

**T**ECHNICAL **B**RIEF  
FOR THE  
**S**TATISTICAL **M**ODEL  
IN  
**I**NFORMATION **W**ORKS!

*2008 Rhode Island School and District Reports  
(School Year 2006-2007)*

By

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Across the nation, politicians, educators, and parents have become deeply concerned with finding ways to measure the effectiveness of schools and school systems. There is statewide agreement in Rhode Island that all students need to attain high standards of achievement in mathematics, reading, writing as well as other school subjects. To ensure that there is a measurable progress in the core subjects, the State administers the *New Standards Reference Examinations* (NSRE) developed by Harcourt Educational Measurement at the high schools. In the elementary and middle schools (grade 3 to 8) the State administers the *New England Common Assessment Program* (NECAP) tests developed by the education departments of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The proficiency results are reported to the general public through an annual publication called *Information Works!*

## 2. PURPOSE

The main purpose of *Information Works!* is to present an overview of the school in five basic categories: past and present academic achievement, demographics, school specific highlights, selected school indicators, and a summary of the financial breakdown for the school. The goal is to provide school-related content that would enhance public understanding of the school and the widely varying circumstances within which the school, its staff and students operate. The ultimate goal of *Information Works!* and the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) is to assist each school in its efforts to improve student achievement by providing measures that focus on getting all students to the desired level of proficiency. *Information Works!* summarizes the information that schools need when developing their strategic planning and school improvement initiatives.

## 3. MOTIVATION

Politicians and educators have struggled with the idea of developing useful yardsticks for school effectiveness that are honest, accurate and easy to comprehend. The initial stages of this effort often ignored the varying degree to which the social and political factors affected schools in various districts. Schools were frequently

measured by a small set of benchmarks that often had no universal applicability. In other words, benchmarks were being used to rank order districts and schools as if the schools were competing on a level playing field. The rank-ordering yardstick by itself is not sensitive to differences in a school's environment, its practices, or to its achievement results that are not part of the formal state assessment program. To help alleviate some of the problems in viewing raw achievement results, the researchers at the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the National Center on Public Education and Social Policy (NCPE) at the University of Rhode Island have devised a statistical model that attempts to address some of the differences in school composition. The remainder of this document is devoted primarily to the understanding of the statistical model.

#### **4. PREDICTORS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

Studies<sup>1</sup> show that family background characteristics are closely related to student achievement. Schools with less economically privileged students, for example, almost always have lower achievement scores. This trend is also evident in Rhode Island. When Rhode Island ranks their state test results, the results closely mirror the socioeconomic status (SES) of the district. Thus, high-income districts have higher number of students meeting or exceeding the standards than low-income districts. Changes in many other characteristics (variables) have also been shown by research studies to correlate closely to student achievement. These variables include:

1. Prior achievement or aptitude
2. Participation in free or reduced lunch programs
3. Minority status
4. Educational level of the mother
5. Father's occupation
6. Family income
7. Number of siblings
8. Students receiving special services (e.g., special education, bilingual or ESL education).

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Daniel Koretz, "Indicators of educational achievement," In Indicators of Children's Well-Being, Eds. Robert M. Hauser, Brett V. Brown, William R. Prosser. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997, pp. 208-234; Stephen P. Klein et al., "Gender and racial/ethnic differences on performance assessments in science," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 19(2): 83-98, 1997; Bonnie L. Halpern-Felsher et al., "Neighborhood and family factors predicting educational risk and attainment in African American and white children and adolescents," in Neighborhood Poverty: Context and Consequences for Children, Eds. Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Greg J. Duncan, J. Lawrence Aber. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1997, Volume 1, pp. 146-173; Jeanne-Brooks Gunn, Greg J. Duncan, "The effects of poverty on children," Children and Poverty, 7(2): 55-71, 1997.

Additionally, other macro-economic variables such as school settings (urban, rural, suburban), per pupil expenditure, policies and practices within schools or school districts, and community characteristics (for example, job market, tax support, etc.) also seem to affect student achievement<sup>2</sup>.

