

2005-06 AYP Results Frequently Asked Questions

What is AYP?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that all students reach the proficient level or above in reading and mathematics by 2014. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the way we know that schools and districts are making progress towards that goal. School districts and schools must show AYP in several measurable areas: student achievement, attendance or graduation rates, and test participation.

AYP targets measure whether a school or district is making sufficient annual progress towards the goal of 100% proficiency by the year 2014. Schools and districts must demonstrate AYP for their overall student population and for all racial and ethnic groups, students with limited English proficiency, economically disadvantaged students, and special education students. (When these subgroups contain fewer than 40 students, the subgroup is not separately evaluated for AYP, but these students are always counted in the overall student population.)

Schools and districts must meet all targets, including performance targets for subgroups, to make AYP. Schools with diverse student populations, may be required to meet up to 41 targets.

What targets must schools hit to meet AYP?

Schools must hit targets in five areas in order to meet AYP. Those targets are:

1. Attendance or graduation rate (dependent upon type of school)
2. Participation in math assessment (overall and for all measurable subgroups)
3. Participation in reading assessment (overall and for all measurable subgroups)
4. Performance on math assessment (overall and for all measurable subgroups)
5. Performance on reading assessment (overall and for all measurable subgroups)

****Assessment = PSSA***

Which PSSA subjects and grades count toward AYP?

Math and reading are the subjects that count toward a school's AYP status.

The 2005-06 AYP school and district calculations are based on PSSA results for grades 3, 5, 8 and 11. Grades 4, 6 and 7 were tested, and results for these grades will be reported to districts and schools, but these results were not included in the 2005-06 AYP calculations.

Pennsylvania will use grades 4, 6 and 7 next year when two years of data will be available for those grades.

Are there any changes made to how schools and districts earn their AYP status this year?

The only significant change to how schools and districts earn their AYP status this year is the addition of 3rd grade assessment results and participation rates.

How do schools meet the attendance/graduation target?

The attendance rate applies to schools that do not have a high school graduating class, and the rate is based on the entire school. The attendance threshold is 90%, or any improvement from the previous year.

The graduation rate applies to schools that have a high school graduating class, and includes only students enrolled in that class. The graduation threshold is 80%, or any improvement from the previous year.

For both attendance and graduation rates, the previous year's data is used for this portion of the AYP calculation. That means for 2005-06 AYP determinations a school's 2004-05 attendance or graduation rate is used in the calculation.

How do schools meet AYP participation targets?

All students are to be assessed in math and reading. In order to meet the AYP participation threshold, at least 95% of students overall and within each subgroup must take the test. Participation rate is calculated by taking the number of students who received a score for the test, divided by the enrollment of the tested grades and each subgroup population. The participation rate is based on those students enrolled as of the last day of the assessment window (March 31, 2006), whether or not those students were enrolled for a full academic year.

How do schools meet AYP performance targets?

The state academic performance thresholds for this school year (2005-06) were 45% of students at or above proficient in mathematics and 54% of students at or above proficient in reading. These thresholds are the same as last year's and will increase in the 2007-08 school year. These percentages will increase gradually until the year 2014 when 100% of students are expected to be at or above proficient in mathematics and reading.

NCLB allows schools to meet proficiency targets by "Safe Harbor," a measure of improvement. The guidelines for Safe Harbor state that if a school can reduce at least 10% of the students who scored below proficient from the previous year, it meets the AYP target for proficiency. (See ***What does it mean to meet AYP targets by Safe Harbor?***)

USDOE has allowed PA schools to show significant growth by toward proficiency by using the Pennsylvania Performance Index (PPI), which measures student progress across all levels of the PSSA, rather than just from Basic to Proficient. (See ***How does Pennsylvania PPI get used in AYP decisions?***)

The academic performance target is based on only those students enrolled for the full academic year (enrolled as of October 1, 2005), who receive a score on the test and who are not "Limited English Proficient" students in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school.

What are the targets for district AYP?

School districts must meet targets in six areas order to meet AYP. Those targets include:

1. Attendance in all schools that do not have a graduating class
2. Graduation in all schools that have a graduating class

3. Math participation in all schools
4. Reading participation in all schools
5. Math performance in all schools
6. Reading performance in all schools

Districts earn their AYP status based upon the entire student population within the district, not upon the collective performances of its individual schools.

The math and reading participation and performance targets are calculated in three grade spans. Those grade spans include 3rd-5th, 6th-8th and 9th-12th. For 2006 district AYP calculations, participation rates and performance scores for students in grades 3 and 5 are included for the 3rd-5th grade span; participation rates and performance scores for students in grade 8 are included for the 6th-8th grade span; and scores for students in grade 11 are included for 9th-12th grade span.

Within each grade span, participation rates and performance scores are calculated for all students and each measurable subgroup. If one of the subgroups or the overall group does not meet the threshold, then the overall grade span does not meet the grade span target. If one overall grade span meets all thresholds, the district meets the threshold for that target. Each of the four targets must be met in order for the district to meet AYP.

Next year, when all tested grades are counted in AYP calculations, 4th grade will be included in the 3rd-5th grade span and 6th and 7th grades will be included in the 6th-8th grade span. The reason these grades are excluded this year is because two years of data is needed for purposes of calculating AYP status.

What are subgroups?

