

**Q: Of highly effective teachers, how many were in non-tested subjects and how many were in tested subjects?**

**A:** Out of the teachers who earned a final evaluation rating of Highly Effective last year, approximately:

- 36% were teachers using Tier-1 assessment teachers (LEAP, ILEAP, LAA1&2, EOC)
- 22% were teachers using Tier-2 assessments (ACT, DIBELS, DSC, etc.)
- 30% were teachers using Tier-3 assessments (including FitnessGram, teacher-created tests, etc.)

**Q: An ESL student is allowed to be beginner ESL for 3 years. This contradicts the SLT measure that a high % of ESLs must move up one level in one year.**

**A:** When the Compass team conducted a data analysis of subject matter SLTs over the summer, we found that of teachers who followed the 2012-13 district guidelines for 50% of students taking the ELDA to move up one level, only 18% of teachers were not able to meet this goal. This revealed that the SLT may not have been written at the appropriate level of rigor. This was further evidenced by the fact that 60% of teachers who followed the guidance greatly exceeded their target and earned a score of “4” on this SLT.

When the issue noted above was brought to our attention (we actually received word of this potential problem from a few other teachers as well), we conducted an additional data analysis across all grade levels and class compositions to see if teachers who had a higher concentration of students starting at Beginner were able to achieve the goal at the same level as teachers with a lower concentration of these students. We found that between these two groups, there was not a significant statistical difference in the likelihood of a teacher to meet the new goal of 65% of students moving up a level. In fact, we had a teacher with 100% of students starting at Beginner who was able to move 81% of students up a level (even with the new guidance, this amount of progress would earn this teacher a “4”). Similarly, we had another teacher who had 0 students starting out at Beginner who moved 0% of students up a level. While these examples represent the far ends the spectrum, they also show that teachers who have all types of class compositions can move a significant portion of their students up one level on the ELDA exam.

**Q: Are teachers to be evaluated by the principal the first three years at school? Are evaluators supposed to be alternated yearly?**

**A:** State law requires that each teacher in the district receives an annual Compass evaluation. There is no set requirement about alternating evaluators yearly, or within a given school year. Our district gives Compass evaluators discretion to determine who will conduct annual evaluations at their schools.

**Q: How are we holding every teacher accountable whether they teach a tested subject or not? As a tested subject, I don't get to see what's on the test - determines the SLTs. A teacher of a non-tested subject creates their own test, which gives them more of an advantage when it comes to SLTs. How are we rectifying the disadvantage of this? Where is the equity and when will it be visible, articulated, and manifested?**

**A:** To start, it's important to note that there are a multitude of factors involved in each teacher's SLTs (including testing type, special classifications of the students in the classroom, student preparedness to access content, etc.), and while the Instructional Performance Team is working very hard to create standardized guidance that creates as little inequity among teachers as possible, it would be virtually impossible to remove every factor that could feel like it is giving one teacher an advantage, even if very slight, over another.

Though a teacher of a tested subject does not see the actual test, they should be aware of the standards, information, etc. that will be tested. While a teacher who creates his/her own test(s) having knowledge of the actual questions on the test could be perceived as an advantage, we saw two issues with teacher-created assessments last year that we thought were more pressing to address in our guidance this year:

1. Because teachers were creating their own pre/post-tests, the rigor of these assessments used to measure student progress in SLTs was likely to vary drastically.
2. Additionally, because there was no standard guidance for how to create an SLT with a teacher-created pre/post-test, the percent of students that needed to pass the post-test for a teacher to meet his/her SLTs could also be very different from teacher to teacher.

To begin solving for these problems, we:

1. Required all pre/post assessments to be approved by the evaluator, using the quality assessment checklist on our website: <http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/quality-assesment-checklist-for-evaluators.pdf>. In some cases, this required teachers to go through several iterations of their tests until the evaluator was satisfied that the test was appropriately measuring what students should be learning in the course.
2. Introduced a teacher-created assessment guide, found here: <http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/teacher-created-assessment-slt-guide.pdf>, which requires teachers to have 80% or more of their students pass the test (and in some cases, depending on the baseline, achieve an even higher percentage).
3. Offered names of colleagues who had put time into creating high-quality assessments as resources for creating tests.