## 5. The RHODE ISLAND MODEL<sup>3</sup>

Statisticians over the years have built increasingly sophisticated models to relate the various factors presented above. One of the most powerful of these methods is hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). When applied to schools, HLM considers characteristics of a school as well as the characteristics of individual students. Researchers at NCPE attempted to use HLM but ultimately rejected it as an approach because the sets of schools that look similar to each other are too small to yield reliable results. The NCPE research team thus used hierarchical regression analysis, which is a specialized form of multivariate analysis.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.1 The Outcome (Dependent) Variable

The outcome variable, or the variable to predict, is the student's academic achievement in each subject area across different grade levels. With the introduction of the NECAP tests, two separate sets of hierarchical regression models were developed. One set of models was for the elementary and middle schools and the other set was for the high schools. For the elementary and middle schools individual models were developed for mathematics, reading, and writing. For the high schools a model was developed for each subtest in each subject area (Mathematics, and English Language Arts). For the purposes of the analysis an

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<sup>2</sup> David Kaplan, Pamela R. Elliott, "A model-based approach to validating education indicators using multilevel structural equation modeling," Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, 22(3): 323-347, 1997; Garrett K. Mandeville, "The South Carolina experience with incentives," In Midwest Approaches to School Reform, Eds. Thomas A. Downes, William A. Testa. Chicago: Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 1994, pp. 69-91; Robert D. Felner et al., "The impact of school reform for the middle years: Longitudinal study of a network engaged in Turning Points-based comprehensive school transformation," Phi Delta Kappan, 78(7): 528-532, 541-550, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Details on the statistical terminology used in the Rhode Island Model are presented in Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> For further information consult George A. Marcoulides, Scott L. Hershberger, Multivariate Statistical Methods: A First Course. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997; J. Scott Long, Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1997; and one of the classics in the field, Jacob Cohen, Patricia Cohen, Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1983. A good general discussion of modeling is David W. Britt, A Conceptual Introduction to Modeling: Qualitative and Quantitative Perspectives. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997.

elementary school is defined as a school which has a grade 5 testing grade. A middle school is defined as a school which has a grade 8 testing grade. If a school has testing grade 11 it was considered as a high school. The percentages of students who achieved proficiency or were above the proficiency level were computed and used as the outcome (dependent) variable.

## **5.2 The Explanatory (Independent) Variables**

Four explanatory variables known to relate statistically to student achievement on state tests are collected annually from Rhode Island schools and districts. These variables are:

1. The percentage of students within a school eligible for free or reduced lunch
2. The percentage of minority students (i.e., non-white) within a school
3. The percentage of students in a school enrolled in ESL or bilingual education programs
4. The percentage of students within a school receiving services under special education law

Because of the small number of schools in Rhode Island, comparisons were made among all schools in the state for the given grade level rather than at a district level. Research has shown that some or all of these variables may be highly correlated.

## **5.3 A Glimpse Into The Rhode Island Data**

A descriptive analysis for the Rhode Island data is presented in Table 1. Table 2 presents the correlation results between the set of explanatory variables. Table 3 presents the correlation results between the response variable and the set of explanatory variables. Table 4 presents the results of the hierarchical regression analysis.

## **5.4 Descriptive Analysis**

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the response variables and the five explanatory variables that will be investigated in the development of the RI school model. Specifically, the information shows the minimum and maximum value for the variable (range), mean (arithmetic average), and standard deviation (a measure of dispersion). Analyzing the information in Table 1, we find that among the five explanatory variables the highest variability (standard deviation) exists in the percentage of minority students enrolled in a grade. The lowest variability exists in

the *% of Students Enrolled in Special Education* and in the *% of Students in LEP*. When analyzing the response variables it is interesting to note that the variability is pretty even among the variables based on the grades.

#### 5.4.1 Creating the Poverty Index Variable

All explanatory variables except *% of Special Education students* exhibit significant correlation. (See Table 2: Correlation Analysis). Only in the elementary section, does the variable *% of Special Education Students* correlate with *% of Students Eligible for Subsidized Lunch*. In essence, the variables are said to exhibit *multicollinearity*. In other words, when one variable shifts, the others also shift in the direction of their sign. For example, *% Eligible for Subsidized Lunch* and *% Minority Students* show a significant almost perfect positive correlation of about 0.9 across all grades. One of the remedies for multicollinearity is to group variables in blocks. Therefore, the researchers computed an equally weighted average of the following two variables: *% Eligible for Subsidized Lunch*, and *% Minority Students*. A low value within the Poverty Index indicates greater poverty in a school and a high value indicates lower poverty.

