

**Florida's Value-Added Model (VAM)**  
**Webinar 1: Communicating About VAM in a Positive Way**  
**7/14/15**  
**Transcript**

Slide 1: Intro Slide

Good morning! My name is Kelly Oglesby. I'm a Policy Consultant for the Teacher Retention Unit in the Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development, and Retention. Joining me today will be Jason Graham, our Program Director, and Alvin Davis, Sangeetha Wollet and Denise Scheidler, Program Specialists. Thank you for allowing us to share with you today information about Florida's Value-Added Model, also called VAM. For your information, we will "mute" all participants until the question/answer sections."

Slide 2: Our Opportunity

"Good morning everyone! I'm glad you could join us for this webinar. House Bill 7069 gives us a powerful opportunity to reposition teacher evaluation as part of a professional growth system for educators and to reclaim the powerful potential of VAM to support teachers and leaders in improving teaching and learning."

As I think about how to do that, I come back to two ideas:

1. Educators will not use performance data to inform their instructional practice and growth needs until they understand it and trust in how it is being used.
2. District and school leaders are instrumental in creating and reinforcing a supportive environment that promotes and models using non-evaluative data for self-reflection and continuous improvement."

Slide 3: Goal

"Our goal for today's webinar and through future related evaluation webinars is that teachers understand how they are being evaluated, including how VAM works, and that they are using evaluation data as they would student data – to inform their practice and to identify areas for professional learning.

To get there, we know we need to do a better job at clearly and effectively communicating what VAM is, who receives a VAM, and how it can be used to inform professional learning and improve instructional practice. That is why I am so proud of this series of webinars and support documents that Kelly has put together for you.

There will be opportunities during the webinar for active discussion and questions. We hope you will join in the conversation as this will lead to a deeper understanding of VAM, teacher evaluations and how to use it to inform our professional learning needs.

If you think of any additional information along the way that would help you with your work, please let us know.

Kelly will provide you with a link to this webinar and all related materials soon after the webinar.”

#### Slide 4: Overview

“As you can see, we plan to host a series of four webinars in the upcoming weeks. Of course, we are happy to add other webinars depending on your needs. Each presentation will last from 50-60 minutes, based on participation and questions.

Since VAM contains multiple layers of information, we thought it best to break each session into smaller components that build off of each other.

Today’s webinar will focus on, “Communicating About VAM in a Positive Way”

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, we will dig into the data and help you understand what data you have access to”.

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, Webinar 3 will share information on “Using Data to Inform Our Practice”.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, Webinar 4 will focus on “Difficult Conversations.”

You will also find these dates in the original invitation email.

During each of these sessions we will also share information and resources that you may find helpful.”

#### Slide 5: Structure of Our Time Together

“Let’s look at today’s webinar.”

#### Slide 6: VAM Video

“Our time together today will be broken down into three sections: a consistent message, district messages to principals, and principal messages to teachers.

In each section we will present the information and then ask the audience to pose any questions they have regarding the slide.”

#### Slide 7: VAM Video – (play video)

“We have a great opportunity to get really clear about what VAM is and to help teachers see its potential. VAM is the best information we have ever had about a teacher’s impact on student learning. Being a teacher who gets a VAM is a good thing. Understanding that starts with understanding how VAM works.

The short 6 ½ minute video that follows will help people understand VAM a little better. We are happy to share the video with you, but we caution against using the VAM video as ‘the answer’. It will almost certainly lead to questions that, if not answered, will result in confusion and frustration for teachers. The video is a great first step to unpacking VAM’s potential and we will talk more about other steps districts can take in subsequent webinars.”

#### Slide 8: Types of Data Available to Districts

We are excited to be able to share this video with you. Now that you have seen the video, you might have some additional questions or a few points you want clarified. Let's pause here for a minute to address those questions. Who would like to go first? Please tell us your name and what district you represent."

...These are perfectly appropriate questions; questions we know teachers and principals will have so thank you."

#### Slide 9: "Mrs. Apple's Classroom" – picture

"Our goal is for all Florida teachers to understand how they will be evaluated, including how VAM works. We created a resource document to support you in accomplishing this goal in your district, which we provided as an attachment to the reminder email we sent out on Monday. For the next part of the webinar, we will refer you to different pages within that document as we talk more about the District message to principals and the principal message to teachers."

#### Slide 10: What is the District's VAM Score?

"On page 5 in the resource document, we talk about 9 general guidelines for educating principals and teachers about VAM. This slide talks about the first three. Let me give you 30 seconds or so to look these over.

The first one focuses on the fact that the video is helpful but it will not answer all questions for everyone. It is a great introduction and clarifies many misunderstandings.

Next, providing raw VAM scores, with the expected and actual scores, offers transparency to teachers and gives them the data they need to make decisions about their practice and their professional learning needs.

Also, allowing teachers to compare their individual students' test history to their predicted score helps them understand how the predicted score is determined and that it is a realistic measure."

#### Slide 11: Resources

"Here are the next three suggested guidelines. Take some time to read through these.

