

Frequently Asked Questions about Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

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Basic AYP Facts

What is AYP?

AYP, or Adequate Yearly Progress, is a measure of the extent to which all students demonstrate grade-level proficiency in a school. It is part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which became law in January of 2002. In order for a school to make AYP, students must meet certain achievement targets set by the state. These targets are set for the school as a whole, and also for separate subgroups of students within each school. These targets are set to gradually increase over time in such a way that by the 2013-14 school year, all students will be expected to be proficient in reading and mathematics.

What are the subgroups used in AYP calculations?

There are 9 AYP subgroups in each subject area: Asian, American Indian, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Multiracial, White, Limited English Proficient, Economically Disadvantaged, and Students with Disabilities. The 10th target is the entire school, so there are essentially 10 groups that are evaluated in each subject area.

Note that these subgroups are not all mutually exclusive – that is, a student can count in multiple subgroups. For example, a White student who is eligible for free lunch and who has a learning disability counts *four* times – once for his or her ethnic group, once in the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup, once in the Students with Disabilities subgroup, and once for the entire school. In this way, some students' testing results contribute more heavily to a school's AYP calculations than others.

What are the types of targets that a school must achieve to make AYP?

There are essentially three types of AYP targets – participation targets, proficiency targets, and an Other Academic Indicator target. Participation and proficiency targets must be met separately for Reading and Math. A school can have as few as 3 or as many as 41 total AYP targets, depending on the size and diversity of the school's student population.

Participation targets are used at the overall school level and for any subgroup that has 40 or more students. In order to meet a participation target, 95% of students overall and in each identified subgroup must be tested. Meeting participation targets is basically a prerequisite for making AYP; that is, if a school does not test at least 95% of their students in each subgroup, then the school will not make AYP regardless of how well students score on those tests.



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Proficiency targets are also used at the overall school level and for any subgroup with 40 or more students who meet the “full academic year” requirement (i.e., student was in membership in the school for at least 140 days during the year prior to testing). While the participation targets are set at 95% across the board, the proficiency target that must be met varies by subject and grade span and typically increases every few years. Proficiency targets are also adjusted whenever a new test is introduced, if that test is determined to be easier or more difficult to pass than the previous version of the test. The numbers associated with the proficiency targets generally increase in a “stair-step” fashion, and must reach 100% by the 2013-14 school year.

The table shown here contains the proficiency target goals for each subject area and each grade span for North Carolina as they currently exist:

YEAR	GRADES 3-8 (%)		GRADES 10 (%)	
	Reading	Mathematics	Reading/ Language Arts	Mathematics
2007-08	43.2	77.2	38.5	68.4
2008-09	43.2	77.2	38.5	68.4
2009-10	43.2	77.2	38.5	68.4
2010-11	71.6	88.6	69.3	84.2
2011-12	71.6	88.6	69.3	84.2
2012-13	71.6	88.6	69.3	84.2
2013-14	100	100	100	100

Source: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/images/nclb/targetgoalschart.jpg>

For example, for the 2009-10 school year, the proficiency rate that schools had to meet in reading in grades 3-8 was 43.2% proficient, and for mathematics, 77.2%. These proficiency rate targets apply to the school as a whole, as well as any subgroups that exist within the school.

In addition to the participation and proficiency targets, each school also has an Other Academic Indicator target that it must meet in order to make AYP. For elementary and middle schools, this is the attendance rate. To meet the attendance target, schools must have either a 90% daily attendance rate or higher, or they must show at least a 0.1% improvement in attendance over the previous year if their attendance is below 90%. For high schools, the Other Academic Indicator is their graduation rate. To meet this target, a high school must either have a four or five-year graduation rate of at least 80% or it must show at least a 2 percentage point improvement in the four-year rate or a 3 percentage point improvement in the five-year rate from the previous year.

What tests are used for the participation and proficiency targets for AYP?