We do hope to move towards a place where we provide more standardized district assessments, the way we did for K-2 math this year, and brought a committee of teachers together over the summer to begin this process. We hope to continue this project during the mid-late spring so that even more teachers may have a chance to be involved. However, it is again important to note that we will likely never be in a place to provide a standardized test for every subject taught in our parish, as we do have many specialized course offerings which only affect a small number of teachers/students.

**Q: Some of the measures that JP schools are using to evaluate teachers (DIBELS, F&P) are not meant to be used as an evaluation tool for teachers. Why are they used in SLTs?**

**A:** Our district uses assessments in SLTs that meet certain criteria, either in terms of proven reliability over time or ideally, they are considered by the LDOE as Tier I assessments. In addition, it is important for SLTs to be based off an assessment that is administered across all schools in every grade level (K-2). Fountas and Pinnell meets the majority of this criteria, and also, is ideal because provides data throughout the year that can also be used to drive teacher instruction.

**Q: If the state is delaying VAM scores - will our SLTs still be based on the test scores that the state has said they will delay evaluating teachers with?**

**A:** Given the changes to VAM data and school testing are new, we are waiting on to receive more information from the state before making any decision regarding changes to SLTs. It is important that our district continue to improve annually, and the current standardized tests are classified by the state as Tier I assessments, which is important in terms of using these assessments for SLTs.

**Q: Teachers are tapped out at a certain pay rate if you identified as effective-emerging for 3 years. Where is the incentive?**

**A:** The incentive is for teachers to earn a higher score each year. If a teacher is not increasing his/her effectiveness beyond the Effective: Emerging level after three years, they are not able to earn step increases until they reach a level of Effective: Proficient. This gives the teachers an incentive to strive for higher levels of effectiveness each year, but of course, so long as he/she maintains Effective: Proficient, he/she will continue to receive the step increase each year.

**Q: My ESL teacher was required to write her SLT's using the same benchmark (F&P) as we did. Her goal is to get all of her ESL (not just intermediate or advanced who can speak English) but her beginning ESL students who do not speak any English to the same goal as a regular English speaking student. For example, all her beginning ESL students were not even able to read anything for F&P's so they were placed on the lowest "A" level but her SLT states that she has to get them to "G" same as a regular English speaking student by the end of the year. So my question is, "Is there something else besides F&P's ESL teacher can use for beginning ESL students to write their SLT's?"**

**A:** The data did not show that ESL teachers were able to achieve the grade-level expectations at significantly lower rates. Current guidance for ESL teachers is on the Instructional Performance website at the link below: [http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/K-8-ESL-SLT-Guide\\_FINAL.pdf](http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/K-8-ESL-SLT-Guide_FINAL.pdf)

This guidance states that SLT 1 would correspond to a level of growth on the ELDA, where SLT 2 is aligned to the students' specific grade level. The aim is to ensure that students are growing and succeeding in their English proficiency as measured by ELDA and F&P. SLTs are set around 65% of students increasing a level in ELDA and 80% of students meeting their individual F&P goals, rather than 100%, so that we are still setting rigorous, yet attainable, goals for our ESL students.

It is also important to note that depending on when an ESL student entered the country, they may or may not be included in a teacher's SLTs. This is also shared in the SLT FAQ document on the website: *If the student entered the country prior to April 8, 2013, the student WILL count toward the teacher's F&P SLT goals. If they entered the country on April 8 or later, they WILL NOT count toward the teacher's F&P SLT goals. This mirrors the LDOE's testing policy for ESL students.*

**Q: How many years can a teacher score Ineffective (in Compass) before termination is a possibility?**

**A:** A teacher must have two (2) years of an Ineffective rating before a local school district can choose to initiate the termination process for that teacher based solely on a Compass final evaluation score. A teacher must have 3 years of an Ineffective rating in a 5-year span before the LDOE can initiate proceedings to revoke their teaching license. In December 2013, the LDOE confirmed that there are no plans to change this requirement.

**Q: Should designated ESL teachers (who teach multiple grades in a self-contained setting) use an ELDA SLT, instead of a math or ELA SLT?**

**A:** Per the SLT guidance posted on the JPPSS Compass website, ([http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/K-8-ESL-SLT-Guide\\_FINAL.pdf](http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/K-8-ESL-SLT-Guide_FINAL.pdf)), K-8 ESL teachers should use the ELDA for one SLT and then follow the literacy guidance for their specific grade level for their other SLT. High school ESL teachers exclusively use the ELDA for SLTs.

