



Predicting proficiency on AK STAR summative based on NWEA growth scores

Updated Linking Study

In fall 2025 MAP Growth began using an updated set of national norms to help interpret student scores. Norms are used to determine how students perform compared to their peers. These newly released 2025 norms are based on more recent data from 2022 to 2024 and reflect how students across the country are performing after the COVID-19 pandemic. Updating norms every few years is necessary to reflect a more recent national sample, making percentile comparisons more relevant to today's students. While the test scale itself is unchanged, the new norms provide updated context for interpreting student achievement and growth.

AK STAR system

In the 2021-2022 school year, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) administered a new assessment system for grades 3-9 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, the [Alaska System of Academic Readiness](#) (AK STAR). This balanced approach connects fall or winter [MAP® Growth™](#) interim assessments to the spring AK STAR, which is made up of a grade-specific summative component combined with a growth component. Since the 2022-23 school year, students across Alaska have taken the [MAP® Growth™](#) interim assessment in the fall and winter and AK STAR in the spring. The spring AK STAR includes both a summative assessment component and a MAP Growth component, producing a summative proficiency score, an overall RIT score, and instructional area RIT scores.

map GROWTH + AK STAR

KEY FINDINGS

- The spring 2025 MAP Growth and AK STAR assessment linking study demonstrated that spring RIT scores are highly accurate at predicting students' proficiency on the AK STAR summative assessment.
- The prediction accuracy of MAP Growth will probably be slightly lower if using fall or winter RIT scores.
- Overall, a MAP Growth projected proficiency will be fairly accurate for most students, but it will not perfectly match the actual achievement level on AK STAR for every student.

The MAP Growth reports include a RIT score along with a projected proficiency score based on the results of this linking study to help inform instruction throughout the year.

The results

NWEA confirmed that the MAP Growth interim and AK STAR summative assessments were constructed based on the same or similar set of content standards to warrant a connection. The link between the two tests was confirmed by calculating the relationship between the MAP® Growth™ and AK STAR summative test scores. A high, positive correlation (e.g., ≥ 0.70) shows that students who perform well on one assessment also tend to perform well on the other, and vice versa, with 1.00 being a perfect positive correlation. The correlations between the MAP Growth and AK STAR summative test scores from Spring 2023, shown below, are consistent with our linking study expectations, indicating that MAP Growth is a good assessment for predicting performance on the AK STAR spring summative assessment.

Using the linking study

This linking study will allow Alaska educators to use MAP Growth RIT scores throughout the year to predict their students' performance levels on the AK STAR summative assessment. Through the linking study NWEA produced RIT cut scores that correspond to the AK STAR summative achievement levels (Needs Support, Approaching Proficient, Proficient, Advanced). A cut score is the minimum score a student must get on a test to be placed in a certain achievement level. The linking study provides RIT cut scores for the fall, winter, and spring MAP Growth administrations that correspond to the AK STAR achievement levels for each subject and grade.

Educators can use these cut scores to determine whether students are on track for proficiency on the state assessment, identifying students early in the school year that are at risk of not meeting state proficiency standards and providing targeted instruction to improve academic outcomes.

