

# PEER REVIEW GUIDANCE FOR THE NCLB GROWTH MODEL PILOT APPLICATIONS

U. S. Department of Education  
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In early 2005, the Department indicated it would take a commonsense approach to implementing the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). This approach, crafted as an equation called *Raising Achievement: A New Path for No Child Left Behind*, established that, when States show results and follow the tenets of NCLB, they will be eligible for new tools to help them meet the law's goal of getting every child to grade level proficiency by 2013-14. Since that time, the U.S. Department of Education, through a letter from Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings (November 21, 2005), invited States to participate in a pilot project where growth models would determine whether schools made adequate yearly progress (AYP) under ESEA Title I, Part A. That letter provided details about seven Core Principles that would be used to evaluate the state growth model proposals, an overview of how the models would be reviewed, and the application deadline (February 17, 2006). Following that letter, Department staff conducted three Question and Answer sessions with State education officials via teleconference.

In describing how proposals would be reviewed, the Secretary explained she would use a peer review process. This document provides details about that process and outlines the criteria peers will use to evaluate the proposals. The Department discussed this peer review guidance at a January meeting sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers that was attended by States specifically interested in applying to participate in the growth model pilot project.

The purpose of the peer review is to help ensure that the States accepted into the growth model pilot have technically sound growth models, a high probability of success in incorporating measures of student growth into school accountability systems, and models that are consistent with the spirit of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB).

The Department desires to promote States' ingenuity in proposing a wide range of technically sound growth models, consistent with the seven core principles enunciated in the Secretary's letter. This document provides guidance to focus and support peer reviewers' evaluation of State proposals. In doing so, this guidance provides specific characteristics any growth model should have to be consistent with the core principles, but leaves each State free to propose its own specific growth model. States may refer to this guidance in preparing their growth model proposals. Accordingly, the following sections provide information to both peer reviewers and States regarding the review process.

## Review Process

As States submit their growth model proposals, Department staff will conduct an initial review to determine basic eligibility, including examining how well States are implementing the “bright line principles of the law” (refer to the Secretary’s announcement on April 7, 2005 which may be found at [www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/04/04072005.html](http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/04/04072005.html)). Only States that meet the minimum eligibility requirements (e.g., grades 3-8 assessment system in place since at least 2004-05, an assessment and data system that tracks student progress) will advance to peer review. Department staff will also provide feedback to each applicant State regarding any omissions or incomplete information or whether the State’s proposal does not meet one or more of the core principles listed in the Secretary’s November 21, 2005 letter. States will have an opportunity during this initial review period to provide any additional information needed. The Department will only submit for peer review those State proposals that meet the minimum prerequisites.

Peer reviewers will come to Washington, DC for training in March. This training will include a thorough discussion of this guidance document, and the Department’s expectations of the review. The Secretary expects peer reviewers to consider and evaluate each State’s proposal, especially the rationale and evidence. During this training, the Department will also explain the confidentiality agreement by which the peers must abide and the conflict of interest agreement.

The actual peer review of state proposals will occur in April 2006 in a series of steps. First, peer reviewers will consider each proposal independently. In addition to the independent review of proposal materials, the Department will facilitate a conference call between the State and the peer review team. The peers can ask clarifying questions during this call. Following the independent review and conference call, peer reviewers will meet again in Washington, DC to discuss each proposal. Peers will use their evaluations of States’ proposals to guide the peer review discussion and build a consensus document that provides reasons for why a State’s proposal is recommended for approval. These recommendations are due to the Secretary by May 2006.

The Secretary will use this information to make a decision about which state proposals to approve for this pilot project.

If a State’s proposal receives final approval by the Department, the State will need to submit electronically the final growth model plan as part of the State’s amended accountability workbook (the plan may be included as an attachment to this workbook). After the amended accountability workbook is received, the Department will notify the State that its proposal has been approved and will post this information on the Department’s website.

The Department intends to complete the approval process so that approved States will apply their growth model proposals in making AYP determinations incorporating 2005-

06 data (prior to the beginning of the 2006-07 school year, unless otherwise approved by the Department).

## **Additional details about the process**

### To States:

This peer review guidance is based on the core principles and is aligned closely with the Secretary's November 21, 2005 letter. However, a State is not required to submit its growth model proposal in a format parallel to this peer review guidance. The Department encourages States to develop complete and concise proposals, limiting the materials submitted and, if at all possible, limiting the actual proposal (excluding the summary) to 30 pages. The Department's preference is that the State provide a summary document that does not exceed 10 pages.

