Fort Worth ISD – Discussion Notes for August 20, 2008 Growth Model Meeting

Fort Worth is developing/refining a model to measure student academic gains. After much discussion and work with our data, we have:

- Completed linking students and teachers for each tested subject and school year.
- Determined whether the student has been in the classroom for a sufficient period to be counted – decision: count any student who has been taught by the assigned teacher for at least two six-week periods.
- Linked other student and teacher information
- Developed and run a value added model (OLS Regression)
- Produced detailed student level files
- Summarized student value added for each classroom/teacher
- Summarized student value added by campus, subject and grade

These processes have been run using a OLS regression model for grades 3-12 in the 03-04 through 07-08 school years. The reports for 2008 and for all years in grade 3 are hot off the computer and have not yet been sent to or reviewed by the district.

In addition, our lead consultant has created summary reports to simply summarize student-level value added scores by grade, subject and campus. The Word-merge process creates one table for each campus each year with cells by grade and subject and summary by grade, subject and for the campus. These have been reported using z-scores (a positive value is above the district average).

We recognized early on that district data systems were not designed to support and confirm detailed teacher-student links. For example, the elementary teacher-student matches assign each student to a homeroom. On numerous elementary campuses, especially in fourth and fifth grade, instruction is departmentalized, so the homeroom teacher may not be the math, reading or science teacher. There will be a change in the scheduling of elementary students for the 2008-09 school year so that each elementary student will be linked by subject to the teacher who teaches the student that subject.

Based on the experience of other districts, such as Houston ISD, we believe it will be necessary to implement a process to confirm which students are taught by each teacher in each subject well in advance of any awards. This is probably the project's most time-critical issue. One proposed solution is to produce either printed or on-line reports (using Datasmart, our web reporting tool) so that each teacher can review & confirm the link for each subject.

FWISD is also evaluating the model to be used to calculate student value-added

including a hierarchical linear model (HLM) currently in development. In addition to the OLS regression, we have a statistical consultant working to construct 2-level HLM models. We will compare of the results of the HLM to the results generated using the value-added model (OLS regression). After this comparison, we will decide which approach to use for our PEAK analysis in the 2008-09 school year. It is our desire to select the simplest method possible which produces the most accurate results.

We also have begun discussions on how to provide training for teachers and administrators on the methodology that will be implemented.