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Value Added Model (VAM) Guidance

TEXAS VAM IS NOW AVAILABLE AS A STUDENT GROWTH MEASURE OPTION

Texas Value-Added Model (VAM) is now available, as a cost-neutral option for districts to use as a Student Growth Measure (SGM) in their local designation systems. Starting in the 2025-26 school year, districts can integrate Texas VAM as part of their teacher evaluation framework, utilizing it to measure teacher impact on student growth through STAAR assessment data. Texas VAM provides a standardized, statewide approach to evaluating student growth and is aligned with the Texas Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) to support accurate and consistent growth metrics across districts.

What is VAM for TIA?

VAM is an optional growth measure for TIA used to evaluate student progress based on predicted performance. By leveraging multiple years of historical testing data across various content areas, VAM uses statistical modeling to predict expected scores and measure growth as more than, less than, or equal to expectations. When students perform at, above, or below their predicted scores, these outcomes correlate with teacher effectiveness.

Common assessments used with VAM include STAAR, NWEA MAP, and other norm-referenced tests. For an assessment to be included in VAM, it must meet three criteria:

Scale stretch: Distinguishes growth across all achievement levels.
Relevance and validity: Aligns with state or national standards.
Reliability: Provides consistent results over time.

This method offers districts a reliable option to measure student growth as part of their TIA designation system.

What is Texas VAM?

Similarly, Texas VAM is a predictive, regression-based statistical model developed by SAS in collaboration with Texas Tech University and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Designed to measure teacher impact on student learning growth, Texas VAM evaluates whether students taught by a specific teacher met or exceeded their expected performance on STAAR assessments. This model provides districts with a robust basis for evaluating teacher impact and supports TIA's objectives by ensuring comparability across districts.

In Texas VAM:

Expected growth is defined by comparing each student's actual score to their predicted score, which is calculated based on historical testing data. Positive growth means students performed better than expected, while negative growth indicates they performed below expectations.

Output metrics focus on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding growth expectations. Teachers are categorized by performance levels ("Recognized," "Exemplary," and "Master") based on the percentage of students who achieved their expected growth.

Coverage includes core subjects tested by STAAR, specifically in grades 4-8 for Reading Language Arts (RLA) and Math, grades 5 and 8 for Science, grade 8 for Social Studies, and high school courses such as Algebra I, Biology, English I and II, and U.S. History. (See: EVAAS-TXTEA-StatisticalModelsandBusinessRules_2024.07.31.pdf)

Texas VAM plays a critical role in TIA, particularly in validating teacher performance data submitted by districts. It allows for comparison between statewide and locally derived growth measures, helping districts to ensure the accuracy and reliability of their systems.

District VAM vs. Texas VAM

Districts may currently use their own local VAM models, either by developing them independently or in partnership with analytics companies, as part of their designation systems. Texas VAM, however, is a specific, state-adopted value-added model designed to be used for data validation in the TIA process. Starting with the 2025 TIA System Application, districts have the cost-neutral option to adopt Texas VAM within their local designation system, like how they may choose to use STAAR Progress Measure or the STAAR Transition Tables.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADOPTING TEXAS VAM

Consideration	Description	Example
Approach to Using Texas VAM	Districts should evaluate whether to use Texas VAM as a standalone growth measure or as a data source to support other measures. It should be aligned with district goals and may work best as part of a broader framework including local measures and observations.	A district uses Texas VAM alongside classroom observations and local or 3rd party assessments to create a comprehensive teacher evaluation framework.
Success with Current SGMs	Districts with effective existing SGMs may prefer to retain them for consistency. A switch to Texas VAM should only be considered if it better aligns with district evaluation goals and needs.	A district retains its existing SGMs, such as STAAR Progress Measure, while considering Texas VAM for supplemental growth validation.
Student Growth Data Needs	Texas VAM uses STAAR data exclusively. Districts relying on broader assessment data (e.g., MAP, iReady) should determine if a STAAR-only approach meets their evaluation goals.	A district focuses on non-STAAR assessments like MAP for certain grades while using Texas VAM specifically for STAAR-tested grades and subjects.
Compatibility with Planning Cycle	Texas VAM data is available in mid-September. Districts should assess whether this timeline fits their decision-making and planning cycles.	A district aligns its decision-making timelines to accommodate the mid-September availability of Texas VAM data.
Accuracy of Teacher-Student Rosters	Automated rosters are based on a February snapshot. Districts with high mobility or complex systems may benefit from measures that allow local control over roster verification.	A district with high student mobility opts for a locally controlled rostering system to verify teacher-student linkages before integrating Texas VAM data.
Support for TIA Validation/ Secondary Data Source	Texas VAM supports TIA data validation checks (2, 3, 10, 12, 13). Districts focusing on TIA compliance may find Texas VAM beneficial for meeting these requirements.	A district integrates Texas VAM as an additional student growth measure for TIA validation while maintaining locally designed SGMs for additional context.
Fit for Bilingual and ELL Programs	Texas VAM adjusts for Spanish assessments, allowing comparative analysis with English data. This feature may help districts evaluate bilingual teachers' impact and align with TELPAS and other measures. *Note: STAAR is only available in English and Spanish.*	A district uses Texas VAM bilingual assessment adjustments to evaluate the impact of dual-language programs and compare results with TELPAS data.
Cost Considerations	Texas VAM is a cost-neutral option for districts since TIA calculates the data and districts are already utilizing STAAR assessments. This reduces financial barriers for implementation.	A district adopts Texas VAM to avoid additional expenses associated with developing or purchasing alternative growth measures while leveraging existing STAAR data.