Figure 1. Accuracy of MAP Growth classifications

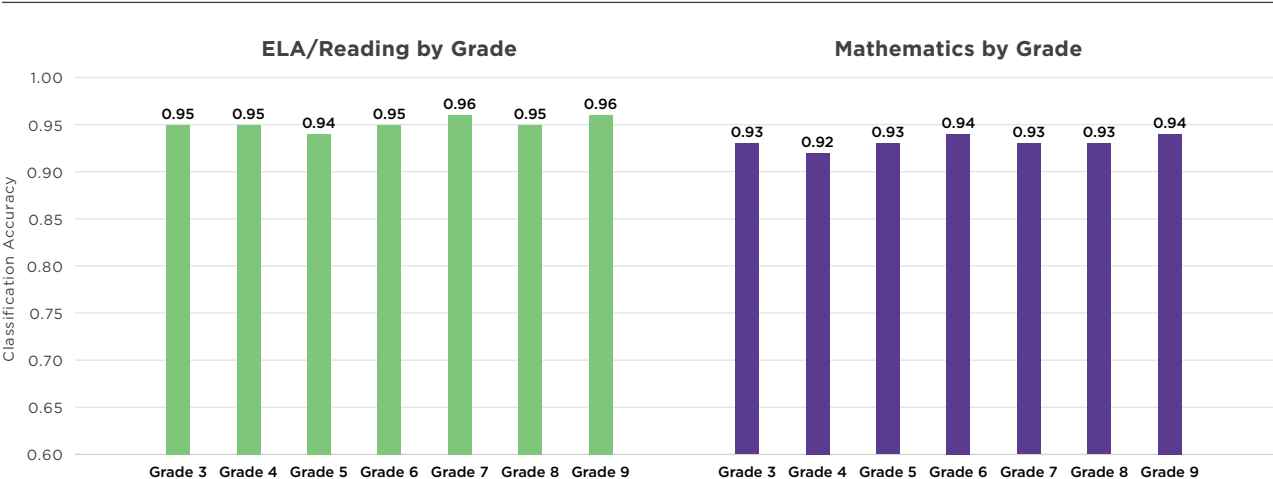


Table 1 provides information on the cut scores for the AK STAR English Language arts (ELA) fourth grade assessment and the corresponding MAP Growth RIT score and percentile projected proficiency ranges. Based on this table, we know that:

- Students with a RIT score of 202 or above on the fall MAP Growth assessment would be projected as being “Proficient” or “Advanced” on the spring AK STAR summative assessment. Specifically, students with RIT scores between 202 and 214 will be projected as “Proficient” and students with RIT scores between 215 and 350 will be projected as “Advanced.”
- Students with a RIT score of 201 or below on the fall MAP Growth assessment would not be projected as being “Proficient” on the spring AK STAR summative assessment. Students with RIT scores between 189 and 201 will be projected as “Approaching Proficient” and students with RIT scores between 100 and 188 will be projected as “Needs Support”.
- Students with a RIT score of 205 or above on the winter MAP Growth assessment would be projected as “Proficient” or “Advanced” on the spring AK STAR summative assessment. Students with a RIT score of 204 and below on the winter MAP Growth assessment would be projected as “Approaching Proficient” or “Needs Support”.

