



VALUE-ADDED ANALYSIS—INFORMING INSTRUCTION, IMPROVING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Transforming the Tulsa Public Schools' (TPS) education system demands that every school has a principal who is empowered with the skills, knowledge and information to lead effectively, and every classroom has a capable and caring teacher. At TPS, we know, and the research tells us, that having an effective teacher in every classroom is the most important school-based factor to escalate student academic achievement. As part of TPS's 2010–2015 Strategic Plan's Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Initiative, the district has selected a growth measure—value-added analysis—to help increase opportunities for student success.

What is value-added analysis?

Value-added analysis is a statistical method that helps educators measure the impact schools and educators make on students' academic growth rates from year to year. Using this growth metric, TPS teachers and schools can begin interpreting the impact of their curriculum, instruction, programs and practices on student achievement. As no single measure tells “the whole story,” value-added data, although robust, will be used in combination with other data sources.

What is the value of value-added analysis?

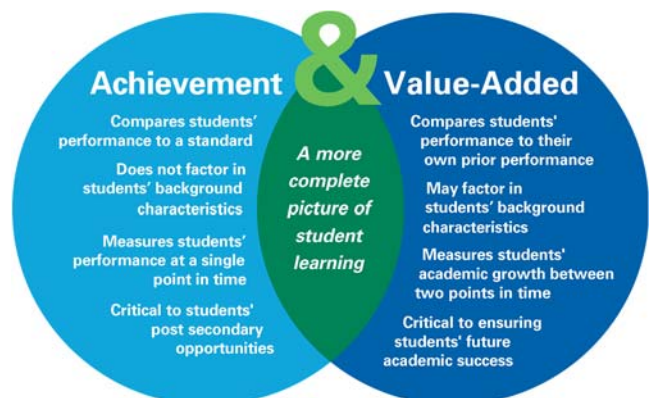
Value-added information allows educators to better identify what is working well and areas for improvement to help students. To gain an overall snapshot of performance, TPS will measure the academic growth and achievement of students from year-to-year. Value-added data provides important diagnostic information not previously available with traditional achievement reporting and allows educators to assess the impact their programs and practices have on student learning.

While the metric is not perfect or a magic bullet, value-added analysis provides crucial information that districts have never had before. With value-added analysis, TPS will be able to:

- Measure educators' influence on the academic growth rates of students;
- Target instruction on students' needs to provide educators feedback on what's working and areas of focus;
- Determine where curriculum and instruction is having the greatest impact on student learning;
- Inform instruction; and
- Understand and evaluate the effectiveness of programs.

Achievement & value-added: How are they different?

Moving to measuring student academic growth and achievement versus the traditional accountability systems that have focused solely on achievement is a different focus—and requires a change in thinking. Value-added analysis provides truer measures of influence of programs and practices, regardless of socioeconomic background.



What was TPS's approach to adopting value-added analysis?

Propelled by a growing national interest in educator effectiveness, and most recently, by Race to the Top funding, many states have passed legislation mandating that student growth or value-added measures be incorporated into educator evaluation systems.

Executive sponsors, TPS Superintendent Dr. Keith Ballard and Chief of Staff Amy Polonchek initiated extensive research and thorough investigation in partnership with the Board of Education and TPS administration to select a value-added provider. These efforts resulted in the district's partnership with the Value-Added Research Center (VARC), housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. VARC has more than 20 years of experience and has worked with leading districts, including the Milwaukee Public School System, Chicago Public Schools, and most recently, the Los Angeles Unified School District.

To provide the most reliable information for schools to make instructional decisions, districts must accurately capture all of the variables that describe the relationships among teachers and students within schools, and essentially, "link" teaching instruction to students. Partnering with VARC, TPS teachers and principals conducted district-wide linkage earlier this year.

As a TPS educator, how does value-added impact me?

Districts use growth measures, like value-added analysis for informing curriculum and instruction, teacher and principal evaluations, career opportunities and compensation for educators, and evaluation of program effectiveness. TPS uses value-added analysis to measure educator effectiveness, identify strengths of teachers and leaders, recognize and plan to overcome challenges, improve student outcomes and create greater opportunities for students to succeed in school, in college and in their careers.



With the proper professional development, value-added analysis provides consistent, reliable, actionable information for educators. Partnering with Battelle for Kids, a national not-for-profit organization specializing in the use of value-added information to inform educational improvement, TPS educators learn ways to harness this information for improvement and take action to solve challenges and leverage strengths. Through stakeholder engagement, professional learning and development, and regular communications, TPS is committed to creating and sustaining a system of effective teachers focused on high performance and accountability for academic success.

In summary...

No single measure tells the "whole story," but value-added information certainly sheds light on a critical part of the story. That is, the degree to which educators are maximizing academic growth for the students they serve.

Everyone plays a role. In addition to teachers, TPS will be engaging the entire school community—students, principals, guidance counselors, superintendents, school board members, community members, business leaders, legislators, higher education leaders and others—to help them understand why measuring both growth and achievement is so important to provide the best and most relevant educational experience possible for all students.

It is with the engagement and continued support of all TPS stakeholders to improve student performance that we will further prepare students to graduate on time, college- and career-ready.