In her letter, the Secretary advised States to describe clearly and concisely their proposals, with particular attention to how these proposals meet each of the core principles outlined in the letter, and to include any relevant evidence. The State should have its evidence clearly labeled and easily accessible; peer reviewers are not expected to have to search for evidence or decide what is relevant to the growth model proposal. For example, peer reviewers should expect that a State would extract or specifically identify material from the technical manual of its assessment system, and explain why that material is relevant evidence for a specific aspect of its proposal linked to one of the core principles, rather than merely appending the technical manual.

### To Peers:

Some States may not be able to include empirical analyses of their proposals, since they still may be obtaining necessary student data from their 2005-06 assessments. Thus, this peer review guidance does not emphasize analytical modeling as required evidence.

For evaluation purposes, each State will be expected to conduct analyses to support the validity of its growth proposal and overall accountability system, as the data become available. For example, the Department will set expectations with each State approved to participate in the growth model pilot project to compare results from the approved proposal with the AYP Status/Safe Harbor<sup>1</sup> provisions alone. The peer review guidance includes some questions to signal what these evaluation issues may include.

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<sup>1</sup> "Status" is a term used to describe the calculation of adequate yearly progress (AYP) where the analysis compares the percentage of students who are proficient to the percentage called for in a State's annual measurable objective. "Safe Harbor" is a term used to describe the calculation of AYP where the analysis compares the change in the percentage of students who are "not proficient" from one year to the next – the school must reduce the percentage of students in each subgroup who are not proficient by 10% to make AYP under this method.

# Guidance on Seven Core Principles

## Core Principle 1: 100% Proficiency by 2014 and Incorporating Decisions about Student Growth into School<sup>2</sup> Accountability

“The accountability model must ensure that all students are proficient by 2013-14 and set annual goals to ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students.”  
(Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory note:** The purpose of the growth model pilot is to explore alternative approaches that meet the accountability goals of NCLB. The intention is not to lower the expectations for student performance. Hence, a State’s accountability model incorporating student growth must ensure that all students are proficient by 2013-14, consistent with the NCLB statute and regulations. Annual measurable objectives for school performance on student growth measures must also ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students.

### 1.1 How does the State accountability model hold schools accountable for universal proficiency by 2013-14?

#### 1.1 Peer Review Probe Questions

1.1.1 Does the State use growth alone to hold schools accountable for 100% proficiency by 2013-14? If not, does the State propose a sound method of incorporating its growth model into an overall accountability model that gets students to 100 % proficiency by 2013-14? What combination of status, safe harbor, and growth is proposed?

Indicate which of the four options listed below is proposed to determine whether a school makes adequate yearly progress (AYP) and for identifying schools that are in need of improvement, and explain how they are combined to determine AYP:

1. Growth alone
2. Status and growth
3. Status, safe harbor, and growth
4. Safe harbor and growth

The Department is planning to evaluate the use of growth models. Once implemented, States participating in the growth model pilot project will be expected to provide data showing how the model compares to the current AYP status and safe harbor approaches.

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<sup>2</sup> The State may propose to apply the use of student growth measures to determine AYP for LEAs. If it does so, the same provisions for evidence shall apply to LEAs as apply to schools, unless specifically mentioned otherwise and peer reviewers should evaluate the soundness of the proposal for LEAs as well as schools.

- What are the grade levels and content areas for which the State proposes to measure growth (e.g., from 2004-05 to 2005-06 in reading and mathematics for grade levels 3-8)? <ED STAFF TO COMPLETE>
- If the State does not propose to implement its Growth model in all grade levels 3-8 and high school and for both subjects, where are the gaps in Growth Model decisions and what are the implications of those gaps for school accountability?

**1.2 Has the State proposed technically and educationally sound criteria for “growth targets”<sup>3</sup> for schools and subgroups?**

**1.2 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 1.2.1 What are the State’s “growth targets” relative to the goal of 100% of students proficient by 2013-14? Examine carefully what the growth targets are and what the implications are for school accountability and student achievement.
- The State should note if its definition of proficiency includes “on track to be proficient” or a related growth concept. For example, a State may propose that a student who is not proficient in the current grade must be on track to proficiency within three years or by the end of the grade span (e.g., elementary).
  - A growth model that only expects “one year of progress for one year of instruction” will not suffice, as it would not be rigorous enough to close the achievement gap as the law requires.
- 1.2.2 Has the State adequately described the rules and procedures for establishing and calculating “growth targets”?