NCLB defines subgroups as major racial/ethnic groups, students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), students with limited proficiency in English (LEPs) and economically disadvantaged students. In Pennsylvania, our major racial/ethnic subgroups are White students, African American students, Latino/Hispanic students, Asian or Pacific Islander students, American Indian or Alaskan students and Multi-Racial or Multi-Ethnic students.

How are subgroups counted towards a school's or district's AYP status?

NCLB requires states to define their minimum measurable subgroup size ('n'). Pennsylvania's 'n' is 40. If a subgroup's population is above 40, then the subgroup must meet all participation and performance targets in order for the subgroup's school and district to meet AYP. If a subgroup's population falls below 40, the students in that subgroup are counted only in the school's and district's overall student count. All students are included in the overall student count.

What does it mean to meet AYP Targets by Safe Harbor?

A school or district can meet AYP targets through a provision called Safe Harbor, which is a measure of improvement in test performance. Meeting Safe Harbor requires a 10% reduction in the percentage of students scoring below proficient in the previous year.

How does the Confidence Interval (C.I.) get used in AYP decisions?

Confidence intervals take into account the fact that the students tested in any particular year might not be representative of students in that school across the years. Confidence intervals control this sampling error or variation across years by “passing” schools or subgroups whose performance percentages are statistically indistinguishable from the AYP annual performance thresholds. A 95% C.I. can be used for meeting the state proficiency target, while a 75% C.I. can be used for meeting the Safe Harbor target.

How is the PPI used in AYP decisions?

The PPI measures growth across all levels of the PSSA, not just from Basic to Proficient. This index starts each school and subgroup at its own 2002 baseline and is aligned with the federal No Child Left Behind Act as it aims for 100% proficiency by 2014. PPI can be used by schools and districts to demonstrate significant growth. Since this index shows significant growth including growth at the lowest levels, it is a good indication that low performing schools are building a foundation to meet AYP targets.

What does it mean to meet AYP Targets by Appeal?

When schools and districts received preliminary reports, a formal appeals process is conducted per the requirements of NCLB. If a school or district had legitimate questions regarding the accuracy of AYP determinations, it may file an appeal to the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability at the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Determinations on appeals are made prior to the public release of the final report. When AYP targets for schools or districts have been met by appeal, this is indicated in the report.

How can AYP targets be met?

Overall, a school or district either meets or does not meet AYP. While it only takes one missed target to “Not Meet AYP,” there are several ways to meet AYP targets:

- **“Met AYP Target”**: indicates that a school or district met or exceeded the threshold.
- **“Met AYP Performance Target using 95% Confidence Interval”**: indicates that a group met AYP by the state target criteria only when using a 95% Confidence Interval.
- **“Met AYP Performance Target by Safe Harbor”**: indicates that a group met AYP by the Safe Harbor improvement criteria. The requirement for improvement is a reduction in the percentage of students who scored below Proficient by 10% from the previous year.
- **“Met AYP Performance Target by Safe Harbor using 75% Confidence Interval”**: indicates that a group met AYP by the Safe Harbor improvement criteria when using a 75% Confidence Interval.
- **“Met AYP Performance Target by PPI”**: indicates that a group met AYP by the PPI improvement criteria. PPI allows each school/district to start at a unique baseline based on their proficiency levels (a weight is given to each performance level with the below basic and basic levels divided into two levels). Each year the district/school must show a fixed amount of growth. 2001-02 established the baseline for PPI.
- **“Met AYP by Appeal”**: indicates that a group met AYP by appeal.

What happens to a school if it meets AYP Targets?

There are two possibilities for schools that meet AYP targets this year, depending on their previous years' results

- Schools that met AYP targets last year, or that were at **"Warning"** status last year (e.g., the school did not meet AYP targets for the first time) will either remain or enter "Made AYP" status.
- Schools that had a **"School Improvement"** or **"Corrective Action"** status last year enter a probationary period called **"Making Progress."** This means that the school must also meet state targets for a second consecutive year in order to be considered "Making AYP".

What happens to a school if it does not meet AYP Targets?

The consequences for schools that do not meet all AYP targets depend on the school's last year AYP status.

- Schools making AYP last year but missing at least one target this year obtain the status of "Warning".
- Schools missing AYP for two consecutive years will proceed in Status (Warning to School Improvement I; School Improvement I to School Improvement II; School Improvement II to School Corrective Action I; School Corrective Action I to School Corrective Action II) if the school fails to meet the same subject target.

Which students are included in AYP public reporting?

To respect student privacy, results may only be reported publicly on groups with at least 10 students. Additionally, reliability is a concern as reporting on small groups can sometimes cause statistical fluctuations. For additional protection of confidentiality and for increased reliability, AYP results may be based on data from this year only, or on an average of data from last year and this year.

Why are there more schools receiving an AYP status this year?

The following are reasons why more schools have received an AYP status this year:

- A new school is opened;
- A school has been created through the consolidation of two or more schools; or
- The school is a newly recognized feeder school.

What is a feeder school?

A feeder school (K-2nd, 1st-2nd, 1st only, 2nd only, 9th-10th, 9th only, 10th only) is a school that receives an AYP status based upon district student performance rates of students that previously attended the school. For 2005-06, there are 75 newly counted feeder schools receiving an AYP status.