

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Final VAM Detail Report 2014-2015, Updated

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Q 1: What do you mean by the Core teacher courses/outcomes?

A 1: The Core outcomes are created by the Florida Value-Added Model or a District model.

The **Florida VAM** created the outcomes for teachers of

- Reading/ELA in grades 4-10 (based on the FSA results)
- Mathematics in grades 4-8 (FSA)
- Algebra in Grades 8-9 (EOC Assessment).

The **District Covariance Adjustment Models** created the outcomes for teachers of

- Reading and Mathematics in grades K-3 (SAT in grades K-2, and FSA in grade 3)
- Science in grades 5 and 8 (FCAT)
- Civics in grade 7 (EOC Assessment)
- Geometry in grades 8-10 (EOC Assessment)
- Algebra 2 in grades 9-11 (EOC Assessment)
- Biology in grades 8-11 (EOC Assessment)
- US History in Grade 11 (EOC Assessment)
- Certain AP courses (AP exams). The list of AP exams used in the District models is presented later in the document.

District Learning Gains and Achievement Models created the outcomes for teachers of

- Reading and Mathematics for certain SPED students (FAA)
- Various other courses when the students participated in the AP, IB, AICE, or Industry Certification testing.

Q 2: What do you mean by the Non-Core teacher courses/outcomes?

A2: For teachers of courses not mentioned above, the results of their students on Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) assessments were used to create outcomes on the District model.

Specifically, student results on the following exams were used:

- SAT reading in grades K-2
- FSA ELA in grades 3-10
- College Board SAT, ACT, or PERT reading in grades 11-12.

The summary of the various models used for teacher evaluation purposes in 2014-2015 is presented below.

State FSA and Algebra Models

Grade	Outcome	State Model
4-10	Reading FSA	Florida VAM
4-8	Mathematics FSA	
8-9	Algebra EOC Assessment	Florida Algebra VAM

District Covariance-Adjustment Models

Grade	Outcome (2015)	Academic Covariates (2014)	Demographic Covariates
K	<i>Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT)</i> Reading and Mathematics	<i>I-Ready Fall 2014</i>	ELL Status Gifted Status SPED Status Relative Age Attendance
1-2	<i>Stanford Achievement Test (SAT)</i> Reading and Mathematics	SESAT/SAT Reading or Mathematics	
3	<i>Florida Standards Assessment (FSA)</i> Reading and Mathematics	SAT Reading and Mathematics FCAT 2.0 Reading or Mathematics for students repeating Grade 3	
5, 8	FCAT 2.0 Science	FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics	
7	<i>End of Course (EOC) Civics</i>	FCAT 2.0 Reading	
8-10	EOC Geometry	EOC Algebra 1	
9-11	EOC Algebra 2	EOC Geometry	
8-11	EOC Biology	FCAT 2.0 Reading	
11	EOC US History	FCAT 2.0 Reading	
11-12	<i>SAT, ACT, Florida Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT)</i> Reading Components	PSAT Reading	
10-12	AP ^a	PSAT reading, mathematics, writing	

District Learning Gains and Achievement Models

Grade	Outcome	Model Type
4-11	FAA	Learning Gain
10-12	AICE, AP, IB ^b , IC	Achievement

^a For courses with at least 50 student results Districtwide; ^b For courses with fewer than 50 student results Districtwide.

Q3: What AP exam results were used to create District Covariance Adjustment models?

A3: The list of AP courses/exams for which the District models were created include:

- Art History
- Biology
- Calculus AB
- Calculus BC
- Chemistry
- Computer Science A
- English Language & Composition
- English Literature & Composition
- Environmental Science
- European History
- Human Geography
- Physics 1
- Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism
- Physics C: Mechanics
- Psychology
- Seminar
- Statistics
- U.S Government & Politics
- U.S History
- World History

The student results on all other AP exams as well as on IB and AICE were used in the District achievement model.

Q 4: What do you mean by the Outcome? Why are there negative numbers in that column?

A 4: It depends on the model that was used to create the outcome.

Florida VAM

The Outcome can be described as the difference between the average performance of a teacher's students and the expected performance of academically and demographically similar students in the State. The expected performance is determined based on the students' prior achievement and certain demographic, academic, and classroom characteristics. The numbers are in scale score points. Positive values show by how much the average performance of a teacher's students exceeded the expected performance of academically and demographically similar students in the State, whereas negative values show by how much it fell below the expectation.

District Covariance Adjustment Models

The Outcome can be described as the difference between the average performance of a teacher's students and the expected performance of academically and demographically similar students in the District. The expected performance is determined based on the students' prior achievement and certain demographic and academic characteristics. The numbers in the Outcome column are in scale score points (except for AP outcomes where the numbers represent the difference between the percentage of students passing an AP exam [with scores of scores 3-5] and the expected percentage). Positive values show by how much the average performance of a teacher's students exceeded the expected performance of academically and demographically similar students in the District, whereas negative values show by how much it fell below the expectation.

FAA Learning Gains Model

The Outcome refers to the percentage of students making learning gains. A learning gain can be made in one of the three ways: (a) increasing an achievement level from the prior year, (b) maintaining a level 1-3 and increasing the exam score by at least five points, or (c) maintaining a level 4-9. The percentages are shown as decimals.

