

Understanding Student Growth Targets



Overview

Since 2012, the Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM) has presented students, parents and educators with Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) to provide information on the amount of progress students have made, in addition to their level of academic achievement. Beginning in 2018, the GSGM also reported growth targets to provide information on the level of student growth needed to attain proficiency. These growth targets are designed to help students, parents, and educators better understand what level of growth is necessary to be on the path to reach each achievement level.

What are SGPs?

SGPs describe the amount of growth a student has demonstrated relative to academically-similar students from across the state on the Georgia Milestones assessments. SGPs range from 1 to 99, with lower percentiles indicating lower academic growth and higher percentiles indicating higher academic growth. For example, an SGP of 60 indicates that a student grew more than 60% of his/her academic peers. With SGPs, all students – regardless of their prior achievement level – have the opportunity to demonstrate all levels of growth.

What are growth targets?

While SGPs provide norm-referenced information (growth relative to academic peers), growth targets provide criterion-referenced information (growth to proficiency). In other words, growth targets tell us what level of growth a student would likely need to demonstrate to perform at a given achievement level on the next assessment.

Growth targets range from 1 to 99 and describe how much growth a student likely needs to be on the path to reach different achievement levels on the next assessment. Please refer to [A Technical Overview of the Student Growth Percentile Methodology: Student Growth Percentiles and Percentile Growth Projections/Trajectories](#) for more detailed information on the technical calculation of growth targets.

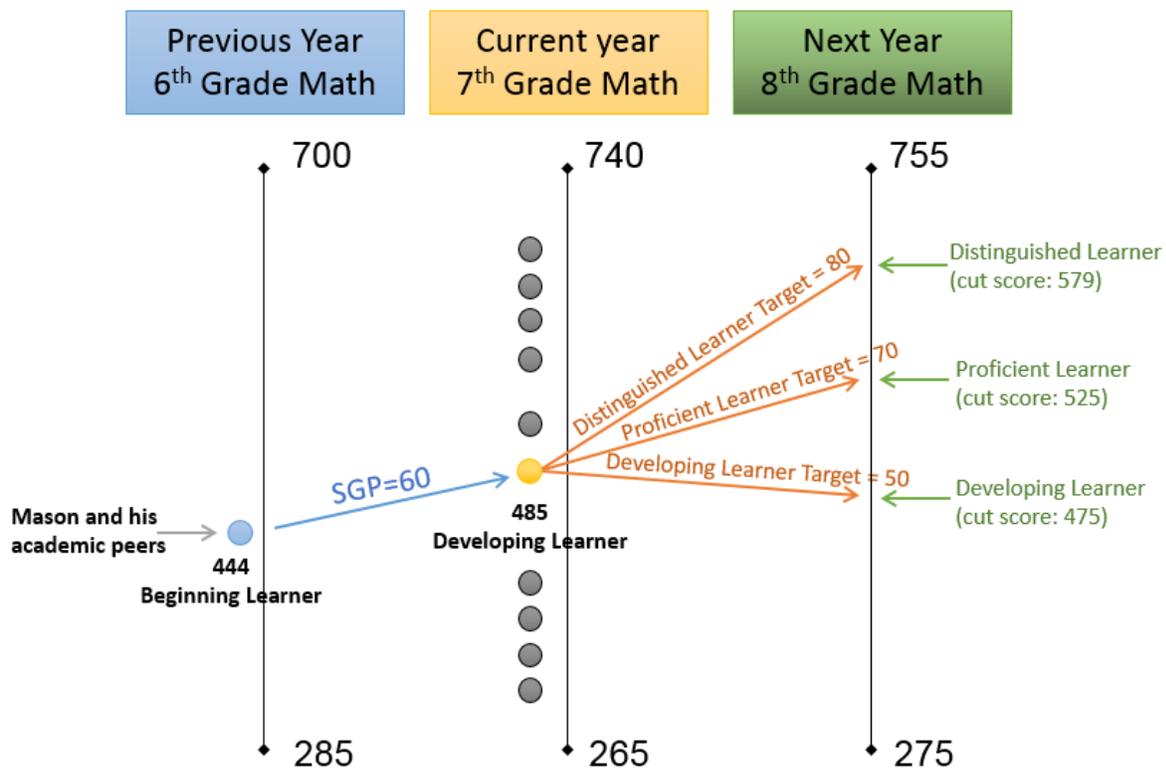
Three levels of targets are provided:

- ***Developing Learner Target:*** The amount of growth a student likely needs to demonstrate to become or remain a Developing Learner.
- ***Proficient Learner Target:*** The amount of growth a student likely needs to demonstrate to become or remain a Proficient Learner.
- ***Distinguished Learner Target:*** The amount of growth a student likely needs to demonstrate to become or remain a Distinguished Learner.

How do I interpret SGPs and growth targets?

Figure 1 is a visual representation of a student’s SGP and growth targets. In 6th grade, Mason received a scale score of 444 in mathematics, which was in the Beginning Learner achievement level. In 7th grade, he received a scale score of 485 in mathematics, placing him in the Developing Learner achievement level. Mason’s 485 in mathematics resulted in an SGP of 60, meaning that Mason grew more than 60 percent of his academic peers. With an SGP of 60, Mason has demonstrated greater-than-average growth and improved his level of achievement from Beginning Learner to Developing Learner.

Figure 1: Sample Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and Growth Targets



A useful question may be “What level of growth does Mason need to demonstrate next to become a Proficient Learner in mathematics in the 8th grade?” Growth targets can shed some light on that question. Growth targets provide the level of growth Mason likely needs to demonstrate to reach or maintain each of the achievement levels on the next assessment. Given Mason’s achievement history, he likely needs to demonstrate 50th percentile growth to remain a Developing Learner. To become a Proficient Learner, he would likely need to demonstrate 70th percentile growth, and to become a Distinguished Learner, he would likely need to demonstrate 80th percentile growth. In other words, growth targets tell us “if you grow this much (e.g., 70th percentile), you will likely reach this achievement level (e.g., Proficient Learner).”

Growth targets are based on a one-year timeframe and are recalculated each year. Given the high expectations required by the Georgia Standards of Excellence and the Georgia Milestones assessments, growth targets might appear rigorous. The recommendation is to focus on the amount of growth needed for a student to maintain the current achievement level or move up to the next achievement level the following year. It is important to remember that students can demonstrate growth even if they do not meet their targets for a certain achievement level. For example, if next year Mason receives an SGP of 60 and does not meet his target of 70 to become a Proficient Learner in 8th grade, he still showed growth compared to his academic peers. Each year, students will receive new targets to reflect their most recent achievement level. For many students, it may take more than one year to move up to the next achievement level.

How should I use growth targets?

Growth targets should be utilized as a supporting metric to SGPs to gauge student progress and achievement. They are intended to be used for informational purposes to help improve student learning and instruction and are not designed to be used for high-stakes purposes. Currently, growth targets are reported on GSGM student reports and through the GSGM Visualization tool within the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). For more information about SGPs and growth targets, please visit: gsgm.gadoe.org