**1.3 Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of making annual judgments about school performance using growth?**

**1.3 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 1.3.1 Has the State adequately described how annual accountability determinations will incorporate student growth?
- A. Has the State adequately described and provided a rationale for how Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or other criteria for growth would be determined? Has the State provided a table giving the values for the AMOs from the first year the growth model will be applied (e.g., 2005-06) through 2013-14 that includes rigorous increases in school performance throughout

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<sup>3</sup> “Growth target” denotes the level of performance required in order to meet AYP. The State may propose different “growth targets” for reading/language arts and mathematics, different grade spans, etc. This document uses the term “growth target” to try to minimize confusion with “expected growth,” “projected growth,” “growth expectations,” and other terms used in value-added and other student longitudinal growth approaches that denote an empirically derived student performance score not necessarily related to the NCLB policy goals of proficiency.

that time? Does the model set reasonable, challenging, and continuously improving annual expectations for student growth?

➤ “Growth models that rely on substantial increases in the growth rates of students or schools in the last few years are not acceptable, but the Department is open to models that set a point in time as the goal (e.g., end of grade in a particular school; within four years). In setting these standards, the State should demonstrate how accountability is distributed among all the grades and not postponed to this point in time. The Department is concerned that if the State’s Growth Model allows attainment of the proficiency standard by individual students to be delayed or is tied to standards that are not considerably more rigorous with each consecutive grade, then it becomes too easy to minimize or delay the importance of accelerated growth” (Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05).

- B. For any proposed confidence intervals or other statistical methods to be applied to the decision about meeting the AMO for growth, has the State clearly described the rationale for the use of the specific statistical method (including minimum group size and any multi-year averaging), and the procedures for applying the method?
  - C. For future evaluation purposes, does the State’s proposal provide evidence of the validity and reliability of the proposed growth model, including impact of use/non-use of the growth model on validity and reliability of overall school accountability judgments?
- 1.3.2 Has the State adequately described how it will create a unified AYP judgment considering growth and other measures of school performance at the subgroup, school, district, and state level?
- A. Has the State proposed a sound method for how the overall AYP judgment (met/not met) for the school will be made, incorporating judgment of student growth?
  - B. Has the State proposed a sound method for how the overall AYP judgment for the school will incorporate growth in subgroup performance?
    - Are the method and criteria for determining subgroup performance on growth the same as for students in the school as a whole?
  - C. Has the State proposed categories for understanding student achievement at the school level and reports for growth performance and AYP judgments that are clear and understandable to the public?

#### **1.4 Does the State proposed growth model include a relationship between consequences and rate of student growth consistent with Section 1116 of ESEA?**

#### **1.4 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 1.4.1 Has the State clearly described consequences the State/LEA will apply to schools? Do the consequences meaningfully reflect the results of student growth?
- The proposed interventions must comply with the Section 1116 requirements for public school choice, supplemental educational services, and so on.
  - If proposed, the State should explain how it plans to focus its school intervention efforts by incorporating the results from a growth model. For instance, a State should be prepared to explain how a school that does not meet either traditional AYP goals or growth-based accountability goals might be subject to more rigorous intervention efforts than schools not making AYP on only one accountability measure.

**Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 1: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**

## **Core Principle 2: Establishing Appropriate Growth Targets at the Student Level**

“The accountability model must establish high expectations for low-achieving students, while not setting expectations for annual achievement based upon student demographic characteristics or school characteristics.” (Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory note:** A State may, in its growth model, use student longitudinal data to adjust for the fact that students who score below proficiency may still be making substantial growth from year to year. As part of including student growth in its AYP accountability model, a State must establish how it would determine whether the growth achieved by a student is adequate. Expectations for growth must not be based on student demographics or school characteristics.

### **2.1 Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of depicting annual student growth in relation to growth targets?**

#### **2.1 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 2.1.1 Has the State adequately described a sound method of determining student growth over time?
- A. Is the State’s proposed method of measuring student growth valid and reliable?
- Are the “pre-“ and “post-“ test scores appropriately defined and adequately measured?
  - If the State will not use a single score for pre- and/or post- test scores (e.g., using an aggregation of multiple scores from multiple years), does the State adequately explain and justify how the scores would be combined, what the weights are for each score, and how and whether the scores are/are not comparable across students and across time?
  - Information about the availability and technical quality of proposed data will be considered in Core Principle 5. The probes associated with Principle 2 are focused on how the change in achievement is measured and valued.
- B. Has the State established sound criteria for growth targets at the student level, and provided an adequate rationale?
- If the State is assigning a value determination at the student level annually with regard to each student’s growth, has it used a sound process and assigned specific values for those growth targets? For example, if a State has four performance categories, would movement between each category be weighted equally or would some categories be weighted more heavily than others?