**Q: SPED students are identified as special learners. Why is the F&P calculator being used for Special Education students?**

**A:** The F&P calculator is a tool that can calculate growth for every type of learner (regular and special education students). If students are in a classroom setting where F&P is used to measure their reading development throughout the year, then the calculator is an appropriate tool to use, as it can identify individual starting points and growth over time for students at their individual level. F&P also helps pinpoint where a student may be having difficulty, and can help teachers identify individual next steps to take. Currently, F&P SLTs are set around 80% of students meeting individual goals, as we understand that a teacher can still be effective even if they are not able to move every single student to the prescribed goal. This should help account for those students who may have greater difficulties with reading.

Additionally, depending on the severity of a student's disability, it may not be required for the students' goals to follow the prescribed F&P calculator. Special Education teachers of K-2 students should reference the SLT guidance for mild/moderate students here: <http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/K-2-SPED-SLT-Guide-for-Students-with-Mild-or-Moderate-Disabilities1.pdf>, which directs teachers to create individual goals for the students based on what is written in their IEPs.

All 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers using F&P data for their SLTs will have the opportunity to meet with a member of the Compass team in March to review their F&P data and their SLTs. There will be more information to come in the near future around this.

**Q: I know that teacher-made tests are supposed to be more rigorous and there are supposed to be checked, but I do not feel that is happening. The quality assessment checklist is not being used by evaluators. What is going to be done to make this more fair?**

**A:** Individual evaluators are responsible for reviewing the teacher-created assessments at their school. The Compass team is making every effort to ensure that evaluators are held accountable for reviewing the teacher-created assessments at every school. Each evaluator who has teachers using teacher created-assessments has submitted a copy of the signed quality assessment checklist to the Compass team, verifying that the evaluator has reviewed the assessment.

**Q: How can a special education teacher reach Highly Effective when the instrument being used to evaluate their performance doesn't apply to their students?**

**A:** Each and every classroom has a unique make-up of children composed with different types of learning styles, and the observation rubric used to evaluate teachers is able to take into account many of those unique differences, and incorporates domains that can be applied to most types of classroom settings and student exceptionalities. The notable exception to this rule exists in severe/profound classrooms. As such, the state has created an additional resource for evaluators who are evaluating teachers in this position, especially in helping them consider what a "Highly Effective" classroom looks like in these situations: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/key-compass-resources/compass-rubric-resource---evaluators-of-teachers-of-students-with-significant-disabilities.pdf?sfvrsn=6>. This document is posted on the Jefferson Parish site here: <http://jpschools.org/resources/human-capital-resources/instructional-performance-resources/#observation-resources>

It is, ultimately, the responsibility of the evaluator to take into consideration each classroom's composition and apply each domain in the Compass rubric to what is seen and accounted for during an observation. It is also expected that Compass evaluators use their best judgment and the knowledge they gathered during the pre-conference and post-conference to evaluate a teacher's performance.

**Q: The SLT guidance for Special Education says one thing, however the assistant principal is requesting that I use the same assessment as regular education teachers. What should I do?**

**A:** There is a document on our website that was created to help Special Education teachers know how to select the proper SLTs, which you can find here: <http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/How-to-Choose-Your-SLTs-for-Special-Ed2.pdf>

If what your assistant principal has requested explicitly conflicts with what is in this document and the SLT guides it points to, you should certainly address that situation with him/her. If, as a result of that conversation, you still feel unsure if you are using the correct guidance, please address this with your principal. If neither conversation yields the answers you are looking for, please reach out to your Compass contact for clarification.

NOTE: It is important to note that many special education teachers are asked to use the assessments that regular education teachers use for their SLTs. Sometimes the guidance is similar to that of general education teachers because some of those students are still required to take the same standardized test. In other cases, SLTs may be created to meet individual student needs if that student is taking an alternative assessment.

**Q: Should the ESL students in my class be on my SLT even if I am not the ESL teacher?**

**A:** Unless instructed otherwise from your principal or COMPASS contact, every student on your roster in your classroom should be included in your SLT, even if they are an ESL student and you are not the ESL teacher. If a child is receiving instruction on a daily basis in your classroom, you will be held accountable for the learning that takes place during that time, even if the student is receiving services elsewhere during the day, too. Sometimes, a student may be included in more than one teacher's SLT if they are receiving services in a classroom as well as by an interventionist or ESL teacher.

