

Selecting Comparison Points

Accountability and Improvement Planning



Overview

This resource describes selecting comparison points. It describes the types of comparisons, where to find data, and how to incorporate this information into your school or district's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).

Why are comparison points useful when analyzing data?

Comparisons make sense of your data. In order to meaningfully understand how a student or group of students is performing, it is important to understand how they are performing relative to state or local expectations and other contexts. Using comparisons, schools and districts can gain perspective on the urgency of performance needs for their students. In the UIP, setting a strong foundation through data trends and target setting will inform the strategies you select and your action plan. Conducting a robust data analysis ensures your strategies represent the strongest opportunity for improved outcomes for all students. This resource describes ways you can perform and describe your data analysis.

What types of comparisons can I make?

There are two major categories of comparisons a school or district can use to contextualize their student performance data: (1) criterion-referenced comparisons or (2) norm-referenced comparisons. See the table below for examples.

	Criterion-Referenced Comparison	Norm-Referenced Comparison
Guiding Question	<i>How did we compare to a specific expectation?</i>	<i>How did we compare to others?</i>
Examples of Comparison Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ State expectations (i.e. "Meets" on the performance framework)→ Cut points for assessment performance levels (e.g. 750 on CMAS ELA/Math)→ Graduation guidelines cut points (district-specific)→ Local assessment benchmarks (determined by the vendor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ State average→ District average→ Neighboring school average→ Grade levels, ex. 9th graders to 10th graders→ Out group v. in group, ex. students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) to Non-FRL
High Level Questions to Ask about Your Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Are students mostly meeting or not meeting expectations?→ How are students performing over time? Is performance increasing or decreasing?→ Are student groups (i.e. students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students of color, etc.) mostly meeting or not meeting expectations?→ How are student groups performing over time? Is performance increasing or decreasing? Are gaps between student groups increasing or decreasing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ How does the performance of students in my school/district compare to students in other schools/districts/the state? Over time?→ How does the performance of students overall compare to the performance of student groups/grade levels? Over time?→ How does the performance of student groups compare to their non-subgroup peers? Over time?→ How does student performance compare across grade levels? Over time?



Criterion-Referenced Comparisons

Description

Criterion-referenced comparisons compare student performance to a predetermined benchmark, cut score, standard, or expectation. Examples include state performance framework expectations, federal expectations for identification (CS/TS), vendor-determined benchmarks, or locally-determined cut scores or benchmarks.

Determining State Criterion-Referenced Comparisons

When making criterion-referenced comparisons at the state level, consult the Framework Scoring Guide, available on the [performance framework page](#) or at the end of your school’s framework document. The scoring guide contains the cut scores and benchmarks for each performance indicator and plan type assignment. See the below table for additional details and information.

Example State Required Metrics	Possible Criterion-Referenced Comparison Points (using the SPF/DPF Scoring Guide)	Determining the Comparison Point
Academic Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exceeds: at or above the 85th percentile → Meets: at or above the 50th percentile but below the 85th percentile → Approaching: at or above the 15th percentile but below the 50th percentile → Does Not Meet: below the 15th percentile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the state benchmarks for exceeding, meeting, approaching, or not meeting expectations and compare your school’s results. ● If current performance is below minimum state expectations (“Meets”), consider minimum state expectations as a comparison point. ● If current performance is above minimum state expectations (“Meets”), consider the state “Exceeds” rating as a comparison point. ● Select a comparison point that would be ambitious but attainable for your school to meet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While the “Approaching” rating may be considered as a way to demonstrate progress, note that this comparison point is not defined as meeting minimum state expectations.
Academic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exceeds: at or above the 65th percentile → Meets: at or above the 50th percentile but below the 65th percentile → Approaching: at or above the 35th percentile but below the 50th percentile → Does Not Meet: below the 35th percentile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow the same steps as above to find comparison points for growth. ● When choosing a comparison point for growth, consider the utilized cut-points may not reflect the growth needed to move student groups to grade level expectations. For students that are performing below grade-level expectations, a growth target of 50 is likely insufficient to move them to grade level expectations over time. Consult resources on target setting using the

		<p>Colorado growth model for considerations.</p>
<p>Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR)</p>	<p>Dropout rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exceeds: at or below 0.5% → Meets: at or below the 2.0% but above 0.5% → Approaching: at or below the 5.0% but above 2.0% → Does Not Meet: above 5.0% <p>Matriculation rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exceeds: at or above 75.8% → Meets: at or above the 61.1% but below 75.8% → Approaching: at or above the 46.8% but below 61.1% → Does Not Meet: below 46.8% <p>Graduation rates (best of 4-, 5-, 6-, or 7-year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Exceeds: at or above 95% → Meets: at or above the 85% but below 95% → Approaching: at or above the 75% but below 85% → Does Not Meet: below 75% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow the same steps as achievement to find comparison points for PWR measures. ● Consider the interpretation of dropout rates. Higher dropout rates indicate that a higher percentage of students are dropping out of your school. Therefore, higher dropout rates are associated with lower ratings. ● Colorado reports a “Best Of” graduation rate in performance frameworks. If a school’s 7-year graduation rate is higher than a school’s 4, 5, or 6-year graduation rates, the 7-year rate will be reported for points on the framework. For Alternative Education Campuses (AECs), the completion rate is reported on AEC frameworks. The completion rate reflects all students who graduate or receive a high-school equivalent diploma. All state, district, and school results are reported on the graduation statistics page.