#### 5.4.2 Correlation Analysis

The Statistical Model presented, shows a very high correlation between achievement on selected state tests and all of the explanatory variables. This is presented in Table 3.

#### 5.4.3 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

After careful study of the correlation tables, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed. The results are presented in Table 4. The first variable to be entered in the model is the *Poverty Index*. We then added in the variable that measured the *% of students in LEP programs*. The variable that measures the *% of students in the special education programs* was entered next into the regression. (For a quick overview on Hierarchical Regression see Appendix A7.3). In the Rhode Island Statistical Model, we used the *Poverty Index* first because it accounts for the most variation in student achievement among the three variables. Research with several Hierarchical Models suggested that the next most important variable was *% Students in LEP*. The residual variance was picked up by *% Students in Special Education*

programs. The researchers are aware that some students within a school receive both types of services and would be “counted” twice in this model. Students with multiple learning needs require more support, which in turn factors into the cumulative effects of multiple challenges.

Table 4, presents the results from the hierarchical regression. Across all grade levels, the *Poverty Index* variable explains most of the variation in student achievement. The negative sign of the coefficient gives further credence to the fact that schools with more economically disadvantaged students have lower student achievement across all subject areas and grades. The residual variation (variation not explained by the *Poverty Index*) is then explained in part by students in LEP programs and students receiving special education services. The variable % *LEP* is not significant in explaining the variation in student achievement as indicated in Table 4. The last column of Table 4, represents the proportion of variation (r-square) in student achievement scores that was “statistically” explained by the set of explanatory variables. For example, the model explains 76.6% of the variation in *Reading: Analysis & Interpretation* in grade 11, and 80.8% of the *Reading* score in grade 8, but only 67.2% of the *Reading* score in grade 5. Similarly, the model explains a relatively large portion of the variation in the Mathematics Skill score (grade 11) and in grade 8. The percentages are 82.1% and 73.6%, respectively. The model does not perform as well for the grade 5 mathematics scores. That is, it explains only 49.7% of the variation in the mathematics scores for this grade.

## **6. PREDICTING INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

The hierarchical regression models were used to create expected achievement scores. The information for each school is presented on *The Value-Added Indicators Field* under the *Using Information* section of each school report. The researchers report on the percentage of eligible students who have met or exceeded the standard (shown in Figure 1 & 2 as the Actual Range) compared to the percentage of similar students statewide (shown in Figure 1 & 2 as the Sample Range). These expected scores, are based on school level data as described above. That is, the field provides a comparison between an individual school’s performance score that has been adjusted by the socioeconomic factors, for similar schools statewide. The researchers call this group of similar schools a “virtual school.”

Standard errors were also computed in addition to the specific point estimates for the expected scores. The point estimates combined with the errors generate a band within which we would expect individual school performance to lie. The band, shown in Figure 1 & 2 as the sample range, shows the 95% confidence interval for the predicted score. The larger the width of the confidence band the less likely the school is in representing a typical Rhode Island school. Conversely, the narrower the band the more representative the school is to the entire group.

