

# VALUE-ADDED MEASUREMENT Services

at American Institutes for Research ■

## Summary of

## Determining Attribution

## Holding Teachers Accountable for Student Growth

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## Background

New state and federal policies, such as the Race to the Top program, have redefined accountability to require that states develop and use performance-based teacher evaluation systems to inform decisions on professional development, employment, and compensation. If teacher performance focuses on student test scores, states and districts must have a mechanism for linking those test scores to the teachers who taught those students.

## Overview

As one way to assess teacher effectiveness, many states and districts are using growth and value-added models. Developing and implementing these models requires states and districts to grapple with the complexity of trying to assess individual teachers' contribution to student learning in a fair manner. Implicit in this work is the need to link teachers with the students whom they have taught. Some work has been done around the nation to guide states and districts on developing business rules for defining teacher-student data links and the teacher of record. This paper contributes to the discussion by summarizing key issues that states and districts implementing growth and value-added models for teacher evaluation may wish to consider, along with practical examples of options for implementation. It also focuses on issues related to linking students to teachers, a concept commonly referred to as *attribution*.

## Key Points

The authors make the following conclusions:

- There are several considerations within a set of attribution rules; these may include accounting for how much time a student spent in a teacher's class, how many relevant courses a student had, and how to define *teacher of record*.
- Rules for attribution can vary, depending on whether a student had one or many teachers of record in a given year.
- In practice, there are a number of ways to measure refined student-teacher data linkages, depending on what information is available or can be collected through existing or new data systems.

## For More Information

The full paper is available online:

[www.air.org/files/VAMS/Determining\\_Attribution.pdf](http://www.air.org/files/VAMS/Determining_Attribution.pdf)

Additional papers are available at AIR's [Value-Added Measures in Education](#) webpage:

[www.air.org/VAMS/](http://www.air.org/VAMS/)

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part of AIR's Educator Talent Management services and resources, can assist states and districts in finding the right approach to measuring how educators contribute to growth in student achievement.

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