- If the State would only calculate “difference” or “change” scores for each student, and then aggregating to the subgroup and/or school levels, then the State should clearly give its rationale in this section.
  
- Would the model ensure that student growth expectations are not set or moderated based on student demographics or school characteristics? The model must have the same proficiency expectations for all students, while setting individual growth expectations for students to enable them to meet grade level standards.
  - If the State proposes a regression or multivariate/multi-level model, the independent variables may not include race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, school AYP status, or any other non-academic covariate.
  - Does the model establish growth targets in relation to achievement standards and not in relation to “typical” growth patterns or previous improvement, unless there is evidence and a clear rationale that those factors are related to the overall goal of achieving proficiency for all students?
  - Would gains of high performing students compensate for lack of growth among other students?
  
- Does the State have a plan for periodically evaluating the appropriateness of the student-level growth targets criteria?

**Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 2: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**

## **Core Principle 3: Accountability for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics Separately**

“The accountability model must produce separate accountability decisions about student achievement in reading/language arts and in mathematics.” (Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory note:** The NCLB statute specifies that a State’s accountability system must produce separate accountability decisions about student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics. This must also be true for school accountability decisions based on measures of student growth.

### **3.1 Has the State proposed a technically and educationally sound method of holding schools accountable for student growth separately in reading/language arts and mathematics?**

#### **3.1 Peer Reviewer Probe Questions**

- 3.1.1 Are there any considerations in addition to the evidence presented for Core Principle 1?
- The growth model proposal must include separate decisions for reading/language arts and mathematics, and maintain validity and reliability, minimize measurement error, and support empirical integrity in the accountability system. How does the model achieve these specifications, especially in small schools or schools with high mobility?
  - Does the model include assessments for other content areas (e.g., covariance matrices to estimate student performance or projected performance in a content area)? If so, the State should demonstrate that achievement on those other assessments does not compensate for failure to achieve proficiency in reading/language arts or mathematics.

#### **Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 3: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**

## Core Principle 4: Inclusion of All Students

“The accountability model must ensure that all students in the tested grades are included in the assessment and accountability system. Schools and districts must be held accountable for the performance of student subgroups. The accountability model, applied statewide, must include all schools and districts.” (Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory note:** The State’s growth model should hold schools accountable for their students by including all students, consistent with NCLB requirements (e.g., “full academic year” (FAY), and minimum group size requirements). In addition, the State’s model must include all schools and districts.

### 4.1 Does the State’s growth model proposal address the inclusion of all students, subgroups and schools appropriately?

#### 4.1 Peer Review Probe Questions

##### 4.1.1 Does the State’s growth model address the inclusion of all students appropriately?

- A. Ideally, every student will have a pre- and a post-score, and a school will be clearly accountable for all students’ achievement even when applying the “full academic year” parameters. However, there will be situations in which this is not the case. Are the State’s proposed rules for determining how to include student achievement results (when data are missing) in the growth model technically and educationally sound?
- For example, if a State proposes to “impute” missing data, it should provide a rationale and evidence that its proposed imputation procedures are valid. A State proposing such a growth model must address how many students would be excluded from its calculations of growth because they lack a score, and provide an acceptable explanation of how these exclusions would not yield invalid or misleading judgments about school performance.
  - Does the State have an appropriate proposal for including students who participate with alternate assessments and/or alternate/modified achievement standards (in one or more years for calculating growth)?
  - Does the State’s definition of FAY include students appropriately when applied in the growth model context? For example, a State that defines FAY as “participating in the assessment in the same school the previous year” will need to modify that definition for its growth proposal to include students who cross school boundaries over time.
  - What does the State propose to do to measure academic growth for students in grade three or the initial grade tested?

