

Accountability – Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

What the Law says...

In short, States are held accountable and are required to hold local education agencies (LEA's) accountable for developing standards and putting systems in place to ensure that students are able to meet or exceed those standards. States and LEA's are to prove they've done so by assessing the students. The "or else" comes in the form of sanctions against the state, districts (LEAs), and schools, however, the worst a State can be sanctioned is the loss of funds; schools, and their employees, can suffer worse fates. We have already discussed Standards and Assessments in separate briefing papers. The remaining major aspects of Accountability are discussed in individual papers as well. Again, the actual language of the law is extensive. Here are the highlights:

- ESEA '01 has set a goal for ALL students in public schools, including those in charter schools, to meet or exceed the definition "proficient" as it is defined by each State relative to the State's standards for mathematics and reading by the end of SY 13-14.
- Each State, district, and school, if it receives Title I funds, must make "adequate yearly progress" towards that goal.
- Each State must define its own AYP using its:
 - o own standards,
 - o definition of "proficiency,"
 - o technically rigorous assessments, and data based on those assessments.
- States may use a two- or three-year averaging formula to determine AYP.
- States must use other indicators, specifically graduation rate is mandated as an indicator for high schools, but it must use the assessments as the primary measure of progress.
- AYP must be made for each category: major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency.
- The starting point or baseline, using SY 01-02 data on the State's assessment, is the higher of the percentage of students:
 - o in the lowest achieving group of students (see the above bullet), or
 - o in the lowest performing school whose student population represents the 20th percentile of state student population.
- Numerical targets, both intermediate and annual measurable objectives, are set for all disaggregated groups of students and each group must move towards 100% proficiency over the next 12 years.
- If any single student group or single school in the State fails to meet its benchmark for a given year (achieve AYP), there are sanctions. (See: [Accountability – Sanctions](#))
- There is a "safe harbor" from sanctions. If a school makes at least a 10% reduction in the number of students (in each group) deemed to be non-proficient and makes improvement in one other indicator, it will not be subject to sanctions.

Regulations

The US Department of Education has promulgated draft regulations on AYP. These regulations require that a state define AYP in a manner that:

- Applies the same standards to all schools in the state.
- Is statistically valid and reliable.
- Results in continuous improvement for all students.
- Measures progress of all public schools, LEAs, and the state.
- Measures progress separately for reading/language arts and for mathematics.
- Applies the same intermediate goals, annual measurable objectives, and other academic indicators to all students.

The regulations also recognize that there is a population of students in each state which consists of students who have the “most significant cognitive disabilities” that may be held, instead, to a standard of professional judgment. It limits this population to 1.0% (proposed) of the student population.

Each state’s definition of AYP must include a timeline; starting point based on SY 01–02 assessment data; intermediate goals (first at SY 04-05; every 3 years thereafter); annual measurable objectives of equal increments based on the intermediate goals; and other indicators, with graduation rate mandated for high schools.

Pennsylvania and AYP

- Definition of AYP: a school or district will make AYP if:
 - It has a 95% or better participation rate; and
 - It meets the performance target or AMO in both subjects^φ; or
 - It makes “safe harbor” by reducing the percent of below proficient students by 10%.
- A district does not make AYP if it fails to meet the target in the same subject for 2 consecutive years in one of three grade spans; 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12.
- Definition of a “full academic year:” those students who are enrolled in the entity on or before October 1 to the close of the testing window.
- Annual Measurable Objectives or performance targets in math and reading:

Years	Mathematics	Reading
2003, 2004	35% (same as baseline)	45% (same as baseline)
2005, 2006, 2007	45%	54%
2008, 2009, 2010	56%	63%
2011	67%	72%
2012	78%	81%
2013	89%	91%
2014	100%	100%

- Group size or “n” has been changed to 40 from 75 for AYP. Data for groups of 10 or more will be reported regardless.

^φ The higher of the current year’s data or the average of that year with the previous year.

- Other indicator (graduation rate and attendance rates for elementary and middle schools) targets are now either 95% or progress over the previous year's rate. Entities already at or above must stay above the 95% rate.
- PDE is proposing the use of "confidence intervals" as part of the decision as to whether a school has made AYP.

A Note About Accountability

NCLB specifically states that the sanctions listed are to be applied to Title I schools AND if consistent with state law. Pennsylvania law currently permits very few of the sanctions of NCLB. PSEA expects the state legislature to begin considering bills to enact a statewide accountability system for Pennsylvania.