



**HOUSTON**  
Independent School District

# **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & FAMILIES**

to Value-Added Progress Measures & ASPIRE Awards



In 2007, HISD launched ASPIRE, the district's comprehensive educational-improvement and performance-management model. ASPIRE is an important part of HISD's commitment to parents and the community to provide high-quality educational opportunities to prepare all students to graduate college- and career-ready.

## ASPIRE:

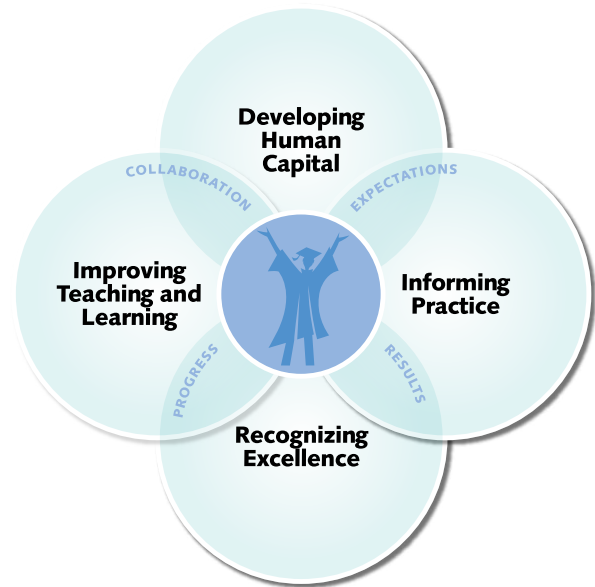
- Creates a culture of continuous improvement
- Continues connecting and aligning all campus and central-service initiatives and functions to support district goals
- Continues fostering collaboration and communication among HISD employees, families, businesses, and community members
- Optimizes performance and efficiency while ensuring the highest-quality service and support
- Creates more clarity around expectations and accountability measures for all campus and central-service initiatives and functions
- Replicates best practices and recognizes regions, departments, campuses, and individuals for excellence

Through ASPIRE, HISD is providing teachers and principals with training and support to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to help all of our students succeed. We are using the latest technology and information systems to provide our principals, teachers, and other staff with the most-reliable data to make important decisions about student performance. Under this framework, HISD is better prepared to support our most important resource in helping students become college- and career-ready—our educators.

*An important part of ASPIRE involves using high-quality information, such as value-added analysis, to make decisions about teaching and student learning.*

## What is Value-Added Analysis?

Value-added analysis is a tool that HISD educators and parents can use to help students succeed. HISD uses value-added analysis to measure the impact of the district's curriculum and instruction on students' academic progress from year to year. Parents can use value-added information to learn how well their child's campus is doing to help groups of students improve. HISD is committed to helping all students reach their highest potential. We want our low-achieving students to get the support they need to accelerate their progress, and we want our highest-achieving students to be challenged and continue to grow academically. Value-added information shines a light on all of our students. When used with other data and information, value-added analysis provides a comprehensive picture of our effectiveness in raising student performance.

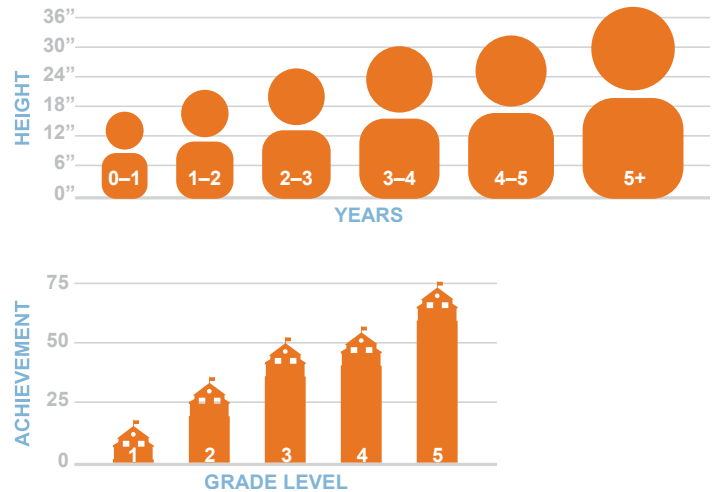


# Achievement & Progress: How Are They Different?

It is easy to think that “achievement” and “progress” mean the same thing. Although they are related, they have different meanings that are important when teachers and parents think about how students perform in school.