If your school or district does not have reportable state assessment results, consider using local assessment results to make criterion-referenced comparisons. Nationally-normed vendors often provide benchmarks publicly on their website.

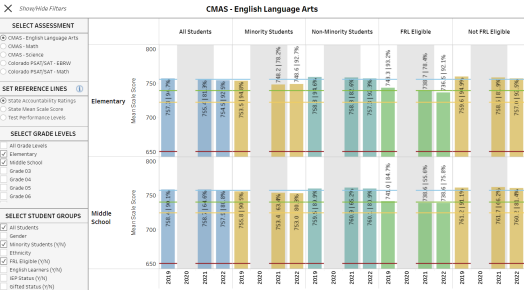
Norm-Referenced Comparisons

Description

Norm-referenced comparisons compare student performance to other schools, districts, the state, student groups, or grade levels. Examples include comparing to neighboring school averages, district averages, state averages, across student groups or grade levels.

Determining State, District, and School Norm-Referenced Comparisons

The following table describes ways to easily find state, district, and school averages, scores, and growth percentiles to make norm-referenced comparisons.

Example Data Sources	Determining the Comparison Point
<p>District and School Dashboard, includes school and district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Enrollment & Demographics → Academic Achievement → Academic Growth → Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness → Performance Framework Results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To use this dashboard, filter by district or school. ● Select the metric of interest (enrollment, achievement, growth, etc.) to see results for that school or district. Compare these results with your school/district results. ● Use the “Select Reference Lines” filter at the top right to find “State Accountability Ratings” (criterion-referenced comparison), “Test Performance Levels” (criterion-referenced comparison), and “State Mean Scale Score” (norm-referenced comparison) reference lines and embed this directly into the charts for achievement, growth, and PWR measures. This is an easy way to pull in data on state criterion and norm referenced comparison points. ● This dashboard is also available in the UIP online system under the “Current Performance” tab in the “Data Narrative - Trend Analysis” tab. This dashboard provides interactive visualizations of enrollment, achievement, growth, postsecondary workforce readiness, participation, and performance framework ratings.
<p>Education Statistics Flat Files, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Attendance by district/school/state → Dropout rates by district/school/state → Graduation and completion rates by district/school/state → Mobility and stability rates by district/school/state → Pupil membership (enrollment) by district/school/state → Staff data (counts, salaries, turnover rates, etc.) by district and charter/non-charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using these data files, your school or district can create aggregate files to compare across years for multiple types of data. ● While much of this data is included in the above dashboard (for example: attendance, mobility, dropout, graduation, and enrollment data), these Excel data files can be used by your school/district to create your own analyses and create comparisons for districts, schools, and the state overall.

For a more comprehensive description of the various state accountability data tools and reports that are available to schools and districts, view a resource [summarizing these Data Tools and Reports](#).



How should I use comparison points for improvement planning?

Using Criterion-Referenced and Norm-Referenced Comparisons in your Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

When writing your school’s UIP, criterion- and norm-referenced comparisons add context to the data analysis presented in your current performance section, identify why a data trend is notable, and provide evidence for why your school is prioritizing performance challenges. See below for example comparison points, orange (darker color) indicate criterion-referenced comparisons while purple (lighter color) indicate norm-referenced comparisons.

UIP Section	Examples in the UIP
Current Performance	<p><i>In CMAS Math, while students are meeting minimum state growth expectations overall, our students with disabilities (SWD) do not meet state expectations (Overall MGP 55, SWD MGP 30) and our students with disabilities are performing below students with disabilities in the district overall (District SWD MGP 60, SWD MGP 30). Our NWEA Map results show similar results for students with disabilities in Math. The Fall to Spring median conditional growth percentile (CGP) for all students was 60 while students with disabilities had a CGP of 40, which is below growth projections. Growth for students with disabilities on NWEA MAP was also lower than their non-subgroup peers (SWD CGP 40, Non-SWD CGP 65).</i></p>
Notable Trends	<p><i>Over the past four years, PSAT to SAT Math median growth percentiles for students with disabilities have decreased from an MGP of 51 to an MGP of 30. This is notable because current performance is far below minimum state expectations (MGP 50) and growth is below district and state percentiles in Math (District SWD MGP 60, State SWD MGP 44).</i></p>
Priority Performance Challenges	<p><i>Growth Gaps for Students with Disabilities: Growth for students with disabilities is decreasing over time, is below minimum state and local expectations, and is below non-subgroup peers and students with disabilities in the district and the state. The school needs a sustained focus on supporting this population.</i></p>

Criterion-Referenced Comparison

Norm-referenced Comparison

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

General information about the Unified Improvement Planning process: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip>.

General information about state accountability processes: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountability>.

If you have questions about the contents of this fact sheet or need further assistance: Contact uiphelp@cde.state.co.us.