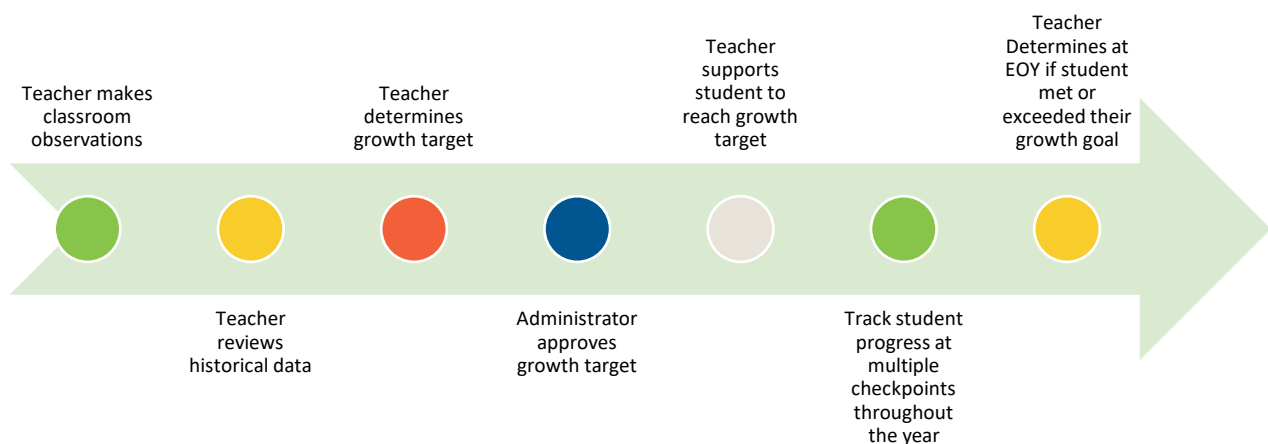# Individualized Student Growth Model for Special Education FAQ

What is the Individualized Student Growth Model?

The Individualized Student Growth Model provides custom growth targets established for individual students based on their own unique historical data using any of TIA's pre-test and post-test options. The Individualized Student Growth Model is often utilized in special education classes where the teacher is with a student the majority of the instructional day and has spent extensive time developing their students Individualized Education Program (IEP). The students IEP goals are usually aligned with the Individualized Student Growth Model to ascertain growth for the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA).

How does the Individualized Student Growth Model Work?

A teacher reviews the historical data for a particular student and makes observations during the first six weeks of the school year to determine a growth target for the student. A goal is set for the student to reach by the end of the school year. A best practice is to have an administrator work with the teacher by offering feedback and act as an approver for the student's growth target. The teacher works closely with the student throughout the school year to help them meet their growth goals. Progress should be tracked at multiple checkpoints throughout the year to determine the level of support needed. At the end of the school year the teacher determines if the student met or exceeded their growth goal(s).

Individualized Student Growth Model Special Education-Life Skills Example:

Jack is a student with multiple intensive needs. He is in an 8th grade, self-contained classroom with five other students who also have multiple intensive needs across a variety of areas. His teacher, Ms. Johnson, reviews previous data – current and previous IEPs – and collects observational data for Jack during the first six weeks of school. Ms. Johnson sets a math goal for Jack of number recognition of 30 numbers by the end of the year. Currently, Jack recognizes nine numbers. Ms. Johnson works with her appraiser to determine if the goal is correct and receives feedback that the individualized growth target is approved.

Ms. Johnson works with Jack throughout the year and marks his progress in a tracker on a weekly basis. By the end of the year, Jack can recognize 31 numbers and has moved to some basic addition, being able to add +1 to all recognized numbers. Jack has exceeded his growth target.

Individualized Student Growth Model Dance IV Example:

Aleida is a student in Ms. Rodriguez's Dance IV class. This will be the fourth year that Ms. Rodriguez is teaching Dance to Aleida, and she has a high degree of familiarity with the student. Ms. Rodriguez reviews prior dance recitals and notes her observations during the first 6 weeks of the school year. Using the available data Ms. Rodriguez sets an individualized student growth target for Aleida to demonstrate the skills and movements of three dance genres: Ballroom, Irish Dance, and Hip-Hop. Ms. Rodriguez works with her appraiser to determine if the goal is correct and receives feedback the individualized growth target needs more detail. Ms. Rodriguez adds three skills and three movements she will assess for each of the dance genres. The change is approved by her appraiser.

Ms. Rodriguez works with Aleida throughout the year and marks her progress in a tracker on a weekly basis. By the end of the year, Aleida can demonstrate proficiency in the skills and movements required for each of the three subgenres of dance. Aleida has met her expected growth target.

What are the benefits of this model?

- The Individualized Student Growth Model is a custom model which allows for different expectations of growth based on a student's current and historical data.
- The Individualized Student Growth Model can apply to all students regardless of their baseline ability. This includes students who receive special education services.

What are the considerations for this model?

- The Individualized Student Growth Model requires access to a student's historical data. This may not be the best model to use if historical data is lacking.
- The Individualized Student Growth Model requires a high degree of familiarity with the student. Teachers who are with the student a majority of the instructional day are more likely to accurately predict growth targets for the student.
- The Individualized Student Growth Model can be overly burdensome for large groups of students which is why we recommend using this model with a smaller group of students.

Next steps for interested stakeholders:
- Identify teacher categories that may be interested in using this model.
- Present this model to your teachers.
- Develop consensus for utilizing the Individualized Student Growth Model.
- Gather historical data on the students including IEPs and testing history, if applicable.
- Develop growth goals that align with student performance goals and the IEP, if applicable.
- Administrators should monitor teachers' growth goals throughout the year.

What are some other models to consider?

Districts have wide flexibility in determining the model utilized in measuring student growth. Districts interested in learning to set growth targets at the local level can view the TIA Setting Expected Growth Targets resources. Each model has its benefits and considerations. Districts are not obligated to choose any of the models presented here and may develop their own model(s).

How can we communicate with TIA if there are additional questions?

To communicate with the Teacher Incentive Allotment team, please reach out to the TIA Inbox at tia@tea.texas.gov. Someone from the TIA team will respond to your question(s) in a timely manner.