It's critical that principals and district leaders send a clear message to teachers about the purpose of evaluation. We are not evaluating for evaluation's sake nor are we trying to seek out teachers to get rid of. One of the key reasons we evaluate teachers and administrators is to inform their practice and areas for professional growth.

VAM is not intended to "catch" teachers. Our raw VAM data shows us that about 70 – 75% of teachers have a positive impact on student learning.

Showing teachers their one year and three-year aggregate data may assist in making them feel more comfortable with the scores."

Slide 12: FAQ Document – picture

“Sharing the data opens the door for teachers to feel comfortable in asking questions. This can be a great opportunity to communicate that teaching a course that receives a VAM score can be a very positive thing.

VAM provides individualized data. Collaborative practices are to every one’s benefit! When teachers are aware of their strengths and weaknesses they can reach out to share practices and learn from each other.”

Slide 13: “HB 7069 Memo” – picture

“Sending out a message to principals like the one on page 8 of the resource document equips them with knowledge and a resource person. We recommend that a District Point of Contact be designated. This person would serve as the district authority on VAM. By identifying a single person, this assists in keeping the message consistent across the district.

As you can see from the letter on this slide, principals are given information to assist in answering questions regarding VAM but also are provided a district POC for additional support. Just a reminder, this letter, along with all resources mentioned in this webinar will be sent out again following this session.

Let’s pause here and answer any questions you may have. Please identify yourself and your district. Who would like to go first?”

Slide 14: Next Webinar

“Principals are the primary contact for school wide communication. Teachers will turn to their principal seeking information regarding VAM. In this next section we will equip them to answer the most commonly asked questions.”

Slide 15: Conclusion

“Letting teachers know from the beginning that they will receive a VAM score takes away the mystery. Doing so in a positive way can help to put teachers in the right frame of mind.

As mentioned in the VAM video, specific courses automatically get a VAM score but this needs to be communicated to teachers.”

Slide 16: Conclusion

“Teachers who receive a VAM score will ask the question, “What does a VAM score mean?”. A brief response has been provided to assist in responding. This can be found on page 8.”

Slide 17: Conclusion

“As the video explained and as page 9 points out, these are the 10 variables the model takes into account.

Let’s pause here for a moment and see if anyone has a question.”

Slide 18: Conclusion

“Again, in order to assist principals, we have created a short invitation on page 11 that could be handed out to teachers to invite them to a staff meeting to discuss teacher evaluations or VAM.”

### Slide 19: Conclusion

“In order to make sure the principal feels supported and prepared as they introduce the VAM video, we have created a script. This should aid principals in prepping the group, focusing on key take-aways, and bringing to light the district point of contact for additional questions.”

### Slide 20: Conclusion

“Another critical step to helping people understand VAM is building a common language around it. Understanding some of these terms will help dispel some common misinformation about the State’s role in teacher evaluation.

We call any VAM data the State sends to districts “**raw**” VAM data. It is simply a number; a data point without any performance level attached to it. Currently, the State gives districts the authority to set performance levels. Districts have access to several different kinds of raw data.

The **student level data** looks like the scores we saw under each student in the VAM video. It represents the number of points higher or lower on the developmental scale that students taught by the teacher scored when compared to similar students statewide. The higher or lower score is a comparison of how the student performed versus his or her expected score.

The State also sends a **1-year aggregate** and a **3-year aggregate** VAM score to districts. The 1-year aggregate, sometimes just called the **aggregate VAM score**, includes an aggregate for ELA, an aggregate for Math, and a combined score that includes both ELA and Math. This means we combine all courses and grade-levels for a teacher and standardize the score.

The 3-year aggregate includes data from the current school year and each of the two prior years for which data are available for a total of at least one and up to three years of data for the teacher.

Let’s take a moment here to pause and answer any clarifying questions you might have.”

### Slide 21: Conclusion

“Once the district receives the VAM scores from the state, they can present the data to teachers in any manner they determine.”

### Slide 22: Conclusion

“It is the difference between the actual score and the expected score that determine the VAM score. When the actual is higher than the expected, the score is positive. When the actual is lower than the expected, the score is negative.”

### Slide 23: Conclusion

“Something we can’t stress enough is the fact that VAM is just a part of the summative evaluation score. Each district presents an evaluation plan to the state for approval. Specific guidelines, as outlined on this slide and on page 14 of the resource document determine how much these measures will count in the overall teacher summative score.

Does anyone have any questions about the summative evaluation score?”

Slide 24: Conclusion

“We’ve covered a lot in a short amount of time. Please know that we are here to support you. If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us. As soon as possible, following this webinar, all related materials will be sent out and posted on our webpage.”

Slide 25: Conclusion

“Our next VAM webinar will focus on Decoding the Student Performance Measures versus VAM. Please plan to spend approximately the same amount of time as we share what constitutes a student performance measure and how it compares to VAM.”

Slide 26: Conclusion

“Thank you for participating in this webinar. We look forward to sharing additional information with you in the upcoming webinars.

Have a great rest of your day!”