Selecting and using District-Determined Measures (DDMs) for Administrators

Overview
From superintendents to principals to department heads, school and district administrators will receive Student Impact Ratings based on evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement. This brief addresses how districts may develop and/or identify appropriate measures that yield meaningful information about an administrator’s impact on student learning, growth, and achievement.

Prior to DDM Development
Before creating DDMs for administrators, districts are strongly advised to have identified the group(s) (district-level leadership, etc.) tasked with making decisions around DDMs for specific administrators.

Next Steps
The recommendations in this brief can be helpful to districts as they proceed through the following stages of DDM development:

- Identify the administrator roles for which statewide growth measures will be used as one measure of impact.
- Establish collaborative administrator teams to identify appropriate DDMs for administrator roles to ensure at least two measures per administrator.

How are Student Impact Ratings determined for administrators?
Administrators will receive a Student Impact Rating of high, moderate, or low based on trends and patterns in student learning, growth, and achievement.

Patterns refer to results on at least two different measures of student learning, growth, and achievement.

Trends refer to results from at least two years.

The Student Impact Rating is informed by annual data over a period of at least two years from at least two state or district-determined measures in order to establish trends and patterns. Where available, statewide growth measures (SGPs) must be used as one measure. When determining ratings, evaluators apply professional judgment, including the consideration of student populations and professional context.

Types of Measures
The highest priorities for any measure used to determine a Student Impact Rating is that it be aligned to content (e.g., addresses aspects of student learning over which the administrator has direct responsibility) and informative. The results should also help schools and districts recognize where administrators are succeeding or struggling and identify where to adjust support.

Measures can be direct or indirect. Direct measures of student learning, growth, and achievement are specific to actual student learning (MCAS student growth percentiles, for example, or improvement on assessment scores across multiple grades). Districts may also choose measures that focus on social, emotional, behavioral, or skill development if they reflect the supervisory foci of these administrators. However, direct measures of student learning may not always be appropriate for administrators, especially if:

- An administrator’s responsibilities do not include overseeing the instruction of students, in which case direct measures of student learning may not yield accurate information about an administrator’s professional contributions, or
An administrator’s responsibilities address non-academic aspects of schooling, such as discipline or operational matters, in addition to academic content, in which case direct measures may not provide information that is fully representative of an administrator’s role.

In these cases, districts should also consider using indirect measures of student learning, growth, and achievement as DDMs for some administrators.

Direct Measures
Direct measures of student learning, growth, and achievement are strongly preferred for evaluating educator impact because they measure the most immediately relevant outcomes of the education process. Examples of direct measures for administrators include MCAS-related measures, such as student growth percentiles (required for some administrators – see below) or changes in subgroup performance; pre- and post-assessments in specific subjects; assessments of growth based on performances and/or portfolios of student work judged against a common scoring rubric; and progress monitoring.

Other options may include measures of social, emotional, or behavioral learning when teaching such skills is an explicit and central component of the curriculum for which an administrator bears supervisory responsibility.

Some administrators supervise educators in academic content areas outside of state-tested subjects or in grades/content areas for which SGPs are not available. In these cases, direct measures of student learning are still preferable, where available. For example, principals of PreK-2 schools should identify alternative direct measures of student learning aligned to the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for those grade levels. School leaders of vocational and technical schools are similarly encouraged to identify direct measures of learning aligned to the Massachusetts CVTE Frameworks.

When is median SGP used as measure of impact for an administrator? A district is required to use median SGPs from statewide assessments (e.g., MCAS, PARCC) as one of the measures used to determine an administrator’s Student Impact Rating for all administrators who supervise educators responsible for ELA or math instruction. More information on median SGP is available in the Implementation Brief on Using Student Growth Percentiles.

There are two key criteria for median SGPs to be used as fair and valid measures of impact for administrators:

1. The administrator has direct responsibility for overseeing instruction of academic content in ELA and/or Math in 4th, 8th, and 10th grade.
2. There are 20 or more students with SGPs in a given content area.

An administrator must meet both criteria for median SGP to serve as a required measure of impact. Similar to teachers, districts need to define which administrators are responsible for academic content in state-tested subjects (e.g., administrators who supervise educators providing instruction in those content areas). However, there are certain administrators whose Student Impact Ratings must take into account median SGPs.

- Superintendent of Schools/Charter School Leader/Collaborative Director
- Principal/Headmaster/Head of School
- Supervisor/Director/Coordinator of Curriculum
- Supervisor/Director/Coordinator: Mathematics
- Supervisor/Director/Coordinator: English
- Supervisor/Director/Coordinator: Reading

Important note: District-determined direct measures for administrators should not result in new or additional assessments for students. Rather, they should capitalize on existing assessments, including teacher-specific DDMs, when such measures yield information that can be reasonably attributed to an administrator’s role in promoting student learning in that area.

