VERTICALLY-ARTICULATED GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS AND TEST SPECIFICATIONS

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PRESENTATION SET OF QUESTIONS

- 1. What concerns about vertical scales need to be addressed for full implementation and interpretation?
- 2. How do various assumptions affect the confluence of vertical scales and value-added models?
- 3. How can thoughtful test specifications positively affect the concerns in questions 1 and 2 and assessment and accountability programs overall?



2004 RILS EXPLORATION

If the goal of the assessment/accountability program is to measure whether:

- students have achieved a year's growth within an academic year (or other interval e.g., by graduation); and/or
- schools have provided value-added instruction; then

Vertical Scales and Value-added Models have great intuitive appeal, *BUT*



PROBLEMATIC REQUIREMENTS OF VERTICAL SCALES

- Construct, in particular construct invariance and unidemensionality across the full range of grades within a content area
- Alignment, structure of content standards across grades
- Assessments, consistency across grades ("mixed models")?
- Design, especially testing students on content they have not been taught or taught in previous years

Role of test specifications in overcoming problems

CHALLENGES OF A VALUE-ADDED SYSTEM: VALUES

- Concept of "one-year's growth" (across grades, content areas, students)
- Individual student growth most important measure of school effectiveness (student by student)
- Classroom/teacher effect most important factor in student success (vs. school, district, home, community)
- Student test scores are a proxy for effective teaching
- Changes in standardized test scores are what is valued
- Additional challenges: assessment, data Economics
 systems, political

TEST SPECIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Start with clear understanding of what content is important and what is less so (vs. unimportant)
- Specificity of specifications
- Articulation of specifications (not just standards)
- Performance levels need to be considered
- All purposes of assessment/accountability program need to be taken into account
- Effects on special populations (SE, EL)—interaction with assessment developmentd

TEST SPECIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS (cont.)

- Development of assessment blueprint:
 - three dimensional matrix
 - cognitive complexity
- Alignment studies (formal and ongoing):
 - vertical and horizontal alignment of standards
 - assessments to blueprint
- What is the meaning of a test score?
- How will test results be interpreted?