- How does the State propose to distinguish between growth for a student who moves from one grade level to another and growth for a student who is retained in a grade level for two years or is promoted at mid-year?
- B. What other strategies will the State use to include, in its NCLB accountability system, students who might be excluded from the growth model calculations?
- 4.1.2 Does the State’s growth model address the inclusion of all subgroups appropriately?
- A. States must ensure that student subgroups are neither systematically or inadvertently excluded from participation in the growth model; the model cannot eliminate or minimize the contribution of each subgroup. Are the State’s proposed rules for determining how to include subgroup accountability in the growth model technically and educationally sound?
- Has the State adequately addressed implications of its proposed growth model for subgroup inclusion in addition to that in Core Principle 1? (For example, has it addressed “minimum group-size” requirements for subgroups?)
  - Does the State have an appropriate proposal for including students who change subgroup classification over the time period when growth is calculated (e.g., LEP to non-LEP)?
  - If applicable, how does the State proposal address the needs of students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita? For example, how does the proposal interact with State plans, if any, to develop a separate subgroup of displaced students, consistent with the Secretary’s guidance of Sept. 29, 2005.
- 4.1.3 Does the State’s growth model address the inclusion of all schools appropriately?
- A. Does the State provide an adequate plan and rationale for how the system will be applied to all schools consistently across the State to yield an AYP determination each year? Has the State adequately described and provided a rationale for any proposed exceptions?
- The State may propose to apply the growth model only to schools with adequate assessment data. If that is the case, it should propose how other schools, such as K-2 schools, single-grade schools, and high schools, will be held accountable (e.g., through continuing its approved statutory AYP/safe harbor accountability system for those schools).
  - The State should propose how it will deal with common conditions that would preclude the calculation of a growth score (e.g., school boundary changes, school closings, new schools, grade reconfiguration).
  - How would the model ensure that all schools are accountable for student achievement, even when the number of tested students in the school is small or constantly changing?

**Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 4: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**

## **Core Principle 5: State Assessment System and Methodology**

“The State's NCLB assessment system, the basis for the accountability model, must include annual assessments in each of grades three through eight and high school in both reading/language arts and mathematics, must have been operational for more than one year, and must receive approval through the NCLB peer review process for the 2005-06 school year. The assessment system must also produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year.” (Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory note:** NCLB requires a student assessment system that produces timely and accurate information. Under the statutory scheme, decisions about AYP are based on the “academic status” of students compared to a target—the State’s annual measurable objectives – or the change in the percentage of students who are not proficient. All States have submitted accountability plans that fit within this structure. Measuring student depends upon the quality of the State’s assessment system. An assessment system that is adequate for the “status” or “safe harbor” model might not be adequate for a growth model.

**5.1 Has the State designed and implemented a Statewide assessment system that measures all students annually in grades 3-8 and one high school grade in reading/language arts and mathematics in accordance with NCLB requirements for 2005-06, and have the annual assessments been in place since the 2004-05 school year?**

### **5.1 Peer Review Probe Questions <ED STAFF TO COMPLETE>**

- 5.1.1 Provide a summary description of the Statewide assessment system with regard to the above criteria.
- For both 2004-05 and 2005-06, did the State implement an assessment system that measures State adopted content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics?
  - Did the State produce individual student, school, and district test results for both years?
- 5.1.2 Has the State submitted its Statewide assessment system for NCLB Peer Review and, if so, was it approved for 2005-06?
- If it was not fully approved, what are the deficiencies and to what extent will they affect the State’s ability to measure growth in each subject?
  - If the State has not yet received approval of its assessment system, when does the State plan to submit evidence of compliance with the NCLB standards and assessment requirements?

## **5.2 How will the State report individual student growth to parents?**

### **5.2 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 5.2.1 How will an individual student’s academic status be reported to his or her parents in any given year? What information will be provided about academic growth to parents? Will the student’s status compared to the State’s academic achievement standards also be reported?

## **5.3 Does the Statewide assessment system produce comparable information on each student as he/she moves from one grade level to the next?**

### **5.3 Peer Review Probe Questions**

The State assessment system – that is the achievement levels and content expectations – needs to make sense from one grade to the next, and even within achievement levels for it to support a growth model. These probes will help the peers understand the assessment system’s capability for use in growth models.

- 5.3.1 Does the State provide evidence that the achievement score scales have been equated appropriately to represent growth accurately between grades 3-8 and high school? If appropriate, how does the State adjust scaling to compensate for any grades that might be omitted in the testing sequence (e.g., grade 9)?

Did the State provide technical and statistical information to document the procedures and results? Is this information current?

