An Introduction to the Value-Added Metric

What is Value-Added?
The Value-Added metric measures the impact of a school or teacher on the academic growth of his/her students from one year to the next. The CPS metric is a relative growth metric, meaning it measures the growth of a school or teacher’s students compared to the growth of similar students across the District. This is a nationally-recognized way of measuring school effectiveness. The CPS Value-Added model was developed by experts at the University of Wisconsin.

The Value-Added metric measures growth at the school and teacher level on the ISAT and NWEA MAP tests, which are given in grades 3-8 and 2-8, respectively. This metric is currently used only for elementary schools.

What is the purpose of the Value-Added metric?
CPS recognizes that it has students at all levels of attainment and that factors outside of a school’s and/or teacher’s control impact academic growth. The goal of the Value-Added metric is to measure the school’s and/or teacher’s impact on student growth independent of prior performance and student factors.

What is the difference between attainment and growth?
Attainment is measured at one point in time and measures a student’s performance against a set standard. Academic growth is measured by how much a student’s performance improves from one year to the next. The following chart illustrates the importance of measuring academic growth.

How is academic growth defined?
Academic growth is defined as the change in a student’s score from the previous year to the current year (e.g. 2013 score minus 2012 score). The Value-Added metric reports how much a school or teacher contributed to growth compared with other schools/teachers. The Value-Added metric is reported on a scale that ranges from approximately -3 to 3, with zero being equal to the District average.

How should a Value-Added score be interpreted?
A positive score indicates a school/teacher whose students are growing at a faster pace that similar students District-wide. A score near zero indicates a school/teacher where students are growing at about the same pace as similar students. And a negative score indicates a school/teacher whose students are growing at a slower pace than similar students.

For which student factors does the Value-Added model control?
1. Prior ISAT/NWEA reading score
2. Prior ISAT/NWEA math score
3. Grade level
4. Gender
5. Race/ethnicity
6. Low-income status
7. ELL status
8. IEP status
9. Homelessness
10. Mobility