

Trending and Test Frequency in STAR (FAQ)

Why does the number of data points required for a trend line vary depending on the report used?

As a general rule, the more tests a student takes that are used to calculate the trend, the more accurately the trend line will represent the student's performance. The professional opinions of our psychometricians as well as outside experts help us determine how many scores to require for a trend line to appear.

Factors taken into consideration include: the purpose of the report, the way the data is intended to be used, and the time span in which the tests were taken.

STAR report	Report purpose	Scores required for trend	Reason
Annual Progress Report	Monitor progress for a student or class against national norm reference lines, or, with STAR Early Literacy, against literacy skills classification levels or risk categories.	3	This report can be used to identify growth trends for individual students or an entire class. The report does not require an intervention goal to be set, so it can be used to monitor growth of any student regardless of their participation in an intervention. Teachers could use the growth trend on the class report to help evaluate the effectiveness of core instruction. Recently, we've changed the number of data points needed from two to three in order to be consistent with the Student Performance Report. Three data points provide teachers with flexibility in how frequently to test students.
Student Performance Report	Track student progress toward proficiency on the state test in time to make adjustments to instruction and practice.	3	In preparation for state assessments, students may be tested periodically to monitor their progress on the pathway to state proficiency. The students being monitored may not be part of an intensive educational intervention and therefore likely to be tested less frequently, such as bi-weekly or monthly. With this additional time between tests, three data points are adequate for a trend line. Also, since state assessments are often given in early spring, we felt it was important a trend line was shown as soon as possible so teachers have enough time before the state test to make instructional changes.
Student Progress Monitoring Report	Determine the effectiveness of an intervention with an individual student.	4	The Student Progress Monitoring Report was developed to follow RTI principles as rigorously as possible. More data points are required to ensure a highly accurate trend line is used to make important intervention decisions. With students able to test as often as weekly for progress monitoring purposes, the time span during which the tests are taken needs to be sufficient to make a reliable trend line. We have recently changed the required number of tests from five to four because we found that schools often monitor progress every two weeks, and having a trend line in eight weeks is consistent with educator and state department recommendations.

* Changes in the number of scores needed for a trend line will take effect when STAR Enterprise is launched: March for STAR Math, May for STAR Reading and October for STAR Early Literacy. Until the changes take effect, the Annual Progress Report will require two tests and the Student Progress Monitoring Report will require five tests.