Achievement is measured by how students score on state tests and how their scores compare to what students should know and be able to do (state standards). Progress is measured by how much academic “gain” students make over time. You might also hear academic progress called academic “growth” or “gain.”

Imagine a child’s growth chart. This chart shows a child’s height at each age. By looking at the chart, you can see how much the child grew from year to year. And, you can use this chart to see how the child will likely grow in the future. Now, thinking about education, if a student’s math achievement level is measured each year, the student’s “growth pattern” in math can be seen.

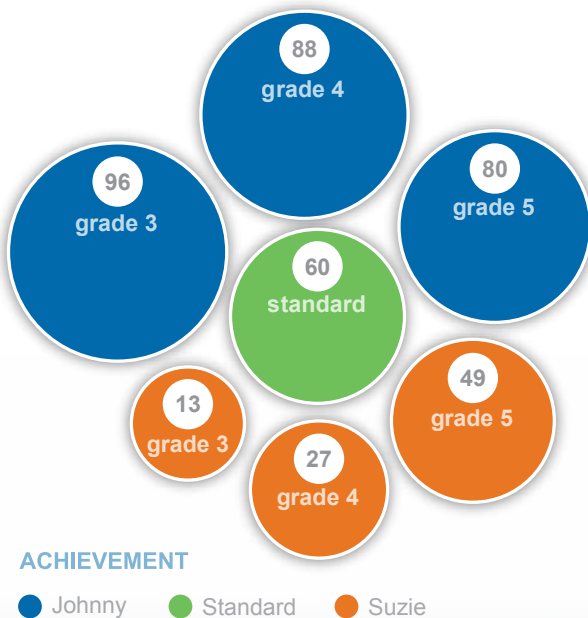


## The Importance of Measuring Student Progress

Why is measuring student progress important?

Because it helps schools know how much growth students are making and the impact our campuses and teachers have on students’ learning.

This is very important. Without measuring student progress, a campus would not know that a child who was scoring above state levels may actually be declining in academic growth over time.



For example, Johnny, a high-achieving student, may score at the 96th percentile in math in third grade, the 88th percentile in fourth grade, and the 80th percentile in fifth grade. While he is still above the proficiency bar, his performance is declining.

In contrast, Suzie, a low-achieving student, may score at the 13th percentile in math in third grade, the 27th percentile in fourth grade, and the 49th percentile in fifth grade. Although she is below grade-level expectations, she is making progress.

To date, success of school districts, campuses, and teachers has mostly been determined by achievement levels based on state or local achievement tests. Using the example above, Johnny and his campus would be considered successful, while the performance of Suzie and her campus would be considered low achieving. It is important to recognize both students’ achievement levels and the progress students and campuses make each year.

*Value-added information provides the most fair and accurate way to measure student progress.*

# Value-Added Progress Reports

Value-added progress reports provide important information to parents and educators about how HISD's curriculum and instruction are helping students make academic progress. Value-added progress reports allow educators to see more clearly what is working well or not so well to help individual students and groups of students.

HISD is using value-added analysis to measure student progress in grades 3–11 in all core subjects (reading, math, language arts, science, and social studies). Parents have access to the following value-added reports:

## District/Region Value-Added Reports

District/region value-added reports show HISD's overall progress by grade and subject compared to the typical growth of students across all schools in Texas.