Indirect Measures
Indirect measures provide information about an educator’s impact through an intermediary measure in an area that is a necessary prerequisite of student learning. For example, an assistant principal may be responsible for ensuring students are in class, a necessary prerequisite for student learning. Indirect measures focus on this intermediary step and therefore
Adherence to special

Removal/suspension/
College course

Rigorous course-taking
Attendance/tardiness

Graduation/Dropout


provide concrete feedback that can be used to inform
meaningful sample of an administrator’s role and
whether direct or indirect – should represent a
Bottom line: Selected DDMs for administrators –

Examples of Indirect Measures

- Promotion rates
- Graduation/Dropout rates
- Attendance/tardiness rates
- Rigorous course-taking patterns
- College course matriculation and course remediation rates
- Removal/suspension/expulsion rates
- Adherence to special education timelines
- Measures of placement in the least restrictive environment
- Access to free-and-reduced-lunch program
- Access to curricular resources
- Discipline referral trends
- Teacher retention/recruitment rates
- Co-op placement rates
- Parent satisfaction surveys
- Measures to address disproportionate identification and placement
- Coordinated Program Reviews

Do Indirect Measures assess student growth?
Indirect measures will not always be measures of student growth, but rather measures of an educator’s impact on conditions that will enable student growth. For example, part of a school leader’s job is to ensure consistent and high rates of attendance across all students. Attendance is a necessary precondition of the learning process and supports teachers who are then engaged in producing student growth. As a result, consistent and high attendance rates are an indirect measure of the school leader’s contribution to student growth. Using historical attendance data as a guide, a district could set parameters for what would constitute high, moderate, and low impact for the school leader, as it relates to student attendance rates.

When are indirect measures of impact appropriate for an administrator? Indirect measures are useful and appropriate for administrators whose role and/or key responsibilities are not directly related to the instruction of students. For example, a school business administrator may use an indirect measure related to ensuring district-wide access to updated curricular materials. In another scenario, an assistant principal may pair a direct measure, such as median SGP, with an indirect measure related to student suspension rates in order to ensure an accurate representation of his or her impact on student learning. For many administrators, including school leaders and district administrators, it may be appropriate to use an indirect measure of student learning along with other direct measures.

Indirect measures include promotion and graduation rates, attendance and tardiness rates, rigorous course-taking patterns, college course matriculation and course remediation rates, discipline referral and other behavior rates, and other measures of student engagement and progress toward school academic, social-emotional, and other goals for students.

Bottom line: Selected DDMs for administrators – whether direct or indirect – should represent a meaningful sample of an administrator’s role and provide concrete feedback that can be used to inform
practice. DDMs do not have to represent everything that an administrator does, nor should an administrator be expected to have a DDM for every component of his or her role. Chosen measures should provide educators and districts with actionable information to inform practice and identify areas of success and situations where more supports are needed.

Considerations for Administrator DDMs
DDMs should be aligned to content. As stated in Technical Guide B, one of the highest priorities for all DDMs is that they are aligned to content. Some administrators may ask the question, “What does content mean for my role if I do not directly supervise or have responsibility for academic instruction?” For these administrators, content should reflect their job functions, practices, and responsibilities and align to what they do to support students, educators, administration, and/or parents.

DDMs should be informative. The results of any DDM should help administrators recognize where students are succeeding, as well as where they are struggling, and identify where to adjust their practice accordingly. Furthermore, the results should also help districts recognize where administrators are succeeding or struggling and identify where to adjust support.

DDMs should be common across roles. ESE recommends that educators in similar roles in a district use identical DDMs to ensure comparability across schools. For example, all elementary school principals in a district should typically use the same DDMs, and all high school assistant principals should use the same DDMs. The use of identical DDMs creates
opportunities for educators to discuss results and share ideas for adjusting practice, and allows for better calibration across administrators.

However, there may be good reasons why a district would choose measures that are not identical across educators in the same administrator role. For example, some larger districts with elementary schools that serve different student populations may have significantly different school priorities. Such districts may choose to select DDMs that differ across schools in order to better align to school priorities. For example, a cadre of elementary schools in a district may use an ELA and a math DDM for their principals. The remaining elementary school principals may use the same math DDM but replace the ELA measure with a science measure due to a stronger STEM focus. More information on comparability is available in the Implementation Brief on Scoring and Parameter Setting.

