

Understanding Your Child's Academic Growth

How is my child doing? This is a simple question many parents ask when they see their child's WKCE test score. There are actually two main issues involved when tests are given: your child's current **Performance Level** and their **Growth** since the last test.

Performance Level: Did my child's test score meet grade-level standards?

Growth: Are my child's test scores improving quickly enough to move up to the next level, keep from falling behind, or catch up?

Growth: The other half of the story. Most tests we take give only a score reflecting something about our level of performance (pass/fail, A/B/C/D/F grade, etc.). Until recently, Wisconsin children received a single test score for each of the academic areas of reading and mathematics, plus a performance level label of Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Minimal Performance. But we need to recognize students' progress towards higher performance, even if they are not quite there yet. Performance levels provide only one half of the story—a snapshot of performance at a single point in time. **The other half of the story is each child's growth in learning.**

Growth shows success in the education system, because it shows where positive change is happening for students and schools.

The Growth Oriented Achievement Learning System (GOALS) measures the academic progress each student has made in a year. However, instead of just saying how many points a student has gained or lost since the previous year, the model **tells us how a student's growth compares** to other students in the state with a similar WKCE score history. These **student growth percentiles** range from 1 (lowest growth) to 99 (highest growth). Percentiles are **not** percent correct scores, and do not tell us anything about a student's performance level. Even students in low performance levels can get high student growth percentiles, if they made great progress since the previous year's test. For example, in the sample plot below, this girl's reading score between Fall 2009 and Fall 2010 went up, and her growth percentile was 73. Her growth was therefore as high as or higher than 73% of other students with a similar WKCE score history; in other words, only 27% of students with a similar WKCE score history progressed more than she did. A 50th percentile growth score is right in the middle, so it's a typical growth score across the state – not particularly low or high. On the other side of this page are graphs of your child's growth and performance history. The sample below will help you to understand what those graphs are telling you about your child's academic growth.

We encourage you to discuss your child's performance level and growth in new and more challenging ways. Instead of "*How is my child doing?*" you can ask a teacher or principal more focused questions such as:

- ***What steps can we take since my son's growth in reading wasn't good enough, and he needs to catch up?***
- ***Is my daughter's academic growth enough to keep her Proficient in mathematics next year?***
- ***What will it take for my son to move up to Advanced in reading next year?***

GOALS Reports are confidential and should only be shared with appropriate staff and the student's parent/guardian.

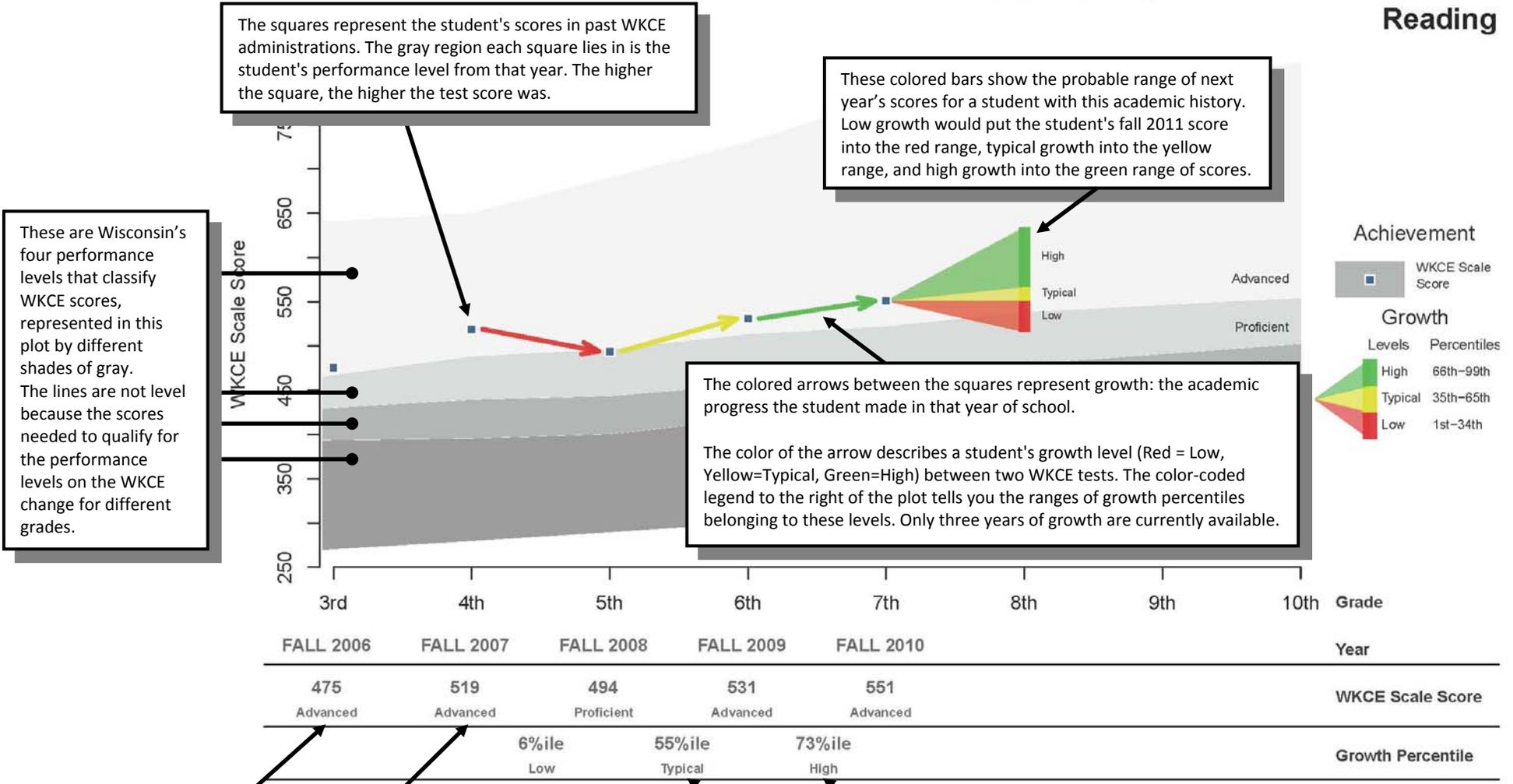
Understanding the GOALS Individual Student Report

SAMPLE STUDENT

Sample Middle, Sample District

A Report from the *Growth Oriented Achievement Learning System (GOALS)*

Reading



These are the student's WKCE scores and corresponding performance levels. Growth reports are produced for Mathematics and Reading.

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The growth percentiles appear in this row, directly below the corresponding growth arrow.

While this student was proficient across the years, he or she experienced typical growth from 5th grade to 6th grade, and high growth from 6th to 7th grade when compared to similar students.

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