Inclusion of STAAR-Tested Science and Social Studies Teachers	Texas VAM allows districts to include STAAR-tested science and social studies teachers in their local designation systems without having to calculate growth locally. This includes STAAR Science (5th, 8th, Biology EOC) and STAAR US History (8th and EOC).	A district integrates STAAR-tested science and social studies teachers into its designation system, leveraging Texas VAM for growth metrics instead of developing local calculations.

TEXAS VAM GUIDANCE: SCENARIOS AND EXAMPLES FOR DISTRICT USE

Texas VAM can be used to inform the implementation and calibration of a district's system or can be a part of that system. Districts must determine how it integrates with other Student Growth Measures (SGMs) and aligns with district priorities.

Using VAM to promote multiple aligned measure for effectiveness

If districts want to enhance growth measure reliability, **Texas VAM** can:

- Validate trends in student progress detected through local SGMs.
- Validate trends in student progress detected through nationally normed 3rd party assessments. (STAAR, MAP)
- Identify potential outliers or anomalies by comparing statewide VAM data with local outcomes.
- Align a district's TIA system with Interim, formative, and summative assessments.

Example: A district finds MAP scores show unexpected dips in student growth. They incorporate Texas VAM as a **"tie-breaker"** to validate whether STAAR performance aligns with or diverges from MAP trends.

Scenarios

Scenario	Use Case	Weighting Tab Example	Rationale
"And" Scenario: VAM as Primary SGM	District adopts Texas VAM as the primary student growth measure.	Texas VAM: 5**0%** + Classroom Observations: 5**0%**	VAM provides standardized growth data with strong comparability across districts.
"Or" Scenario: Combined Use SGMs	District uses Texas VAM to supplement local SGMs for reliability.	Pre-test/Post-test: **25%** + Texas VAM: **25%** + Classroom Observations: **50%** Pre-test/Post-test: MAP: Primary measure for non-STAAR subjects + Texas VAM for STAAR-tested grades as a validation.	Combines local and statewide measures for enhanced reliability in growth validation. Example 1: MAP shows unexpected growth dips/gains; Texas VAM serves as a "tiebreaker" to validate performance. Example 2: District is confident in the use of MAP for student growth and use TexasVAM as a weighted component of their system to increase SGM data reliability.
"Neither" Scenario: No VAM Use	District retains existing SGMs and chooses not to adopt Texas VAM.	Pre-test/Post-test: **50%** + Classroom Observations: **50%**	Local measures align better with district priorities (e.g., broader K-12 tracking). Example: MAP/iReady for all grades and subjects; STAAR Progress Measure for STAAR-tested subjects.

Resources for Support and Further Questions

For districts adopting Texas VAM, the Texas VAM platform offers resources such as instructional videos, FAQs, technical manuals, and data validation documentation. Districts may also contact the TIA team at tia@tea.texas.gov for additional support.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Will my district pass data validation if we adopt Texas VAM?**
   Adopting Texas VAM does not guarantee that your district will pass data validation. Data validation for TIA considers multiple factors beyond Texas VAM, such as teacher observations and the alignment of growth measures with other performance data. For example, Texas VAM uses criteria like a minimum of five full-time equivalent students per teacher and adjusts for factors like student economic status and school rurality. These adjustments ensure a fair growth measure, but passing validation requires alignment across multiple data points, not Texas VAM alone. (See: 2024-25-Data-Validation-Documentation_2024.05.10.pdf)

2. **How should districts use Texas VAM data?**
   Districts are encouraged to use Texas VAM data to assess the validity and reliability of their local designation systems. Texas VAM data can help districts check alignment between their locally calculated student growth measures and statewide growth data. Districts may also consider involving teachers in discussions about whether to incorporate statewide value-added data into their designation systems. Expanding or modifying local systems to include Texas VAM data can be done annually, with adjustments typically planned in April.

3. **When will Texas VAM data be available to districts?**
   Texas VAM data is typically available to districts in mid-September each year. Districts can access this data through the Texas VAM login page at https://texasvam.sas.com/.