Achievement Models based on AP, IB, and AICE Results

The Outcome is the difference between the passing rate of a teacher's students on all of these assessments combined and the average Districtwide passing rate for a given broadly defined subject area, such as Mathematics or Social Science. The percentages are shown as decimals with positive values indicating by how many percentage points the passing rate of the teacher's students exceeded the Districtwide average passing rate in a particular subject area. The negative values indicate by how many percentage points the passing rate for the teacher's students fell below the Districtwide average passing rate.

Achievement Models based on the Industry Certification Examination Results

The Outcome represents the difference between the passing rate of a teacher's students on all such assessments combined and the average Districtwide passing rate. The percentages are shown as decimals with positive values indicating by how many percentage points the passing rate of the teacher's students exceeded the Districtwide average passing rate in a particular subject area. The negative values indicate by how many percentage points the passing rate for the teacher's students fell below the Districtwide average passing rate.

Q 5: What do you mean by the Standard Error?

A 5: Although teachers may be instructing demographically and academically similar students, they still may have different mixtures of such students in their classrooms. Students' achievement on standardized tests could be different on different test forms or on different days. Standard Error is the measure of uncertainty in the Outcome caused by these and other factors. It is similar to the Margin of Error often used when reporting poll results.

Q 6: What do you mean by the "VAM Ratio"?

A 6: In order to take into account the uncertainty present in the Outcome, we used an approach similar to the one used in Statistics when calculating confidence intervals. For instance, the numeric interval extending from the Outcome minus twice the Standard Error to the Outcome plus twice the Standard Error can be thought of as the approximate 95% confidence interval for a teacher's "true" Outcome.

We used a simplified version of the confidence level approach, in which we calculated the VAM Ratio by dividing the Outcome by its Standard Error. We then used the VAM Ratio to assign points to teachers for each grade level and subject area separately. These points were then aggregated and used as part of the overall teacher evaluation.

Q 7: How were the points assigned?

A 7: We used the following assignment rules for each data source (grade level, subject area, etc.):

- If VAM Ratio < -3 , assign 8.75 points,
- If $-3 \leq$ VAM Ratio < -1 , assign 17.5 points,
- If $-1 \leq$ VAM Ratio ≤ 2 , assign 26.25 points,
- If VAM Ratio > 2 , assign 35 points

In addition, we used the following supplementary safeguards when using the data from AP, IB, AICE, Industry Certification, and FAA. If the passing rate (or the percentage of students making gains on FAA) was at least 5%, 25 points were assigned even if the calculations based on the rules above resulted in a smaller number of points. At the other end of the spectrum, if the

passing rate was at least 75% (or 95% for Spanish), 50 points were assigned even if the calculations based on the VAM Ratio rules resulted in a smaller number of points.

Q 8: My Summative Performance Evaluation (SPE) form shows 17.83 points for the Learner Progress part of the evaluation, but the Web Report shows different points for different subjects and grade levels. Explain how you calculated the SPE result.

A 8: Let's consider an example. Suppose an elementary school teacher received the following points:

Grade	Subject	#Students	Points
4	Reading	19	8.75
4	Mathematics	18	17.50
5	Reading	21	17.50
5	Mathematics	22	26.25

To calculate the number of points shown on your SPE form, we found the weighted average of all points using the numbers of students as weights. In this example, the results would be found as

$$(8.75*19+17.5*18+17.5*21+26.25*22) / (19+18+21+22) = 17.83.$$

Q 9: The VAM detail report shows “New Points”.

Q 9: In the prior years, the Summative Performance Evaluations were based on two components, Learner Progress (Performance Standard 1) and IPEGS Performance Standards 2-7 (or 2-8 for Instructional Support or Student Services personnel). Each of these components was worth 50 points on a 0-100 summative scale. A third component – Individual Professional Development Plan, worth 15 points – was added in 2014-2015. To accommodate this additional factor, the weight for the Learner Progress component was reduced from 50 to 35 points. The VAM Detail report shows the points calculated based on the 0-50 scale, so the teachers can compare their points in 2014-2015 to those in previous years. The Report also shows the “New Points”, which are the “VAM Points” expressed on the new 0-35 scale.

Q 10: I taught in two different schools. Does that affect how my results are calculated and shown in the report?

A 10: When the State reports the results of the Florida VAM calculations, it reports the number of students separately for each school, but aggregates the results of the model to the subject area and grade level. That is, if a teacher taught in two different schools, the Florida VAM results will be the same for both schools, but the number of students may be different. We followed the same logic when calculating and reporting the results of the various District models.

Q 11: SAT, ACT, and PERT can be administered many times during an academic year. Which results do you use to calculate the non-core VAM points?

A 11: Because we want to be able to attribute student results to an effort of a particular teacher during an academic year, only the results of students who took the SAT/ACT, or PERT at the end of an academic year (March, or later) and who took the PSAT in October of a previous academic year are used.

Q 12: I am a mathematics coach at a school. Are my “VAM points” based solely on the mathematics results of students in my school?

A 12: If you did not instruct any students during an academic year (based on students' schedules, you are considered an instructional employee with schoolwide responsibilities. As such, your “VAM points” are calculated as a weighted average of all points of all “core” teachers in your school as explained here

<http://oda.dadeschools.net/VAM%20Information/2014-2015TeacherEvaluationDocumentandUnifiedSummativeRatingChart.pdf>