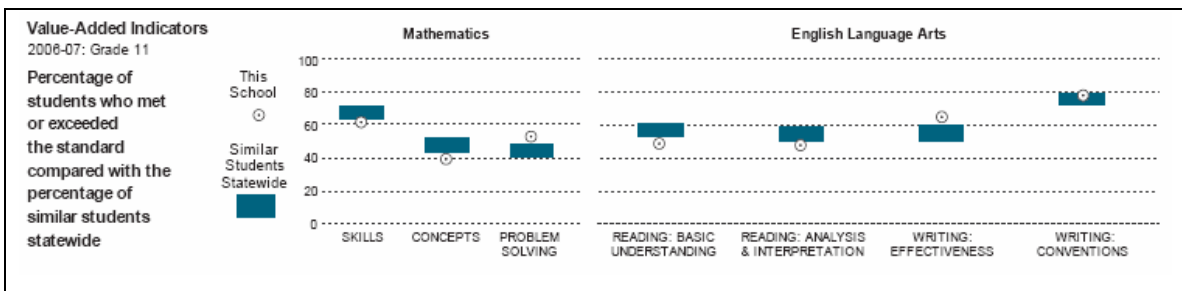


Figure 1: RI Statistical Model for a Sample High School

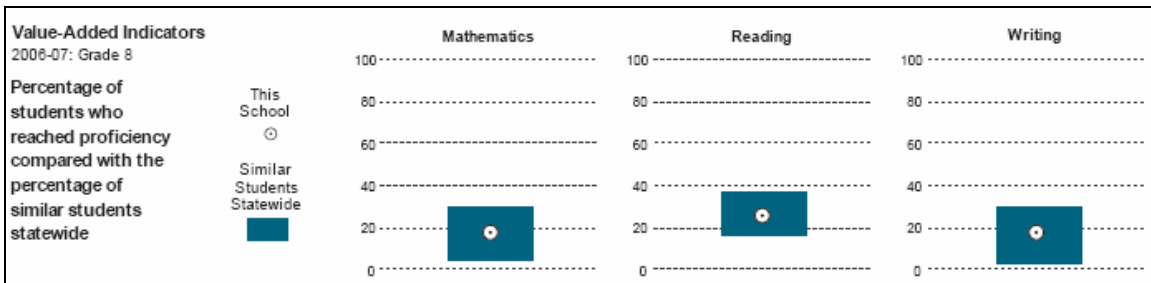


Figure 2: RI Statistical Model for a Sample Elementary and Middle School

## APPENDIX A: STATISTICAL DEFINITIONS

The following few sections describe some general statistical terminology that is important for understanding the analysis presented in this *Technical Brief*.

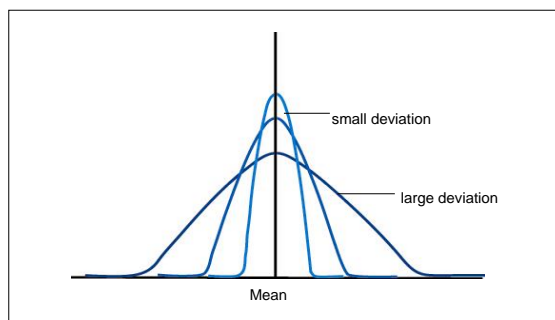
### A1. Definition of a Variable

A variable is a data / questionnaire item on which individual responses (observations) are obtained. Variables are categorized into two major categories.

- Response Variable: Is a variable whose outcome is being studied.
- Explanatory Variable: A variable that can explain the causal changes in the response variable.

### A2. Descriptive Statistics

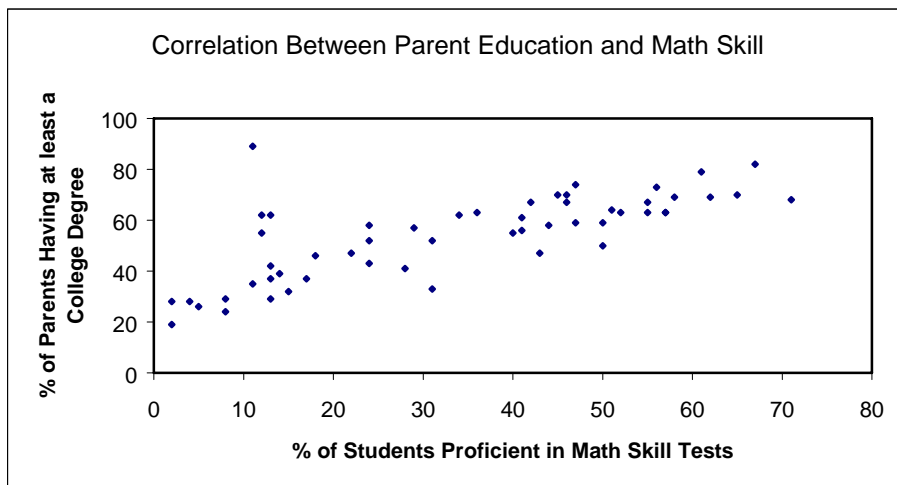
Descriptive Statistics is the collection, organization, analysis, and presentation of data. For example, in Table 1 column one presents the number of valid observations (N) for each of the variables. The next column shows the minimum value for that variable in the data set. The third column shows the maximum value for the variable. The fourth column shows the arithmetic mean for the variable. Arithmetic mean is often called the average value. The last column shows the standard deviation for the variable. Standard deviation provides a statistical measure for dispersion around the mean. For example, Figure A1 shows the dispersion around the mean of three sample schools. The innermost curve corresponds to smallest dispersion (low standard deviation) around the mean the outermost curve corresponds to the most variability (high standard deviation).



