

By looking at a student's past test scores and controlling for the variables that can effect scores, TEI and other value-added model (VAM) systems apply an algorithm to predict how a student is likely to score at the end of his current grade. Any deviation from the predicted score for the current grade is assumed to measure the impact of a teacher's work. (In DISD, the achievement score is measured by the STAAR or ACP tests). So a teacher whose students who do better than predicted mean the teacher is effective and a teacher whose students who do worse than predicted is ineffective. It is well known by educators, statisticians, and data scientists that this is an unreliable method of evaluating teachers. The subtitle of this blog is a statement coined by mathematician Dr. Cathy O'Neil, listen to [her explain VAM here](#) and why it is unreliable. The similarities of what she discusses (particularly during 11:26-20:03) and what we are finding in DISD are uncanny.