For every teacher that teaches an ESL student it is also important to know that if the student entered the country prior to April 8, 2013, the student WILL count toward the teacher's SLTs. If they entered the country on April 8, 2013 or later, they WILL NOT count toward the teacher's SLTs. This mirrors the LDOE's testing policy for ESL students.

**Q: We were told at the last F&P meeting that SLTs would be adjusted if tests were administered incorrectly in the beginning of the year. Will there be more information around this?**

**A:** All first and second grade teachers using F&P data for their SLTs will have the opportunity to meet with a member of the Compass team in March to review their F&P data and their SLTs. There will be more information to come in the near future around this.

**Q: Some Kindergarten students made high growth going into the current testing window (Nov/ Dec). How will that growth from the beginning of the year be accounted for if we are not recording baseline data until Nov/Dec?**

**A:** According to the F&P Instructional Level Expectations for Reading (<https://www.heinemann.com/fountasandPinnell/handouts/InstructionalLevelExpectationsForReading.pdf>), which were used to create the SLT calculators, a student who is meeting expectations for Kindergarten should leave the classroom on a Level C. Also according to this document, that same student should be at a Level A by Nov/Dec.

**Q: Why is F&P an SLT when we received training as late as November?**

**A:** F&P is being used for SLTs this year because it is required that teachers across our district use this tool to measure the nuanced reading growth of their students. Using the same measure for SLTs across the district helps us to better understand the holistic progress our teachers are making with their students.

F&P trainings were offered beginning in September, with some teachers receiving training in their school building, and others opting to attend training sessions at 501 Manhattan. If you have specific concerns regarding the F&P training timeline for your school, please speak to your principal or to Karen Herndon in the Strategic Initiatives Unit, who is the Director of Testing for our district.

**Q: What is being done to study the drop in 4-rated teachers from grammar to middle school? These scores bump up again 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Is the rigor of the tests themselves being studied?**

A: To provide further context, at a principal’s meeting and at the December teacher-voice committee meeting, we shared the following information about the in-depth analysis we conducted of last year’s SLTs over the summer.

	% of SLTs rated 1	% of SLTs rated 2	% of SLTs rated 3	% of SLTs rated 4
Pre-K	1%	2%	33%	64%
K-2nd	12%	23%	24%	41%
3rd-5th	16%	17%	29%	39%
6th-8th	22%	26%	28%	24%
9th-12th	14%	13%	31%	42%

This chart provided a summary of what we found by grade-level, though the analysis we performed was actually done at a much more detailed level, by grade, subject and course. Adjustments have been made to ensure a more similar distribution across grades, subjects and courses. See Pre-K, PE and 5<sup>th</sup> grade math SLT guides for examples of these adjustments.

**Q: Last year, across the parish, for VAM teachers, were SLTs equal to VAM scores?**

A: To answer this question, we are going to use two specific numbers – the single VAM score a teacher received and the final SLT score that a teacher received, which is an average of the individual scores on ALL of that teachers’ SLTs (usually, this is two SLTs, the minimum state requirement). This is important to note because a teacher who received a 1 and a 4 on their two SLTs would have the same final score as a teacher who received a 2 and a 3 (they would both have a final score of 2.5), even though their scores on the individual SLTs are quite different.

When looking at these two numbers, we found that 80% of our teachers’ VAM scores and final SLT scores were within a point of one another, meaning that if the teacher’s VAM score was a 3, it’s highly likely that their final SLT score was somewhere between 2 and 4. For 51.5% of teachers, their final SLT score was within a half-point of their VAM score. Therefore, for most teachers with a VAM score of 3, their final SLT score was between 2.5 and 3.5. Because the SLT average can be a decimal and the VAM score could not be, teacher’s score falling within a half point of the VAM score represents a very accurate measure of teacher performance.

It is important to note that because VAM was not available for every grade and subject area, we would not have expected to see an exact 1:1 correlation between the two. As an example, a teacher who teaches Geometry and Algebra II and set one SLT based on each course would have a final score which was reflective of both, but a VAM score that was only reflective of the scores of his/her Geometry students.

