



To: Education Board Members

From: NWEA

Subject: Update on MAP Growth Norms and AK STAR Reporting

Dear Board Members,

This memo provides an overview of recent updates to MAP Growth assessment norms and clarifies how these changes relate to AK STAR reporting.

MAP Growth Norms Update

On July 11, 2025, NWEA released updated national norms for MAP Growth assessments. These 2025 norms are based on student performance data from 2022 to 2024 and reflect post-pandemic academic trends. Norms are used to compare student performance to a national sample of peers. Updating them ensures that percentile rankings remain accurate and relevant.

While the **RIT scale**—which measures student achievement and growth—remains unchanged, the **percentile rankings** may look different under the new norms. This shift reflects a change in the reference group used for comparison.

AK STAR Reporting Context

The **spring 2025 AK STAR assessment** was administered while the previous 2020 MAP Growth norms were still in use. As a result, the Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for AK STAR **do not include percentile rankings** this year to help minimize confusion. Families are directed to MAP Growth reports produced after July 11, 2025, for the most current percentile information.

It's important to note that:

- **MAP Growth** is a **norm-referenced** assessment, comparing students to national peers.
- **AK STAR** is a **criterion-referenced** assessment, measuring student proficiency against Alaska's grade-level standards.

Even though both tests may show a RIT score, they are used for different reasons and measure different things. MAP Growth is given in fall and winter, and, while aligned to Alaska standards, it covers a broad range of skills and looks at growth. It can be used to see how students are growing compared to a national sample of peers. AK STAR is a spring assessment that looks at grade-level learning and measures if students are on grade level according to Alaska state learning objectives. The standards for AK STAR have not changed.

Looking Ahead

Next year's AK STAR ISRs will include percentile rankings aligned with the updated 2025 MAP Growth norms. NWEA has provided resources and guidance to support districts during this transition, including a [Norms Toolkit](#) and updated [linking study](#).

In addition, [this new YouTube video](#) featuring Dr. Karyn Lewis provides a non-technical introduction to MAP Growth norms, giving you a better understanding of what MAP Growth norms are, why they're important, how to apply them appropriately, and how to avoid misuse. In addition to giving an overview of how the norms are created, you'll learn about key normative metrics (i.e., achievement percentiles, CGPs, CGIs) and their intended uses.

NWEA will continue to support school districts through this transition.