Table 1. MAP Growth Projected Proficiency Cut Scores for 4th Grade—ELA/Reading

AK STAR Summative ELA Score Ranges

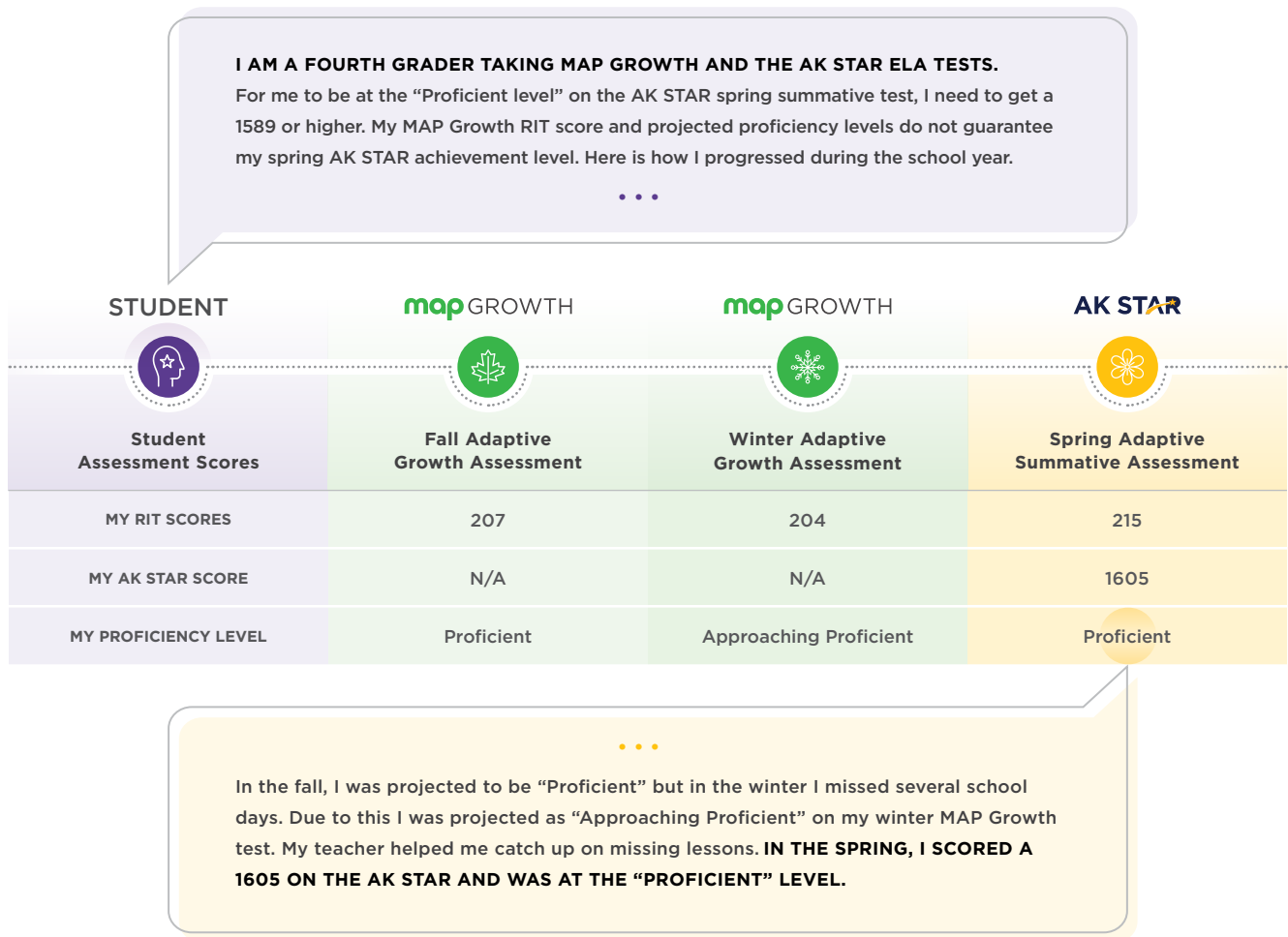
Needs Support	Approaching Proficient	Proficient	Advanced
1410-1567	1568-1588	1589-1611	1612-1750

Reading RIT Score and Percentile Ranges

Needs Support		Approaching Proficient		Proficient		Advanced	
RIT	PERCENTILE	RIT	PERCENTILE	RIT	PERCENTILE	RIT	PERCENTILE
FALL							
100-188	1-34	189-201	35-62	202-214	63-85	215-350	86-99
WINTER							
100-192	1-35	193-204	36-61	205-217	62-84	218-350	85-99
SPRING							
100-195	1-36	196-206	37-60	207-218	61-82	219-350	83-99

NOTE: The full table (grades 2-9) for ELA/Reading cut scores can be found on page 13 of the [linking study](#). Math cut scores can be found on page 12 of the linking study. Additionally, the probability of the proficiency projections can be found in the tables starting on page 16 of the linking study.

Figure 2. Student scenario for MAP Growth projected proficiency and AK STAR scoring



To learn more about using the [AK STAR and MAP Growth linking study](#) and projected proficiency scores to inform instructional planning decisions, consider working with your district Certified Facilitator for the current year’s Professional Learning options. Additionally, [NWEA Professional Learning](#) is an excellent resource to support you and your district.



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