**Q: Isn’t it true that if a teacher receives an “Ineffective” on her SLTs and a “3” by principal’s observations, that it turns into a “0”?**

A: No teacher can score a 0 overall or on any individual components of Compass. If a teacher receives an overall score that is below 1.5 on his/her overall Professional Practice (observations) or Student Achievement (SLTs/VAM), his/her overall score will be Ineffective, regardless of what the score was in the other area. This is a state practice and the CIS system automatically registers the overall score as Ineffective when a teacher or leader earns a 1.5 on either component. For more information Compass scoring, you may refer to this link: <http://jpschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Compass-Guide-for-New-Employees.pdf>

**Q: What is VAM and how does it affect my evaluation?**

**A:** VAM stands for Value-Added Measurement, and aims to provide information about the extent to which individual students met, exceeded, or fell short of their expected performance on state tests, based upon the student’s past achievement history and individual characteristics (English proficiency, socioeconomic status, etc.). This PowerPoint will help you understand more about VAM and how it is calculated: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/teaching/value-added-model-formula-calculation.pdf?sfvrsn=10>

VAM was a part of many teacher evaluations in the 2012-13 school year. It will not be for the 2013-14 or 2014-15 school year, as the state will not be producing this data for those two years.

**Q: What is too high of a percentage for a “4” on SLTs?**

**A:** A small percentage of teachers start the year with very high baseline data. When we find that a teacher cannot set their goal(s) following the guidance because their attainment range would exceed 100%, the Compass team works with the evaluator and teacher to set alternate ranges, while working to ensure consistency for these types of teachers across the district.

**Q: The grading scale for LEAP is narrower than the range for iLEAP. For example, a score of 396 is Advanced in 3rd grade, but Mastery in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. VAM was based on number scores, so as long as my kids’ number scores increased I had a good chance of making a higher VAM. However, my SLT is written to show growth in LABELS – although the scales are not even. This makes it a huge disadvantage to teach 4<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Likewise, 5<sup>th</sup> grade would be easier based on SLTs instead of VAM because they can score a lower number, but still get a higher label.**

**A:** As you mention, unfortunately, the scaled score does not mean the same thing in different grade levels. As stated in the LEAP Interpretive Guide on louisianabelieves.com, “The scaled scores are not comparable across grade levels or content areas.” The iLEAP Interpretative Guide reinforces this statement. Both of these guides may be helpful in providing further information.

Essentially, the cut scores (the distinctions between one level to the next) are determined based on the types of questions a student would need to answer correctly to be classified as scoring at a certain level. Because each grade and content-area test is structured slightly differently, these cut scores are not the same across grade and subject areas. However, based on the skill and knowledge level of a student scoring a 396 in the third grade ELA, it is not unreasonable to believe that that same student would score a 408 or higher on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade test. See below for expectations to score Advanced at each grade:



**Title 28  
EDUCATION**

**Part CXI. Bulletin 118— Statewide Assessment Standards and Practices Title 28**

**Grade 3 Achievement Level Descriptors**

**Grade 3 English Language Arts Achievement Level Descriptors**

<b>Advanced</b>
Students scoring at the Advanced level in English Language Arts generally exhibit the ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. determine meanings of unfamiliar words using a variety of strategies;</li><li>2. demonstrate inferential understanding of what they read by making generalizations and predictions, drawing conclusions, and extending ideas;</li><li>3. identify story elements, including theme, in a text;</li><li>4. research topics by locating, selecting, and evaluating appropriate information from multiple print and electronic resources for a specified purpose;</li><li>5. construct responses with focused central ideas, purposeful organization, thorough elaboration, well-chosen information from texts, and effective linking words;</li><li>6. demonstrate thorough understanding of the writing task through the use of effective vocabulary, varied sentences, and engaging voice; and</li><li>7. demonstrate consistent command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage.</li></ol>

### Grade 4 Achievement Level Descriptors

#### Grade 4 English Language Arts Achievement Level Descriptors

Advanced
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Students scoring at this level generally exhibit the following skills.

In the areas of reading and use of resources, students:

1. demonstrate a thorough understanding of what they read;
2. extend ideas in texts by making generalizations supported by textual evidence;
3. explain how authors use different literary elements; and
4. research topics by evaluating information in a variety of sources.

In the area of writing, students:

1. develop responses with sharply focused central ideas, thorough elaboration, and well-chosen evidence from texts;
2. create compositions with effective transitions and a sense of wholeness;
3. demonstrate thorough understanding of the writing task through the use of effective word choice, sentence variety, and engaging voice; and
4. demonstrate consistent command of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.