**Figure A1: Example of Deviations Around the Mean**

### A3. Correlation

Researchers find it convenient to have a single number to measure the strength of the relationship between two variables and to have that number be independent of the units used to make the measurement. The correlation between a response variables and an explanatory variables is shown in Table 2. The reader thus has a better idea of the predictive ability of a single explanatory variable on the response variable. Table 3, on the other hand, shows the interactions of the explanatory variable amongst themselves. The higher the absolute value of the correlation, the greater is the relationship between the two variables. A correlation of zero indicates that there is no positive or negative relationship between the two variables. A positive correlation value indicates that the variables increase together (Figure A2 shows a line with an upward slope – bottom left to top right). A negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases the other decreases (Figure A3 shows a line with a downward slope – top left to bottom right). A correlation of  $\pm 1$  (or 100%) indicates that there is a perfect linear relationship between the two variables. Correlations of  $\pm 1$  would be extremely strong relationships. These correlations are rarely observed when exploring relationships between different variables.



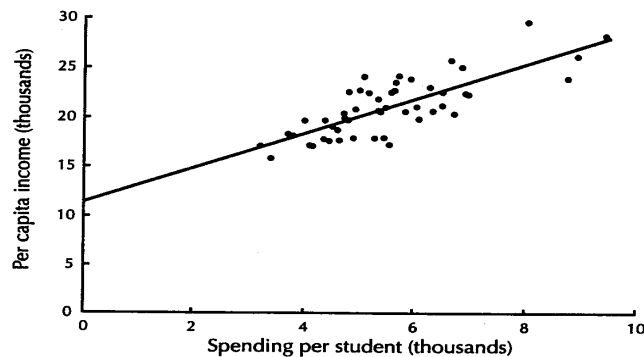
**Figure A2: Example of Positive Correlation between Two Variables**



degree of confidence we have in a statistical relationship is called the *confidence level*. A confidence level of 95% and above is considered to have *statistical significance*. In other words, most researchers are willing to state that a relationship is statistically significant if the possibility of observing that relationship in the sample purely due to chance is less than 5%.

For interpretational reasons, statisticians generally present a *confidence interval* of a prediction. A *confidence interval* is the statistical lower and upper bound within which the predicted value will occur 95% of the time. 95% is the value of the confidence level. In *Information Works!* this *confidence interval* is represented as a band (sample range) on Field 2 of the school report. In essence, a school should expect the actual achievement score (presented as a heavy solid line) for a particular sub-test to fall within the band. If the actual achievement score is above or below the band it is assumed that the school achieved those results purely by chance. Of course, if the school consistently performs above or below the band in multiple years and/or in more than one test, this school requires further study. It is increasingly likely if the results hold over multiple years that the results obtained are not due solely to chance (i.e., random fluctuations) but represent "real" under or over achievement as compared to what was expected from the model.

## A6. Simple Linear Regression

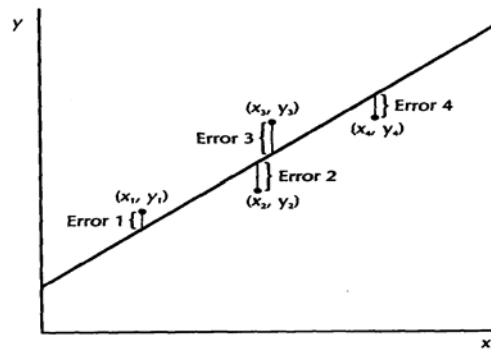


**Figure A4: Regression Line**

As mentioned in Section A3, the correlation coefficient measures the degree of linear relationship between two variables. However, it does not describe the exact linear association between a response variable ( $y$ ) and the explanatory variable ( $x$ ); that

role is played by regression analysis. Regression analysis helps us to determine whether a specific relationship exists between  $x$  and  $y$  thereby allowing one to use  $x$  to predict  $y$ .

