

Q: What information is in the "Report Datafile"? What units are "predicted score", "actual score", and "value-added" in?

A: Teachers can download the Report Datafile to see additional information about their value-added results. Included in this file are the predicted score, actual score, and value-added scores for each section of a teacher's report. The predicted score, actual score, and value-added score are reported in standard deviations (also known as standardized scores or z-scores). Students' scale scores on the state tests are converted into z-scores to perform the value-added calculations.

A frequently used rule of thumb is to think of one standard deviation as one year of learning. Research has also shown that the achievement gap is approximately one standard deviation. To illustrate how z-scores can be interpreted, let's say Teacher A had an actual score of 0, a predicted score of  $-0.2$ , and a value-added of  $0.2$ . An actual score of 0 means that the teacher's students on average scored at the citywide mean level of performance on that year's state tests in that grade and subject. A predicted score of  $-0.2$  that means that Teacher A's students were predicted to score  $-0.2$  standard deviations below the citywide mean. A value-added score of  $0.2$  (actual score minus predicted score) means that Teacher A's students grew  $0.2$  standard deviations more than predicted. Said another way, using the one standard deviation = one year of learning rule of thumb, Teacher A's students grew  $1/5$ th of a school year more than predicted. If a student in Teacher A's class had a teacher like Teacher A for six years in a row, his performance would be  $1.2$  standard deviations higher than it would have been – a difference bigger than the achievement gap.

Predicted score, actual score, and value-added result are not adjusted for experience, while the percentiles compare a teacher's results to the results of other teachers in the same experience category. Therefore, a 1st year 7th grade math teacher and a 2nd year 7th grade math teacher may have the same value-added results (e.g.,  $0.2$ ) but different percentile scores because their results are compared to different groups of teachers.