What are the ISAT Gains?
The ISAT Gains is a metric developed to measure whether students are making academic progress from 2006 to 2007. At the student-level, ISAT Gains are computed for the ISAT Mathematics and Reading tests. At the school level, Percent Making Expected Gains refers to the percent of students in a school making academic progress from year-to-year. In addition to Reading and Mathematics, a Composite metric is also available at the school-level.

Why measure progress?
Measuring progress helps to indicate whether or not students are learning from year-to-year. As the following graph illustrates, it is possible for students to be above an attainment standard and not progressing, and vice-versa.

In the above simple example, Student 1 is above the attainment standard in both years, but Student 1’s score has declined from year 1 to year 2 whereas Student 2 is below the attainment standard but is actually improving from year 1 to year 2.

How is progress defined?
In general, students are considered to have made progress if the gain in their ISAT scale score from 2006 to 2007 is at or above the median (i.e., at the 50th percentile or higher) scale score gain of similar students district-wide.

How are similar students identified?
Students are compared along the following dimensions:

1) Previous year ISAT scale score
2) Stability (defined as enrollment in the same school at the 20th day of the school year and at the day of ISAT assessment)
3) IEP status
4) LEP status
5) Eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL)
6) Gender
7) Race
8) Grade

Students were compared to other students in the district who match them on all of the above dimensions.
Why are students only being compared to similar students?
This comparison recognizes that student performance has historically been impacted by prior performance (where a student started) and by demographic and socioeconomic factors.

How is the ISAT Gains analysis conducted?
The analysis is conducted once the Board receives final ISAT results from ISBE. The ISAT Gains analysis utilizes a statistical regression model; the dependent variable in the model is a student’s current year ISAT scale score and the factors listed above (previous year ISAT scale score, IEP Status, LEP status, etc.) are the explanatory variables. If a student's actual current year scale score is greater than or equal to his or her score estimated by the model, then the student made gains. Each group of similar students will have the same estimated score. Non-technically, as mentioned above, if a student is in the top 50th percentile of similar students district-wide, that student made gains. Due to small sample sizes, for some groups of similar students, the cutoff for making gains may not be exactly at the 50th percentile.

Can a school know in advance what gain each student needs to make to reach the “expected” gain?
No. The regression analysis generates the predicted scores for each student after there are two years of scores. This is because the predicted gain for each student is influenced by the performance of all students from 2006 to 2007.

Who is included in the ISAT Gains analysis?
CPS students in 4th through 8th grade in the 2006-07 school year who:
- had an ISAT Reading score in both the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years or an ISAT Mathematics score in both the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years
- were neither retained nor skipped a grade from the 2005-06 to the 2006-07 school year

How does ISAT Gains differ from ISAT Attainment?
ISAT Attainment reports the performance of students at one point-in-time (e.g. a student’s scale score on current year ISAT). ISAT Gains compares the relative growth of each student from one year to the next. Further, unlike proficiency standards (e.g. Meets Standards / Exceeds Standards) for ISAT Attainment, there is not one fixed score that all students need to achieve. To meet ISAT Gains, students are measured on a relative basis to other similar students in the district.

Is ISAT Gains the method CPS will use to measure progress in the future?
No, the ISAT Gains metric was produced by the district to introduce the concept of measuring growth from one year to the next. ISAT Gains metric will be replaced by a more statistically robust metric called Value-Added. Value-Added is being designed by national education and academic experts, with CPS consultation, to measure growth district-wide. Preliminary Value-Added results measuring growth from 2006 to 2007 have been produced, and there is a high degree of correlation between these Value-Added results and the 2007 ISAT Gains metric. More information on Value-Added will be forthcoming soon.
SIMPLIFIED EXAMPLE: School A has 5 students

3 students in School A have the following characteristics:

- 2006 Reading ISAT Scale Score = 200
- Stability = Yes (spent entire school year in School A)
- Race = Black
- LEP = No
- FRL Eligible = Yes
- Gender = Female
- IEP = No
- 2007 Grade = 4

To make gains, a student with these characteristics needed to score at least 220 on the 2007 Reading ISAT Assessment (i.e., district-wide, the median scale score gain for students with these characteristics is 20 (220-200)).

2 students in School A have the following characteristics:

- 2006 Reading ISAT Scale Score = 195
- Stability = Yes (spent entire school year in School A)
- Race = Hispanic
- LEP = No
- FRL Eligible = Yes
- Gender = Male
- IEP = Yes
- 2007 Grade = 5

To make gains, a student with these characteristics needed to score at least 217 on the 2007 Reading ISAT Assessment (i.e., district-wide, the median scale score gain for students with these characteristics is 22 (217-195)).

At the student-level, of the 5 students in School A, 2 have met gains (Student 2 and Student 4). At the school-level, the Percent Making Expected Gains in Reading for School A is 40% (2 divided by 5).