



## **MODULE IV ACTIVITY**

### **SCAVENGER HUNT EXPLORING VALUE-ADDED REPORTING**

### **ANSWER KEY**

#### **Access**

**1. Which Web page is used to provide access to the reporting system?**

The “System Login” page. You get access to this page by entering the URL you have been provided.

*(You may have an easier way to access your actual data. This URL will allow you to complete the Scavenger Hunt with dummy data).*

**2. How would you change your access password?**

The first time you log on to the site, you are asked to change your password to something you can remember. Thereafter, click on the “User Settings” icon at the top of any page to take you directly to the “User Information” Web page. Here you can change your user settings including your password or your email address.

**3. Who in a district is ultimately responsible for assigning Web access to the value-added system?**

The district superintendent or his/her designee.

**4. Who would assign Web access to the value-added systems to teachers within a building?**

Once someone has been assigned access as a building level administrator (usually the building principal), that person can assign access to other personnel in the building.

#### **Navigation**

**1. On the Web reporting home page, how do you gain access to the different kinds of reports available on the Web site?**

The pull-down “reports” menu provides access to all of the reports.

- 2. What type of information is contained on the system's "Help" pages?**  
A "Help" page is available on each value-added reporting Web page. Click on the "Help" icon at the top of the page. Help pages provide descriptions of all content available on that Web page, including definitions of terms, graphic displays and navigation and interpretation hints.
- 3. Describe at least two ways to access a school's value-added report.**  
A school's value-added report is directly accessible through the drop-down "Reports" menu. You also can access a particular school's value-added report by going to the "Value-Added Summary Report" and clicking on the school's name. A third way to access this report is to click on the reports icon next to a school's name in the school search feature.
- 4. What do blue underlined words or numbers indicate?**  
Anything written in blue underlined text is a live hyperlink. Clicking on any of these live links takes you to a new Web page with more granular information.
- 5. Describe at least two different paths to take to access individual student reports.**  
An individual student report is directly accessible by going to the "Student Search" icon in the dropdown "Reports" menu and typing that student's last name. You also can access individual student reports by drilling down to the diagnostic report and clicking on any live links on that page. These links take you to student lists. Click on a student name to review that student's individual report.
- 6. What is the best way to return to a report you just left?**  
Click the "back" button at the top of the Web page. Do not click the "back" button in your browser, which would move you out of the value-added reporting system.
- 7. What menus would you use to view every school value-added report for a single school?**  
To view every value-added report for a school, access the school value-added report through the "Reports" menu. Click on that icon to see the first series of school value-added reports. To access value-added reports for the same grade level but different subject area, click on the "Subjects" drop-down menu. To access value-added reports for grade levels not listed in the initial report, click on the "Tests" drop-down menu. This link provides access to the grade levels that use a different end-of-the-year test.
- 8. Describe one way to produce a list of all the fourth-grade math students in a particular school.**  
In the Reports menu, click on the "School Diagnostic Report." Click on fourth-grade in the "Grades" menu. Make sure you are reviewing the "math" diagnostic report. If you are not, click on math in the "subjects" menu. In the table of data at the bottom of the page, notice the word "math" in blue underlined text. Click on this live link to see all fourth-grade math students included in the analysis.

**9. What information can you find through the “School Search” feature?**

The “School Search” feature allows you to compare achievement and progress information across comparable schools in your district. To begin a school search, select school search from the drop-down “Reports” menu, type school name in which you are interested and click the “Search” button. When your school appears, click on the name to access your school’s demographic data and some check boxes that are used to extend your search. You can find comparable schools by clicking on the check boxes and filling in the search parameters in each of the boxes that you checked. Once you have filled in these parameters, click the “Search” button again. This search provides you with information that compares your school to other schools in your district.

This comparison is based on a rating from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 in any of the three categories means your school is in the bottom 20% in terms of that category. A rating of 5 means your school is in the top 20% in terms of that category.

**10. Find two different ways to compare the performance of two of your district’s elementary schools.**

By accessing any of the district level summary reports—the Value-Added Summary Report, the Diagnostic Summary Report, or the Performance Diagnostic Summary Report—you can compare the performance of multiple schools. You also can compare schools through the School Search feature described in the previous question.