### DDMs for Single Administrators
Administrators often serve in unique leadership roles (e.g., superintendent, school business administrator, HR director). Given the specialized nature of these positions, districts may consider the following options to identify and develop DDMs for these “singletons”:
- Work with neighboring districts to identify and/or create DDMs.
- Use DDMs that can be easily interpreted (e.g., for a school counselor, using number of seniors who applied to college instead of number of students who are prepared to apply to college).
- Identify other administrator roles that, while not identical, are similar enough to warrant the use of the same DDMs.

### Identifying Measures for Administrators
Below is a suggested process by which districts may identify appropriate measures to inform the Student Impact Rating for administrators. These steps are not intended to be comprehensive but rather to serve as guideposts for the identification and development of measures for administrators.

1. **Create a Team.** Teams should consist of individuals responsible for identifying measures for administrators (superintendent, district- and school-level administrators, school committee members, teachers, and others).

2. **Conduct a Gap Analysis.** Identify administrators for whom statewide growth measures will be one of the measures used; identify those for whom additional DDMs are necessary in order to ensure at least two measures per administrator.

3. **Determine Content to Measure for DDMs.**
   - What content is most central to the curriculum and relevant to school, district, and state goals? (Consider specific academic areas, student cohorts, etc.)
   - What student knowledge, skills, or behaviors are most directly attributable to or overseen by an administrator?
   - Of the student knowledge, skills, and abilities overseen by an administrator, what can be assessed?
   - Based on an administrator’s full scope of responsibilities, does it make sense to use one direct measure and one indirect measure?

4. **Identify Potential Measures.** Determine baseline data points/assessment dates.

5. **Set Parameters for High, Moderate, and Low Growth.** Districts have flexibility in determining what constitutes high, moderate, and low growth or progress in a given area.

6. **Implement/Analyze/Refine.** Districts should remain open to modifying and refining measures as needed in order to ensure alignment to key content and utility to the administrator role.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Do all administrators have to use direct measures?**
No. When selecting DDMs, districts and educators should prioritize measures that are (a) aligned to content (or an educator’s work and responsibilities) and (b) informative. For administrators who do not have direct instructional responsibilities or supervision over educators with direct instructional responsibilities, direct measures of student learning may not be the most appropriate measures and indirect measures should be considered.

**How do DDMs differ from student learning goals?**
DDMs are set by the district and are common to educators serving in a particular role. A main focus of DDMs is comparability – so student learning and impact can be discussed across schools and educator roles. DDMs should also address key content for all students and therefore remain relatively stable from year to year in order for trends and patterns in student learning to be analyzed. In contrast, student learning goals are unique to an individual educator and tailored to the specific needs of a student population in a given year(s).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator Category</th>
<th>Example Measures for Student Impact Ratings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decreases in achievement gap</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Principal</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Progress at the Warning/Failing Level on MCAS (ELA, Math, Science)</td>
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<td>• Measure of Teacher Retention/Turnover</td>
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<td>High School Assistant Principal</td>
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<td>• Suspension/Expulsion Rates</td>
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<td>Special Education Administrator</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<td>• Progress in measures of placement in the Least Restrictive Environment</td>
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<td>Director of Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<td>• Progress at Advanced Level on MCAS (ELA, Math, Science)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Chair, Science</td>
<td>• Progress at the Warning/Failing Level on MCAS (Science)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Progress in AP Scores from 3 (qualified) to 4/5 (well qualified/extremely well qualified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal, Voc/Tech High School</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Employability measure (e.g., SkillsUSA Employability Assessment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Business Administrator</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<td>• Access to Free and Reduced Price Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary School Principal (K-5)</td>
<td>• MCAS SGP: ELA and mathematics*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Percent reading at or above grade level</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

Do districts/educators have to use the example measures identified in this brief? The information in this brief is intended to serve as a resource. Districts and educators are not required to use the examples provided. The information provided is just a starting point and will need to be further developed by educators and districts.

Are Special Education Administrators required to use SGP? SGP is a required measure for administrators with (1) direct responsibility for overseeing instruction in grades and content areas for which SGPs are available, when (2) there are 20 or more students in a given content area. Districts have the opportunity to review the role of these educators and decide if they fit the above description.

Can administrators have more than two DDMs? Yes. All educators are required to have a minimum of two measures each year to inform their Student Impact Rating, but districts may identify more than two if additional DDMs would be helpful in determining administrator impact on student learning, growth, and achievement.

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i See 603 CMR 35.09.

ii According to 603 CMR 35.02, district-determined measures are defined as "measures of student learning, growth, and achievement related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks, or other relevant frameworks, that are comparable across grade or subject level district-wide."

iii For administrators who are responsible for both Math and ELA academic content in tested grades, the district is only required to use median SGPs from one subject area in the determination of these administrators’ Student Impact Ratings; they may choose, however, to use SGPs from both math and ELA.