

Questions and Answers

About Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

1. What is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

AYP represents the annual academic targets in reading and math and other indicators that the state, school districts and schools must reach to be considered on track with the federally mandated goal of 100% proficiency by school year 2013-2014.

2. Why does Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) exist?

AYP is part of state and federal statute. The Federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB), 2001*. Sec. 1111 (b)(F), states that, "Each state shall establish a timeline for adequate yearly progress. The timeline shall ensure that no later than 12 years after the 2001-2002 school year all students in each group described in subparagraph (C)(v) will meet or exceed the state's proficient level of academic achievement on the state's assessments."

New Mexico Statute Article 2C Assessment and Accountability Sec. 22-2C-8 NMSA 1978, Adequate Yearly Progress – "The state shall institute an 'adequate yearly progress program' that measures public schools' improvements..."

3. Who has to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

1. School districts
2. Schools
3. Subgroups within schools. The subgroups are:
 - All Students
 - African American
 - Asian/Pacific
 - Caucasian
 - Hispanic
 - Native American
 - Economically Disadvantaged
 - Students with Disabilities who have IEPs (Individual Education Plan)
 - English Language Learners

4. Can a given student be included in more than one subgroup?

Yes. For example, a Caucasian student who also receives free lunch would be counted in the All Students, Caucasian, and Economically Disadvantaged groups.

5. What happens if a school does not make AYP?

If a school does not make AYP in the same area (e.g. in math, or reading) for 2 consecutive years, then the school receives an NCLB designation as a School In Need of Improvement (SINOI). There are five levels of improvement that carry progressive requirements for monitoring and enhancement.

6. How can schools be removed from improvement status?

If a school makes AYP for two consecutive years, that school will no longer be in need of redevelopment, and any improvement designations will be removed.

7. What do schools have to do in order to make AYP?

Schools need to:

- a) Achieve a 95% participation rate on state assessments.
- b) Reach targets for proficiency.
- c) Reach targets for one other indicator – for elementary and middle schools that is the attendance rate, and for high schools it is the graduation rate.

8. What groups must achieve the 95% participation rate?

Participation rates are calculated for all schools that have 40 or more students. In addition, each subgroup with 40 or more students must meet the target of 95% participating in the standards based assessment.

9. If any participation rate (school-wide or subgroup) for a school is below 95% can it still make AYP?

No.

10. Which assessments count toward proficiency and participation?

The Standards Based Assessment (SBA) has been used for 4 years, and was designed to assess whether students meet grade-specific standards developed by New Mexico professionals. The New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment (NMAPA) was similarly designed for special education students who meet qualifications for specialized testing.

11. Who must be tested?

All public school students enrolled in grades 3-8, and 11 must participate. The school year 2006-2007 was the last year that 9th graders were tested. Assessment is not required for home and private schooled students.

12. Will the AYP proficiency targets stay the same over time?

No. The proficiency targets increase over time as we work towards the goal of 100% proficiency by 2014. At a minimum, a federally mandated increase must occur every 3 years. The targets are called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and their trajectories are viewable on the NMPED website.

13. How were proficiency starting points established?

The NCLB Act prescribed the process for determining starting points for reading and math. Baselines for New Mexico students were established using these steps:

1. Schools were ranked from lowest to highest based upon assessment performance in school year 2003-2004.
2. Beginning with the lowest ranked school, the enrollment for each school was added to the enrollment of the next higher performing school.
3. This continued until 20% of the statewide enrollment had been reached.
4. The starting point became the rate (percentage) of students who scored proficient for the school at that level.

14. How is proficiency defined for the purpose of determining AYP?

Assessments rank students as *Beginning Step*, *Nearing Proficient*, *Proficient*, or *Advanced Proficient*. Students achieving *Proficient* or *Advanced Proficient* are considered proficient for AYP and a rate is calculated for the school and district. Proficiency is computed for subgroups only if they have 25 or more students.

15. How are the AYP end points established?

The NCLB goal is to have 100% of all students proficient by school year 2013-2014. During the intervening years, AYP targets (AMOs) are set to help us move toward meeting that goal. The path to the 100% end point for different schools is viewable on the NMPED website.

16. Do all groups and schools have to meet the same targets?

All schools of the same configuration (grades taught in the school) have to meet the same proficiency targets.