- 5.3.2 If the State uses a variety of end-of-course tests to count as the high school level NCLB test, how would the State ensure that comparable results are obtained across tests? [Note: This question is only relevant for States proposing a growth model for high schools and that use different end-of-course tests for AYP.]
- 5.3.3 How has the State determined that the cut-scores that define the various achievement levels have been aligned across the grade levels? What procedures were used and what were the results?
- 5.3.4 Has the State used any “smoothing techniques” to make the achievement levels comparable and, if so, what were the procedures?

## **5.4 Is the Statewide assessment system stable in its design?**

### **5.4 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 5.4.1 To what extent has the Statewide assessment system been stable in its overall design during at least the 2004-05 and 2005-06 academic terms with regard to grades assessed, content assessed, assessment instruments, and scoring procedures?
- 5.4.2 What changes in the Statewide assessment system's overall design does the State anticipate for the next two academic years with regard to grades assessed, content assessed, assessment instruments, scoring procedures, and achievement level cut-scores?
- What impact will these changes have on the State's proposed growth model? How does the State plan to address the assessment design changes and maintain the consistency of the proposed growth model?

**Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 5: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**

## **Core Principle 6: Tracking Student Progress**

“The accountability model and related State data system must track student progress.”  
(Secretary Spellings’ letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory note:** NCLB established the goal of having all students reach “proficiency” in reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013-14. To reach this goal, it is necessary to monitor students’ progress as they move from grade level to grade level. Status models take a snapshot of a school’s or subgroup’s level of achievement to see if the school or subgroup has met the established proficiency target. Implicit in any system of growth measurement is the necessity of being able to track individual students over time. This section facilitates Peer Reviewers’ efforts to review a State proposal with regard to the State’s data system and the proposed methods for tracking student progress.

### **6.1 Has the State designed and implemented a technically and educationally sound system for accurately matching student data from one year to the next?**

#### **6.1 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 6.1.1 Does the State utilize a student identification number system or does it use an alternative method for matching student assessment information across two or more years? If a numeric system is not used, what is the process for matching students?
- 6.1.2 Is the system proposed by the State capable of keeping track of students as they move between schools or school districts over time? What evidence will the State provide to ensure that match rates are sufficiently high and also not significantly different by subgroup?
- 6.1.3 What quality assurance procedures are used to maintain accuracy of the student matching system?
- 6.1.4 What studies have been conducted to demonstrate the percentage of students who can be “matched” between two academic years? Three years or more years?
- 6.1.5 Does the State student data system include information indicating demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnic/race category), disability status, and socio-economic status (e.g., participation in free/reduced price lunch)?
- 6.1.6 How does the proposed State growth accountability model adjust for student data that are missing because of the inability to match a student across time or because a student moves out of a school, district, or the State before completing the testing sequence?

**6.2 Does the State data infrastructure have the capacity to implement the proposed growth model?**

**6.2 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 6.2.1 What is the State's capability with regard to a data warehouse system for entering, storing, retrieving, and analyzing the large number of records that will be accumulated over time?
- 6.2.2 What experience does the State have in analyzing longitudinal data on student performance?
- 6.2.3 How does the proposed growth model take into account or otherwise adjust for decreasing student match rates over three or more years? How will this affect the school accountability criteria?

**Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 6: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**

## **CORE PRINCIPLE #7: Participation Rates and Additional Academic Indicator**

The accountability model must include student participation rates in the State's assessment system and student achievement on an additional academic indicator. (Secretary Spellings' letter, 11/21/05)

**Introductory Note:** In determining AYP, a State must include, in addition to academic achievement, (1) participation rates on the State's assessment, and (2) "at least one other academic indicator, as determined by the State for all public elementary school students" and graduation rate for public high schools, and may include other academic indicators such as "decreases in grade-to-grade retention rates." For purposes of developing a growth model, these requirements must be addressed in a State's proposal.

### **7.1 Has the State designed and implemented a Statewide accountability system that incorporates the rate of participation as one of the criteria?**

#### **7.1 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 7.1.1 How do the participation rates enter into and affect the growth model proposed by the State?
- 7.1.2 Does the calculation of a State's participation rate change as a result of the implementation of a growth model?

### **7.2 Does the proposed State growth accountability model incorporate the additional academic indicator?**

#### **7.2 Peer Review Probe Questions**

- 7.2.1 What are the "additional academic indicators" used by the State in its accountability model? What are the specific data elements that will be used and for which grade levels will they apply?
- 7.2.2 How are the data from the additional academic indicators incorporated into accountability determinations under the proposed growth model?

### **Peer Reviewer Notes on Core Principle 7: Proposal Strengths and Weaknesses**