Report: District Value Added      Test: STAAR 3-8/Stanford  
 District: Houston Independent School District      Subject: Reading/ELA  
 Year: 2013

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS REPORT (must require Case Model | Predictive Methodology)

Estimated District Growth Measure									
Grade	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Growth Measure over Grades Relative to Growth Standard	
Growth Standard		0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
2011 Growth Measure									
Standard Error									
2012 Growth Measure		-0.2 R	0.3 G	0.0 G	-0.5 R	-0.3 R	0.4 G	0.1	
Standard Error		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
2013 Growth Measure		-0.2 R	0.4 R	0.0 G	0.1 Y	0.0 G	0.0 G	0.1	
Standard Error		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
3-Yr Avg Growth Measure									
Standard Error									

Estimated District Avg Achievement									
Grade	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
State NCT Average	50.5	50.0	53.0	53.0	53.0	52.0	52.0		
2010 Avg Achievement									
2011 Avg Achievement	42.7	41.5	42.1	43.2	44.4	44.5	42.6		
2012 Avg Achievement	43.1	42.5	41.9	43.0	42.7	44.2	44.9		
2013 Avg Achievement	43.2	42.8	42.0	42.7	43.1	43.0	44.7		

Report: School Value Added      Test: STAAR 3-8/Stanford  
 School: Houston Independent School District      Subject: Reading/ELA  
 District: Houston Independent School District  
 Year: 2013

LEARN HOW TO USE THIS REPORT (must require Case Model | Predictive Methodology)

Estimated School Growth Measure					
Grade	2	3	4	5	Growth Measure over Grades Relative to Growth Standard
Growth Standard		0.5	0.6	0.0	
2011 Growth Measure					
Standard Error					
2012 Growth Measure		-0.3 R	0.4 G	0.2 R	0.3
Standard Error		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2013 Growth Measure		0.2 G	0.2 G	0.1 Y	0.1
Standard Error		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
3-Yr Avg Growth Measure					
Standard Error					

Estimated School Avg Achievement					
Grade	2	3	4	5	
State NCT Average	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	
2010 Avg Achievement	51.2	50.5	49.4	48.4	
2011 Avg Achievement	54.3	47.9	50.9	47.1	
2012 Avg Achievement	41.2	38.4	51.6	50.8	

## School Value-Added Reports

School value-added reports provide information about performance/progress by the campus overall and at each grade level. These reports give information about specific subjects, including reading, math, language arts, science, and social studies.

## Value-Added Summary Report

The value-added summary report provides campus comparisons of student progress by grade level.

Report: Value Added Summary      Test: STAAR 3-8/Stanford  
 District: Houston Independent School District      Subject: Reading/ELA  
 Year: 2013

Estimated School Growth Measure by Grade

School Name	3	4	5	6	7	8
2013	5.6	-3.2	3.2			
3-Yr Avg						
2013	1.7	-0.0	4.3			
3-Yr Avg						
2013	1.0	1.7	0.8			
3-Yr Avg						
2013	-0.2	2.7	0.9			
3-Yr Avg						
2013				1.0	0.2	0.1
3-Yr Avg						
2013	-0.9	4.9	3.2			
3-Yr Avg						
2013	-3.9	-0.9	7.4			
3-Yr Avg						

# Understanding & Using the Reports

Value-added progress reports contain technical language that may be difficult to understand. However, simple color-coding is used to make the reports easier to understand.

HISD is using value-added analysis to identify, recognize, and reward the campuses and educators whose students make the greatest academic progress each year. HISD also uses this information to help make important district- and campus-level decisions. Parents can use value-added information to learn about the progress HISD and their child's campus are making in raising student achievement.

If you have questions about these reports, please contact your child's principal. He/she can help you better understand how these reports are being used on the campus and in the classroom. Parents and families can also visit the ASPIRE portal at [www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE](http://www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE) under the "Value-Added" tab.

G+	Students in the school made substantially more progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (growth measure is above the Standard for Academic Growth by 2 standard errors or more).
G	Students in the school made progress equal to or greater than the Standard for Academic Growth (growth measure is above the Standard for Academic Growth by at least 1 standard error but less than 2 standard errors above it).
Y	Students in the school made progress equal to the Standard for Academic Growth (growth measure is at most 1 standard error below the Standard for Academic Growth but less than 1 standard error above it).
R	Students in the school made less progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (growth measure is more than 1 standard error below the Standard for Academic Growth but by 2 standard errors or less).
R+	Students in the school made substantially less progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (growth measure is below the Standard for Academic Growth by more than 2 standard errors).