17. What are the targets for schools that do not have one of the tested grades?

New Mexico tests students only in grades 3-8, and 11. However NCLB statute requires that all schools receive an AYP rating, even if they do not have a tested grade. A *Feeder School* method is used to assign scores from alumnae of the feeder school to compute AYP. For example a kindergarten-only school (feeder school) will receive the rating and designation from their exited students in grade 3. Where exited students cannot be found in the tested population, district ratings are given to the school.

18. Which students count for proficiency?

Only students who are continuously enrolled in the school for a full academic year (FAY) are counted. FAY is defined as continuous enrollment in the same school from test cycle to test cycle (e.g. Spring 2007 to Spring 2008).

19. What about students whose parents refuse to let their children take the test?

Those students are included as non-participants when determining AYP participation rates for a school. The students also do not receive a valid score for the assessment, which is considered below proficiency. Therefore these students will adversely affect a school's ability to meet AYP.

20. How do I calculate the proficiency rate for a school?

Use the following formula:

1. Numerator: The number of students scoring proficient or advanced, who were enrolled for a full academic year (FAY).
2. Denominator: The total number of FAY students tested.
3. Divide the numerator by the denominator. The result is the school's AYP proficiency rate.
4. This rate is calculated separately for reading and for math.

21. How do I calculate the proficiency rate for a subgroup?

For any subgroup (other than the *All Students* subgroup) with 25 or more students enrolled for a full academic year, repeat steps in the prior question.

22. Do schools have to reach AYP targets in both reading and math to make AYP?

Yes, all schools must meet both targets, regardless of the size of the school. Separate AYP determinations are made for both reading and math that depend on the school's meeting proficiency and participation targets in that subject. If the school does not make AYP in either reading or math, the school will not make AYP.

23. Do all subgroups have to reach their proficiency target in reading and math in order to make AYP?

Yes. All subgroups of 25 or more FAY students must meet their respective AYP target. If a subgroup does not make AYP in math, the school will not make AYP in math, and the school will not make AYP overall.

24. Do subgroups have different targets?

All subgroups are held to the same AYP proficiency standard for the school. Differences occur only because of the size of the subgroup. When groups are very small, computations take this into account and adjust the acceptable target boundary. The boundary is indicated on reports as the "Lower Bound Confidence Interval," and the formula for its calculation is appended at the end of this document.

25. What is the "other academic indicator"?

In addition to reading and math, every school must meet AYP targets in one other academic indicator. For schools with a 12th grade, that indicator is their overall graduation rate. For schools that do not have a 12th grade, attendance is the indicator.

26. Must schools reach their target for the "other academic indicator" to make AYP?

Yes. Just like reading and math, the other indicator is rated separately for AYP. If a school does not meet their target for the other indicator, they do not make AYP.

27. What is the target for attendance?

The target for attendance rate is 92.0%

28. How do I calculate attendance?

All students in kindergarten through 8th grades are included in the calculation, except in cases where these grades are not present (i.e. a 9th grade academy) and then all available grades are used. The calculation uses these steps:

1. All students ever enrolled up to the 120th day of school are included
2. For each student take the number of days enrolled (ENROLLED)
3. For each student take the number of days attended (ATTENDED)
4. For each student compute ATTENDED divided by ENROLLED
5. Average the numbers from step 4, and multiply by 100 to get the percentage

29. How was the target for attendance established?

The attendance target was negotiated with the federal government when AYP was first established. These and other federally approved rules can be viewed in the *New Mexico Accountability Workbook* which is available on the NMPED website.

30. What is the target for graduation?

The 2007-2008 target for graduation rate is 90%. Each high school will meet AYP if it: 1) achieves a 90% graduation rate, 2) equals or exceeds the previous year's graduation rate, or 3) if the graduation rate averaged over three years (this year's rate and the two previous academic years) equals or exceeds the rate of the previous year.

31. How are graduation rates calculated?

School year 2007-2008 will be the last year that this method is being used in New Mexico. The rate for each school and district is found by:

1. Identifying the number of seniors who graduated (GRAD)
2. Identifying the number of seniors who were enrolled in the school on the 40th day of the same year (ENROLLED)
3. Compute GRAD divided by ENROLLED
4. Multiply by 100 to arrive at the percentage

32. How will graduation rates be calculated next year?

In 2009 New Mexico will begin using a formula called the *Four-Year Cohort* rate. This rate represents the proportion of graduates that came from the pool of 9th graders 4 years earlier. Students who leave to another educational setting during that 4 year period are excused from the calculation (i.e. students who transfer to an out-of-state school, or to a private or home school). Similarly students who transfer into public high schools from another non-public school will join their respective cohort and be counted.

