Rally Spreadsheets – Preliminary Results

These student-level files report data pulled from the Rally Analytics Platform in one file for district leaders in South Carolina. Historical and current assessment information is provided for each student, including pre-COVID predictions for this year's interim scores and tier assignment based on the statewide distribution of student scores.

Using the Preliminary File

Purpose

- Take some time becoming familiar with the file. The accompanying Data Dictionary provides a definition for each column of the file, the values you can expect to see in each column, and any relevant notes for that column.
- Note that the scores *and* predictions in the Preliminary File are likely to remain similar in later iterations for students taking MAP, Star, and iReady. Although s*cores* for CASE and Reading and Math Inventory are likely to remain the same (when available), *predictions* are not yet available due to lack of data. Once data for all students in the state are accounted for, tiers and quartiles will be recalculated for all students in the Preliminary File.
- Confirm that the students you think should be in the file are in the file (i.e., the students align with your PowerSchool rosters). There should be one row for each district/school/student/subject combination (meaning separate rows for ELA and Math results). Note that the spreadsheets include all rostered students, even those without test scores. This enables a side-by-side examination of which students have not been tested this year.
- The file contains historical data back to January 2019. However, the most relevant data is toward the front of the file. This includes the first test from fall this school year (occurring between 8/1/20 and 11/4/20) and last test from winter this school year (occurring between 11/5/20 and 1/13/21). The earliest and latest tests of the year were selected in order to allow the longest period of time for learning to be assessed.

Helpful Tips

- *Save the CSV as an Excel Workbook (.xlsx).* You will be able to do much more with the file saved as an Excel Workbook.
- *Freeze the first row so you can always see the column names.* Click on View > Freeze Panes > Freeze Top Row.
- *Make the columns filterable.* Right click on the "1" at the beginning of the first row. Click on Data > Filter.

Linking Interim Assessments to SC READY

Purpose

- In the Rally Analytics Platform, scores for South Carolina's interim assessments are aligned to the SC READY scale. This enables the examination of growth even when students or entire districts switch assessments.

- An additional purpose of getting a uniform scale across interims is to create statewide tiers and quartiles of student performance, which supports policy decision making at the district and state level.

Linking Steps

1. We started with any equating studies that the assessment vendors have conducted. These studies identify equated values for the three thresholds between performance categories (Does Not Meet, Approaches, Meets, or Exceeds Standards). In South Carolina, NWEA (the MAP vendor) and Renaissance Learning (the Star vendor) both completed their own equating studies. Certica (the CASE vendor) has also reported performance category thresholds for SC READY.
2. We then used the observed distribution of SC READY scores in grades 3-8 to fill in the remainder of the linking curve via a percentile matching method. The 3rd grade linkages are extrapolated to translate 1st and 2nd grade scores to the SC READY scale. For MAP, Star, CASE, and iReady, we perform percentile matching within categories (i.e., between threshold values). For Reading/Math Inventory, we fill in the entire curve, from the lowest observable score to the highest observable score, in one application of percentile matching.
3. We then repeatedly examined the distributions to ensure that the equating worked as expected for every grade and subject combination.

Application in Different Grades

- **3rd-8th grade interim scores** are linked to SC READY scores and corresponding SC READY performance levels. Note that the performance levels are based on end-of-year standards, so we would expect to see an increase in the number of students meeting expectations as the year progresses.
- **1st-2nd grade interim scores** are linked to *scores* on the SC READY scale. However, since they fall outside the SC READY testing grades and do not have identified performance levels, SC READY *performance levels* are not given for 1st -2nd grade.
- **Kindergarten interim scores** are not linked to SC READY scores, because we do not have enough interim data for Kindergarten students to conduct the linking.

Pre-COVID Predictions for Fall and Winter Interims

Purpose

- Predictions are estimates of how students would have performed in the 2020-2021 school year if there had been no COVID-related learning disruption. The predictions are based solely on the pre-COVID academic history of each student, meaning how they performed on interim and (when available) state assessments in the past.
- Fall predictions account for typical (i.e., non-COVID) summer slide.

Application in Different Grades

- **5th-8th grade students** with historical SC READY and interim data have the most precise predictions, because they have the most information to contribute to the predictions.

- **2nd-4th grade students** have predictions that are based solely on historical interim data, since they have not yet taken SC READY. Therefore, there is less precision in the estimates.
- **Kindergarten and 1st grade students** do not have any predictions, because they do not have enough historical data (because they have not been in school very long).

Quartiles and Tiers

Purpose

- Quartiles and tiers are both ways of examining where a student's score lies in the distribution of scores across the state. Quartiles divide students (within each grade and subject combination) into four equally sized groups, with each group consisting of 25% of students. This produces larger "buckets" of students. The tier approach isolates the most impacted 5% of students (Tier 3) from the next 15% (Tier 2) and the remaining 80% (Tier 1) of students.