**11. What are the benefits of creating Custom Reports?**

Custom Reports allow you to create a customized list of students that correspond to particular search parameters. Custom Reports also allow you to save a particular report so that others can access it.

**12. Name at least two reports that can be used to provide information about the progress of NCLB subgroups.**

NCLB subgroups can be examined through the “School Diagnostic” report, the “Performance Diagnostic” report and through the “Student Search” feature. To examine NCLB groups in the diagnostic report, click the “Select Subgroups” button at the top of the page. You can select the subgroups in which you are interested and click “submit” to obtain a diagnostic report for that subgroup of students. You also can select similar subgroups in the “Student Search” report by restricting your search to particular subgroups.

## **Interpretation**

**1. What path do we suggest you take to analyze the value-added information in a particular school?**

Most value-added analyses move from the most global level of information to the most fine-grained level of information. An analysis often starts with a district-level report and moves through the school value-added report and the diagnostic reports in sequence.

**2. In terms of school improvement, what are the benefits of viewing district-level reports (Value-Added Summary, Diagnostic Summary, Performance Diagnostic Summary)?**

District-level reports are useful because they compare the performance of schools across a district.

**3. What information is missed if you only look at district level reporting?**

Because the primary purpose of district level reporting is to provide comparisons across district schools, district level reporting sometimes reports effects without reporting the magnitude of effects. District level reports also provide average effects, which may hide what is happening with population subgroups.

**4. Why is the “N” in a particular school’s value-added report not always the same as the number of students in that grade level?**

The “N” reflects the number of students who could be included in the analysis. “N” represents the number of students for whom this year’s record could be connected to last year’s record.

**5. How does one judge whether the school value-added calculation (school effect) is statistically significant?**

A school effect is statistically significant if the magnitude of the school effect is at least double the associated standard error.

**6. What does an “Above” rating mean in a school value-added report?**

An “Above” rating means that the students being referenced are making significantly more growth in the space of a year than would be expected. The “Above” rating results from a school effect that is positive and more than double the associated standard error.

**7. What information does a diagnostic report provide that is useful for school improvement?**

A diagnostic report breaks a school effect calculation down into subgroups. In the school diagnostic, students are placed in one of five quintile groups based on their baseline score (either their predicted score or their prior year score in the mean gain approach). The school diagnostic report provides information on how each subgroup of students performed relative to other students at the same achievement level. In the performance diagnostic, students are placed in one of the five state performance categories (below basic, basic, proficient, accelerated or advanced) based on their prior achievement. The performance diagnostic provides information on how this subgroup of students did relative to others within their performance category.

**8. How is the standard error or the range of possible true means represented on the School Diagnostic Report graph?**

The red whisker line in the school diagnostic graph represents standard error. The entire length of the whisker represents two times the standard error.

**9. What factors impact the magnitude of the standard error in a diagnostic report?**

Standard error in this case is dependent upon: 1) how widely dispersed the differences are between students observed scores and their predicted scores, and 2) the number of students in the calculation. In general, the smaller the group of students and the more widely dispersed their difference scores, the larger the standard error.

**10. What do the three different color lines mean on an individual student report?**

**a.** The red line represents the percentile ranking of a student over the number of years for which data is available. This ranking is relative to this student's comparison group over those same years. In years where a student is in a statewide pool, a proficiency year for example, the ranking is relative to all students in the analysis who took the proficiency test. In non-proficiency years, that ranking is relative to only those students who took the same off-year test.

**b.** The blue line represents how the average student in the same district cohort group performed, relative to the larger pool.

**c.** The green line represents how the average student in a school cohort group performed, relative to the larger pool.

**11. How can two different students in the same grade level in the same school have different green lines in their individual student reports?**

If students moved from one school to another over time, the green data points represent the average student in whatever school that child attended that year.

**12. In an individual student report you have access to "student projections." What do these projections mean?**

A student projection in one subject area is based on data from all subject areas. The projection provides information on where a student would be expected to score, at some future date, if that student grew at the average rate of other students with similar achievement histories.

**13. In the School Search, how is a school's Cumulative Gain Index calculated?**

The cumulative gain index is a calculation that was created to be able to compare school effects across schools. The cumulative gain index is calculated by dividing a school effect by its associated standard error. For example, if School A had a school effect of 10 and a standard error of 2, then the cumulative gain index for that school would be 5.