



## **ESSA Growth Scores in Minnesota**

There are several growth models that require assessments to be on a vertical scale, meaning that the scores would be comparable across grades. Minnesota's MCA assessments are on a horizontal scale, so the scores are only comparable within grades. Since the state's MCA assessments do not use a vertical scale, there are only two possible models—z-scores and transition matrix. Currently, MDE uses z-scores to measure student growth. In this model, a student's growth target is created by looking at a cohort of students who performed similarly on the prior year's MCA assessment. Each student's growth target is the averaged or categorized across all students to calculate a school wide measure of growth.

In a transition matrix, the possible scores are divided into proficiency categories. These categories can copy the four existing MCA categories—not proficient, partially proficient, meeting proficiency, and exceeding proficiency—or they may be split into more categories. Students demonstrate growth when they move from a lower to a higher category. Schools only receive credit for the students who move to a higher proficiency level and lose credit for students that move to a lower proficiency level.

The Technical Committee voted in the majority to continue using z-scores, but to change the way that they are used and communicated to families. However, at the December 6th Advisory Committee meeting, the Commissioner shared her concerns about continuing to use z-scores and expressed her interest in continuing to review the possibility of using a transition matrix.