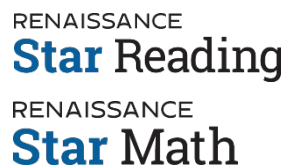
Star Reading						
Measure	Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Overall classification accuracy (percentage of correct classifications)	85%	82%	82%	85%	86%	87%
Area Under the ROC Curve	0.92	0.90	0.91	0.93	0.93	0.94
Star Math						
Measure	Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Overall classification accuracy (percentage of correct classifications)	82%	86%	82%	85%	88%	86%
Area Under the ROC Curve	0.90	0.92	0.90	0.92	0.93	0.93

Other diagnostic accuracy measures studied:

- ✓ **Sensitivity** represents the percentage of proficient students that were correctly forecasted, which for Star Reading averaged 80% and for Star Math averaged 78%.
- ✓ **Specificity** represents the percentage of not-proficient students that were correctly forecasted, which for Star Reading averaged 87% and for Star Math averaged 88%.
- ✓ **Positive predictive values** indicate that when Star scores forecasted students to be proficient, they actually were proficient 77% of the time for Star Reading and 77% of the time for Star Math.
- ✓ **Negative predictive values** indicate that when Star scores forecasted students to miss proficiency, they actually weren't proficient 89% of the time for reading and 89% of the time for math.
- ✓ **Proficiency status projection error**, the difference between actual and projected proficiency rates, indicates how well scores accurately predict proficiency within each grade. Star Reading and Star Math both averaged 1% (negative scores indicate under-prediction while positive scores show over-prediction).

Appendix A: About Star Reading and Star Math

The computer-adaptive Star Reading and Star Math assessments serve multiple purposes including screening, progress monitoring, instructional planning, forecasting proficiency, standards mastery, and measuring growth. These highly reliable, valid, and efficient standards-based measures of student performance in reading and math provide valuable information regarding the acquisition of skills along a continuum of learning expectations. The assessments can be completed in about 20 minutes, and we recommend administering them two to five times a year for most purposes and more frequently when used for progress monitoring.



Star Reading and Star Math are highly rated for academic screening and academic progress monitoring by the National Center on Intensive Intervention.

National Center on
INTENSIVE INTERVENTION

at American Institutes for Research ■

Appendix B: Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) Test achievement levels

Table B1. MAAP achievement level score ranges

MAAP achievement level score ranges: English language arts					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	301 – 334	335 – 349	350 – 364	365 – 386	387 – 399
4	401 – 428	429 – 449	450 – 464	465 – 487	488 – 499
5	501 – 538	539 – 549	550 – 564	565 – 581	582 – 599
6	601 – 635	636 – 649	650 – 664	665 – 678	679 – 697
7	701 – 737	738 – 749	750 – 764	765 – 775	776 – 792
8	801 – 841	842 – 849	850 – 864	865 – 879	880 – 899
MAAP achievement level score ranges: Mathematics					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	301 – 332	333 – 349	350 – 364	365 – 383	384 – 399
4	401 – 435	436 – 449	450 – 464	465 – 483	484 – 499
5	501 – 539	540 – 549	550 – 564	565 – 575	576 – 599
6	601 – 635	636 – 649	650 – 664	665 – 686	687 – 699
7	701 – 735	736 – 749	750 – 764	765 – 792	793 – 799
8	801 – 837	838 – 849	850 – 864	865 – 888	889 – 899

Appendix C: Star Reading and Star Math Enterprise score equivalents

Since the 2017–2018 school year, Renaissance has offered educators the additional option of reporting student Star scores on an alternative scale referred to as the Unified scale. Table C1 below includes the Enterprise scaled scores for Star Reading and Star Math that correspond to achievement levels on the MAAP assessments for English language arts and Mathematics. Table 1 contains the Unified scaled scores for Star Reading and Star Math that correspond to achievement levels on the MAAP assessments for English language arts and Mathematics.

Table C1. Star Reading and Star Math Enterprise score equivalents at time of state test for each MAAP achievement level range

Star Reading Enterprise cut-score equivalents					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	< 205	205 – 353	354 – 494	495 – 706	≥ 707
4	< 269	269 – 440	441 – 574	575 – 906	≥ 907
5	< 366	366 – 479	480 – 643	644 – 968	≥ 969
6	< 398	398 – 574	575 – 783	784 – 1026	≥ 1027
7	< 431	431 – 578	579 – 875	876 – 1166	≥ 1167
8	< 463	463 – 610	611 – 903	904 – 1276	≥ 1277
Star Math Enterprise cut-score equivalents					
Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
3	< 480	480 – 585	586 – 655	656 – 726	≥ 727
4	< 540	540 – 648	649 – 724	725 – 803	≥ 804
5	< 554	554 – 653	654 – 775	776 – 828	≥ 829
6	< 568	568 – 711	712 – 806	807 – 905	≥ 906
7	< 597	597 – 737	738 – 831	832 – 920	≥ 921
8	< 629	629 – 779	780 – 858	859 – 921	≥ 922

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