Figure A4<sup>6</sup>, shows the causal relationship of *Spending per Student* ( $X$ ) on the *Per Capita Income* ( $Y$ ). The original data is represented by dots. The line, often termed as the *regression line*, is obtained via the principles of Least Squares. As we know, given two points we can draw one line. Given, infinite points we can draw infinite lines. Thus, the problem of finding the *best* line through a set of points was solved using the Least Squares principle. The Least Square principle minimizes the deviations from the actual data points to a hypothetical line. This is shown in Figure A5<sup>7</sup>. The formula that defines the *regression line* is termed the *regression equation*.



**Figure A5: Regression Line with Deviations**

A simple linear regression equation is written as:  $y = a + bx$ , where  $y$  represents the values on the vertical axis (per capita income in our example);  $x$  represents the values on the horizontal axis (spending per student in our example); and  $a$  and  $b$  are parameters (values) obtained from the least squares solution. The intercept or " $a$ " is the intersection point of the regression line with the vertical axis. The slope or  $b$  determines if there is a positive or negative relationship between  $x$  &  $y$ . A positive slope, indicated by a positive value for  $b$ , shows that for every unit increase in  $x$  the response variable  $y$  has an increase of  $b$  units. Conversely, a negative value of  $b$  indicates that for every unit increase in  $x$ ,  $y$  decreases by  $b$  units.

<sup>6</sup> Reproduced from *Statistics: The Easy Way*, Douglas Downing, Jeffrey Clark, Barron's Educational Series Inc., Hauppauge, NY, 1997, p.256.

<sup>7</sup> Reproduced from *Statistics: The Easy Way*, Douglas Downing, Jeffrey Clark, Barron's Educational Series Inc., Hauppauge, NY, 1997, p.259.

## A7. Multivariate Analysis

The section above presented an overview of how one explanatory variable can predict the outcome of one response variable. However, in most daily scenarios it is unlikely that one explanatory variable is all one needs to build an effective model. The study of multiple explanatory variables interacting simultaneously to produce the outcome on one or many response variables is termed Multivariate Analysis. For the purposes of this Technical Brief, we will only address models with one response variable and more than one explanatory variables. The Rhode Island Statistical Model is based on one such technique -- Hierarchical Regression. As is shown in the following sections Hierarchical Regression is a variation of two other forms of analysis that we did not use: Multiple Regression and Stepwise Regression. A brief discussion on each of the three techniques follows.

### A7.1 Multiple Regression

In a multiple regression model, sets of explanatory variables called independent variables jointly predict the outcome of the response variable or the dependent variable. All of the independent variables are specified simultaneously in the regression equation and the solution is obtained through a technique called Least Squares. The assumption is that all ( $n$ ) independent variables ( $x_i$ ) together are necessary to explain the variation in the dependent variable ( $y$ ). The regression equation is written as:

$$y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + \dots + b_nx_n$$

Once again,  $a$  and  $b_i$  are parameters obtained from the least squares solution. The intercept or  $a$  is often termed as the constant term. Each  $b_i$  determines if there is a positive or negative relationship between a given  $x_i$  and  $y$ . A positive slope, indicated by a positive value for  $b_i$ , shows that for every unit increase in  $x_i$  the response variable  $y$  has an increase of  $b_i$  units. A negative slope indicated by a negative  $b_i$  value shows that for every unit increase in  $x_i$  the response variable decreases by  $b_i$  units.

### A7.2 Stepwise Regression

In stepwise regression, the researcher assumes that the independent variables ( $x_i$ ) are correlated. The researcher simultaneously specifies all of the variables in the

regression equation just like in the Multiple Regression Model. However, the Stepwise procedure will systematically add variables that make a significant contribution to the explanation of the variation in  $y$ . The Stepwise procedure will also eliminate variables that are not significant from the equation. Thus, the final predication equation will have fewer independent variables. Stepwise regression does not address the economic or model building requirements. It simply adds and removes variables based on mathematical criteria.