33. Why aren't we using the Four-Year Cohort rate in 2008?

The Four-Year Cohort rate requires that 9th graders be given four full years to graduate, including the summer following their senior year. Because New Mexico did not institute a unique student ID tracking system until 2004, the first cohort that could be tracked to the senior year will not be complete until September of 2008. The federal government has allowed New Mexico, like other states, to begin reporting graduation rates that are lagged by one year, in order to fully account for these summer graduates. Therefore, the first cohort will be reported in the Spring of 2009, and it will represent the graduates of the previous year. Subsequent years will follow that pattern (i.e. the graduation rate of 2010 will derived from the cohort 2005-2009).

34. What happens when students attend more than one high school?

The treatment of student mobility in the *Four-Year Cohort* calculation is a complex issue that is currently being deliberated by a task force at NMPED. This and other details of the calculation will be published as they become available.

35. Can some students take longer to graduate?

Specialized groups may be allowed 5 or 6 years to graduate, such as special education students with IEPs, or recent immigrants who do not speak English. These rules have not yet been formalized.

36. Who is considered a “graduate”?

Graduates are students who graduate with a standard diploma (including the Career and Ability pathways). Students who get a GED or a Certificate of Completion (complete course requirements but do not pass all portions of the New Mexico High School Comprehensive Examination) are considered “non-graduates” in the computation of the graduation rate.

37. What is the 2% Proxy Method?

New Mexico is implementing the one-year 2% proxy method using the 2007-2008 data. This method was approved as part of the *Accountability Workbook I* by The U.S. Department of Education on June 21, 2008. Schools that did not make AYP solely on the proficiency of Special Education students can add to the proportion of proficient scores by an equivalent of 2% of the population eligible for an alternate assessment. This is a proxy for students who would have scored at the proficient level had a modified assessment been available to them.

This flexibility is for only the current year and will be handled through the appeals process. Once a modified assessment is developed by New Mexico and approved by the U.S. Department of Education, this proxy will no longer be needed. More details of the procedure for calculating the proxy can be reviewed on page 27 of the June 16, 2008, *Accountability Workbook* (www.ped.state.nm.us).

38. What is the 1% Cap?

School districts and states are limited to the number of proficient scores generated by the alternate assessment for significantly cognitively disabled students. The limitation of 1% of the tested population is applied to students who scored at the proficient level on the New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment (NMAPA). Districts that exceed this cap will have 1% of their NMAPA proficient scores randomly selected and applied to AYP calculations at the district levels. This cap is not applied at the school level and does not change a student’s score.

39. What is Safe Harbor?

Safe harbor is an opportunity for a school to show growth for subgroups that did not make AYP. If a subgroup did not show AYP by meeting the proficiency target (by percent proficient or the confidence interval) a school may demonstrate that the subgroup made AYP by all other measures (participation, attendance/graduation rate) and has diminished the proportion of non-proficient students in that subgroup by 10%.

40. What is a Confidence Interval?

As the number of test scores and students diminishes so does our confidence in interpreting results. The U.S Department of Education has allowed us to apply a 99% confidence interval. If the AYP target is 35% proficient in Mathematics, for example, and 101 students are tested, then the target lowers to 24.97, which is the lower bound of the confidence interval. This is similar to the margin of error mentioned in surveys and election results (“give or take 3%”). The smaller the number of scores used in an analysis the wider the confidence interval (margin of error). Below is the formula New Mexico uses to calculate the confidence interval around the AYP goal depending on the number of students analyzed.

Confidence Interval Formula

$$\pi_L = \frac{n}{n + z^2} \left[p + \frac{z^2}{2n} - z \sqrt{\frac{pq}{n} + \frac{z^2}{4n^2}} \right]$$

Where: n = the number of students

z = the critical value (PED is using a 99% confidence level, so z= 2.33)

p = AYP target (Annual AYP Goal), expressed as a proportion (e.g., .3370)

q = 1-p

Source: Statistical Methods in Education and Psychology, Glass and Hopkins 1996