

# Understanding Median Student Growth Percentiles



The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) introduced student growth percentiles (SGPs) in 2011 as a way to measure student growth for students in elementary and middle school. SGPs measure the progress of students compared to their academic peers. Median student growth percentiles (mSGPs) measure the academic progress of elementary and middle schools.

NJDOE prioritizes academic progress and student growth in the state accountability systems.

## What are academic peers?

Academic peers are all students in New Jersey in the same grade level that took the same previous assessments and had similar scale scores on those assessments. Academic peers are based only on assessment scores and are not based on demographic information.

**Example:** If Maria takes the English Language Arts (ELA) grade 6 assessment in 2018-19, her academic peers for ELA would be other students who had similar scaled scores on the ELA grade 4 assessment in 2016-17 and the ELA grade 5 assessment in 2017-18.

## What is a student growth percentile (SGP)?

A student growth percentile is a percentile ranking from 1 to 99 which explains a student's academic progress compared to his/her academic peers.

SGPs are grouped into three levels:

- **Low Growth:** SGPs less than 35
- **Typical Growth:** SGPs between 35 and 65
- **High Growth:** SGPs greater than 65

**Example:** If Maria receives an SGP of 70 for ELA, it means she performed as well or better than 70% of her academic peers, which would be considered high growth.

If Maria receives an SPG of 40 for mathematics, that means she performed as well or better than 40% of her academic peers, which would be considered typical growth.

## What is a median student growth percentile (mSGP)?

Median student growth percentiles (mSGPs) are a way to measure growth for groups of students, such as schools, grade levels, programs, and classes.

To calculate an mSGP, the student growth percentiles for all students in the group are ordered from smallest to largest, and the mSGP is the percentile in the middle of that list. This means that half of the students in the group would have an SGP above the mSGP, and half of the students in the group have an SGP lower than the mSGP.

**Example:** For a class of five students with the following ELA SGPs, the mSGP would be 42 because that is the SGP in the middle of the list.

31

36

42

56

82



## Which students get student growth percentiles?

Students in grades 4 through 7 receive an SGP in both ELA and mathematics. Students in grade 8 only receive an SGP for ELA because many students take the Algebra I assessment instead of Math 8.

Only students that take two consecutive grade level assessments will receive an SGP. Students that only have one year of assessment results would not receive an SGP.

## How are median student growth percentiles used?

In the [state ESSA plan](#), mSGP is the measure of academic progress. The school (ESSA) and district (QSAC) accountability models use mSGP, measured both for all students and by student group, as one of the indicators used to identify schools that need the most support.

New Jersey also committed to developing measures of student growth as required under the TEACHNJ Act. Qualifying educators may have the mSGP of their students used as one element of their evaluation. Visit the [NJDOE AchieveNJ webpage](#) for more information.

## Can students show high growth if they are already high performing?

Yes. SGPs measure how students are progressing compared to their peers, so it's possible for students with high scale scores on prior year assessments to have high SGPs.

**Example:** If Maria has prior scores of 825 (ELA Grade 3) and 840 (ELA Grade 4), she can still show growth in the high range (greater than 65) if she performs better than 65% of other students with similar prior scores.

Similarly, a school with high overall test performance can have a high mSGP if the majority of the students in the school have high SGPs. A school at any level of proficiency can have a low or high mSGP because it is based on the relative growth of all students.

## How is student growth measured when assessments change?

In developing the student growth percentile model, it was important to build a model that could be used across assessment transitions. Because SGPs measure growth as compared to academic peers, not an individual's improvement on a specific assessment, it's possible to calculate SGPs even if the assessment changes.

## Where can I find a student's student growth percentile?

Parents/Guardians can find the student growth percentile for math and ELA for a student at the bottom of the Individual Student Report (ISR). Districts can view SGPs for their students in the Student Growth Percentile Profile in NJ SMART.

## Where can I find more information?

Visit the [NJDOE Student Performance page](#), where you can find:

- [Short video explaining Student Growth Percentiles](#)
- [An Overview of Student Growth Percentiles](#)
- [A Technical Overview of the Student Growth Percentile Methodology](#)