### A7.3 Hierarchical Regression

In hierarchical regression, the approach used in the RI model, a core set of  $m$  independent variables ( $m < n$ ) form the basis of the regression equation. In essence these are forced into the model. The other variables are introduced one at a time in the model to see the incremental gain. Thus the order in which the variables are entered is important. The variable that explains the most variance is the better predictor of the variance in the dependent variable. For example<sup>8</sup>, if we know that IQ, age, and parents' income predict a student's ability to do math, we would like to investigate if Test A or Test B is the better predictor of a student's test score. This model can be solved by hierarchical regression by first adding all known factors – IQ, Age, and Parent's income -- into the model. Next we add the performance on Test A and Test B in every possible combination. The sample results are presented below:

STEPS FOR MODEL 1	R2 CHANGE	STEPS FOR MODEL 2	R2 CHANGE
<b>1. Age, IQ, Parents Income</b>	68%	1. Age, IQ, Parent's Income	68%
<b>2. Test A</b>	18%	2. Test B	6%
<b>3. Test B</b>	4%	3. Test A	16%

**Table A1: Predicting Math Performance Using Hierarchical Regression**

In this example, Test A accounts for more unique variation in math scores 18% or 16% compared to Test B which accounts for only 4% or 6% of the variation in math scores. Test A is thus considered to be a better predictor of math scores and should be selected in the model.

<sup>8</sup> Example obtained from <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~pssiw/stats/week4ohp/sld012.htm>

## APPENDIX B: TABLES

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

		<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<b>Grade 5</b>	Mathematics	168	15.00	100.00	56.68	17.98
	Reading	168	12.00	100.00	65.21	18.60
	Writing	168	6.00	87.00	50.70	20.37
	% Eligible for subsidized lunch	168	2.00	95.00	38.41	27.67
	% Minority Students	168	1.16	98.33	31.49	31.83
	% Students in Special Education	168	0.00	34.17	17.72	4.99
	% Students in LEP	168	0.00	49.00	6.71	10.90
	Poverty Index	168	2.45	94.11	34.95	28.88
<b>Grade 8</b>	Mathematics	55	10.00	91.00	49.60	21.15
	Reading	55	18.00	93.00	60.50	20.19
	Writing	55	7.00	82.00	43.68	19.90
	% Eligible for subsidized lunch	55	1.00	88.00	32.40	24.62
	% Minority Students	55	2.65	94.89	30.62	33.90
	% Students in Special Education	55	6.03	29.35	17.73	5.12
	% Students in LEP	55	0.00	27.00	3.40	6.43
	Poverty Index	55	1.96	83.65	31.51	28.24
<b>Grade 11</b>	Skills	54	0.00	94.00	53.63	22.71
	Concepts	54	0.00	75.00	33.70	20.92
	Problem Solving	54	0.00	66.00	31.91	19.42
	Reading: Basic Understanding	54	0.00	76.00	45.48	19.27
	Reading: Analysis & Interpretation	54	0.00	82.00	40.72	21.27
	Writing: Conventions	54	8.00	94.00	68.56	19.36
	Writing: Effectiveness	54	0.00	87.00	45.91	20.30
	% Eligible for subsidized lunch	54	3.00	100.00	31.15	24.44
	% Minority Students	54	1.45	97.67	35.65	35.46
	% Students in Special Education	54	1.57	65.05	17.16	9.90
	% Students in LEP	54	0.00	21.00	3.07	5.71
	Poverty Index	54	3.47	87.21	33.40	28.89

**Table 2: Correlation between Explanatory Variables**

	<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	<i>% Eligible for Subsidized Lunch</i>	<i>% Minority Students</i>	<i>% Students in Special Education</i>	<i>% Students in LEP</i>	<i>Poverty Index</i>
<b>Grade 5</b>	% Eligible for subsidized lunch	1.000				
	% Minority Students	0.885**	1.000			
	% Students in Special Education	0.207**	0.078	1.000		
	% Students in LEP	0.685**	0.763**	0.051	1.000	
	Poverty Index	0.966**	0.975**	0.142	0.748**	1.000
<b>Grade 8</b>	% Eligible for subsidized lunch	1.000				
	% Minority Students	0.860**	1.000			
	% Students in Special Education	0.387**	0.260	1.000		
	% Students in LEP	0.605**	0.607**	0.378**	1.000	
	Poverty Index	0.952**	0.975**	0.325*	0.628**	1.000
<b>Grade 11</b>	% Eligible for subsidized lunch	1.000				
	% Minority Students	0.856**	1.000			
	% Students in Special Education	0.302*	0.096	1.000		
	% Students in LEP	0.498**	0.670**	-0.009	1.000	
	Poverty Index	0.948**	0.976**	0.187	0.622**	1.000