## Recognizing Excellence: The ASPIRE Award Program

We are proud of our educators' commitment to excellence. We believe it is important to recognize and celebrate our many highly effective campuses and educators—not only those that achieve, but also those who make progress toward higher achievement. Based largely on achievement and value-added data, HISD is able to identify and reward the campuses and educators whose students make the greatest academic progress through ASPIRE Award Program.

The ASPIRE Award Program is an expanded and improved way the district is recognizing the campuses and educators who are helping our students achieve and grow academically. There are teachers who may not receive an ASPIRE Award in a particular year. This does not necessarily mean that their students or campus didn't grow academically or that they are not good teachers. Therefore, parents should not use this information as a way to judge the quality of their child's teacher.

Teaching is hard work, and it is important that HISD do all that it can to promote good teaching for ALL of our students. Recognizing and rewarding highly effective educators helps HISD keep and recruit good teachers.

## Increasing Results & Expectations

We are proud of our accomplishments in accelerating student progress through ASPIRE. We will continue working together to realize our aspiration of preparing HISD students to thrive as 21st-century learners who are ready for success in college, in their careers, and beyond.

To learn more about ASPIRE, value-added analysis, and the ASPIRE Award Program, visit the ASPIRE portal at [www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE](http://www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE).



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It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, race, religion, sex, veteran status, or political affiliation in its educational or employment programs and activities.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is it important to measure both student achievement and progress?

Achievement information provides educators with a snapshot of students' growth at a single point in time and how well those students perform against a standard. Progress information provides a more complete, accurate picture of student growth over time. By combining achievement and progress information with other data, HISD has a better picture of its impact on student learning.

### How will value-added information help my child's teacher and principal?

Value-added analysis provides important information that was not previously available. It helps educators see more clearly how students are progressing and is a great tool teachers and principals use to understand strategies that are working well and those that need improvement. Teachers and principals are using this information to make decisions about how to take advantage of the strategies that are working and how to improve in other areas.

### Does value-added analysis require that my child take more tests?

No. For value-added analysis, HISD uses existing state and district test data, including State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and nationally norm-referenced tests.

### When and where can I see value-added reports?

District/region and school-level value-added reports and value-added summary reports are available on the HISD Web site. Go to the ASPIRE portal at [www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE](http://www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE) under the "Value-Added" tab.

### What does it mean if my child's campus makes "above" expected growth?

This means that students on that campus, on average, grew more than similar students across Texas.

### What does it mean if my child's campus makes "below" expected growth?

This means that students on that campus, on average, grew less than similar students across Texas.

### Where can I learn more about value-added reports?

HISD encourages parents and families to talk with their child's principal about how these reports are being used on the campus and in the classroom. Parents and families can also visit the ASPIRE portal at [www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE](http://www.houstonisd.org/ASPIRE).

### Why is HISD recognizing and awarding educators with extra pay?

Over the past few years, HISD has been working hard to have teacher salaries that are competitive with other school districts. Remaining competitive helps HISD keep and recruit good teachers. Many professions regularly reward employee performance with bonus pay or higher salaries. While this concept is not new in many job industries, it is a new concept in education. Through ASPIRE and the ASPIRE Award Program, HISD is on the cutting edge of a national movement toward performance-pay models for recognizing and paying educators for great work. We are proud to recognize our successful campuses and educators, and believe they should be rewarded with extra pay.

### How is HISD helping campuses and teachers who do not receive ASPIRE Awards or bonuses?

Through ASPIRE and the use of value-added information, we are able to identify campuses and educators whose students are making great progress. We are encouraging these highly effective educators to work with their colleagues and share best practices to improve student performance.

### How is the ASPIRE Award Program funded?

The program is funded by federal grants and district contributions.