\*\* Significant at the 99% confidence level

\* Significant at the 95% confidence level

**Table 3: Correlation of Student Characteristics to Achievement**

		<i>% Eligible for Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</i>	<i>% Minority Students</i>	<i>% Students in Special Education</i>	<i>% Students in LEP</i>	<i>Poverty Index</i>
<b>Grade 5</b>	Mathematics	-0.701**	-0.660**	-0.187**	-0.512**	0.700**
	Reading	-0.814**	-0.771**	-0.202**	-0.202*	0.815**
	Writing	-0.691**	-0.655**	-0.195**	-0.195**	0.692**
<b>Grade 8</b>	Mathematics	-0.817**	-0.803**	-0.432**	-0.610**	-0.838**
	Reading	-0.844**	-0.844**	-0.459**	-0.656*	-0.874**
	Writing	-0.770**	-0.749**	-0.424**	-0.560**	-0.785**
<b>Grade 11</b>	Skills	-0.771**	-0.762**	-0.542**	-0.578**	-0.793**
	Concepts	-0.778**	-0.763**	-0.442**	-0.510**	-0.797**
	Problem Solving	-0.767**	-0.781**	-0.434**	-0.535**	-0.804**
	Reading: Basic Understanding	-0.763**	-0.721**	-0.568**	-0.541**	-0.765**
	Reading: Analysis & Interpretation	-0.770**	-0.750**	-0.498**	-0.551**	-0.786**
	Writing: Conventions	-0.614**	-0.528**	-0.761**	-0.436**	-0.584**
Writing: Effectiveness	-0.640**	-0.560**	-0.540**	-0.531**	-0.614**	

\*\* Significant at the 99% confidence level

\* Significant at the 95% confidence level

**Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Results**

		<i>Constant</i>	<i>Poverty Index</i>	<i>% Lep</i>	<i>% Special Education</i>	<i>R-Square (%)</i>
<b>Grade 5</b>	Mathematics	77.330** (3.742)	-0.435** (0.053)	0.024 (0.138)	-0.317 (0.202)	49.7%
	Reading	89.009** (3.126)	-0.495** (0.044)	-0.077 (0.115)	-0.338* (0.169)	67.2%
	Writing	74.483** (4.278)	-0.470** (0.060)	0.026 (0.158)	-0.405 (0.231)	48.8%
<b>Grade 8</b>	Mathematics	79.565** (5.700)	-0.545** (0.070)	-0.304 (0.313)	-0.663** (0.323)	73.6%
	Reading	90.465** (4.637)	-0.527** (0.057)	-0.403 (0.255)	-0.675** (0.263)	80.8%
	Writing	71.854** (6.165)	-0.486** (0.075)	-0.187 (0.338)	-0.689 (0.350)	65.1%
<b>Grade 11</b>	Skills	88.590** (2.950)	-0.449** (0.062)	-0.899** (0.308)	-1.003** (0.142)	82.1%
	Concepts	61.659** (3.340)	-0.496** (0.070)	-0.318 (0.349)	-0.666** (0.160)	72.9%
	Problem Solving	58.669** (3.047)	-0.451** (0.064)	-0.411 (0.318)	-0.608 (0.146)	73.9%
	Reading: Basic Understanding	75.479** (2.664)	-0.369** (0.056)	-0.678** (0.278)	-0.909** (0.128)	79.7%
	Reading: Analysis & Interpretation	71.879** (3.159)	-0.443** (0.066)	-0.669** (0.330)	-0.833** (0.152)	76.6%
	Writing: Effectiveness	74.017** (3.763)	-0.219** (0.079)	-1.213** (0.393)	-0.995** (0.181)	63.5%
	Writing: Conventions	101.534** (2.504)	-0.193** (0.053)	-0.889** (0.261)	-1.387** (0.120)	82.2%

\*\* Significant at the 99% confidence level  
 \* Significant at the 95% confidence level  
 Standard Deviations are in parentheses