In elementary and middle schools, the state’s reading and mathematics end-of-grade tests in grades 3 through 8 are used. The various alternate assessments that some students take in place of those tests (currently the NCEXTEND1 and NCEXTEND2 assessments) are also used. In elementary schools, AYP calculations are based on the students in grades 3-5; K-2 students are not included in any way. In middle schools, all students in grades 6-8 are included.

In high schools, reading and mathematics AYP calculations are more complicated. First, only the test results of 10th grade students are included. Since North Carolina does not have a 10th grade test in reading or mathematics per se, high school reading results are based on a combination of English I end-of-course test results and the 10th grade writing test. For mathematics, results are based on the Algebra I end-of-course test.

Since most 10th graders take English I and Algebra I prior to 10th grade, high school AYP results for any given year are largely based on tests that students have already taken in previous years, either in 9th grade or even in middle school. In some cases, they may have taken these courses in other schools, other counties, other states, or even other

countries! AYP target calculations for high schools are therefore much more complicated than those for elementary and middle schools.

How does the state figure out if a school makes AYP or not?

In order to make AYP, a school must make all of its proficiency and performance targets in both Reading and Math and must also make its “Other Academic Indicator” target. If there are any targets on a school’s AYP report (<http://ayp.ncpublicschools.org>) which say “Not Met”, then the school has failed to make AYP.

Explanation of AYP Target Results

What is the level of the proficiency targets that a school must make under AYP?

The participation targets and Other Academic Indicator targets are generally consistent from year to year. The proficiency targets, however, change periodically and also whenever a new version of a test is introduced. The table below shows the proficiency targets by subject and grade span that are in place for the 2009-10 school year.

(NOTE: These targets are scheduled to increase dramatically in 2010-11; see

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/abcayp/overview/tgoal>)

AYP Targets by Grade Span, 2009-10 School Year

Grade Span	Subject	Proficiency Target
Elementary/Middle	Reading	43.2%
Elementary/Middle	Math	77.2%
High	Reading	38.5%
High	Math	68.4%

What does it mean when I see ‘Met w/ Safe Harbor’ or ‘Met w/ SH’ for a target on an AYP Report?

Safe harbor is a “safety net” that can be used to help a school make an AYP target even if the school falls below the actual proficiency target. That student group can meet its proficiency target with safe harbor if:

- the subgroup has reduced the percent of students *not* proficient by at least 10% from the previous year; AND
- the group shows progress on the Other Academic Indicator (i.e., attendance in grades 3-8 or graduation rate in high schools).

Schools can use safe harbor for any and all subgroup(s) of students that do not meet the proficiency target outright. If a subgroup did not have at least 40 students in the previous year, however, then safe harbor cannot be used.

What does it mean when I see “Met w/ Conf. Int.” or “Met w/ CI” for a target on an AYP Report?

Like safe harbor, the confidence interval (or CI) is a second safety net that schools can use to make an AYP target. In some cases, particularly when a school falls just short of a proficiency target, a confidence interval (similar to a margin of error applied to polling data) is used. If the AYP target falls within this margin of error, then the school is considered to have met that target. This analysis is applied if the school fails to make the target outright and if they also fail to make it using safe harbor. Note that the confidence interval cannot be combined with safe harbor; it is calculated independently.

What does it mean when I see “Met w/ Growth” for a target on an AYP Report?

Like safe harbor and the confidence interval, growth is a third safety net that schools can use to make an AYP target. If a school does not make a target using either of the first two safety nets, then a calculation is applied that identifies non-proficient students who are nonetheless “on track” to become proficient within the next three years based on their performance history. If by counting those students as proficient the school would then have enough proficient students to meet the target, the target is considered to be met.

What does it mean when I see “N/A”, or “Insuf Data” for a target on an AYP Report?

Targets that are listed as “N/A” or “Insuf Data” are those in which there are fewer than 40 eligible students in that group. Schools are not held accountable for subgroup results when there are fewer than 40 students in that group.

Explanation of Different Target Results for AYP

Target Result	Explanation
Not Met	School failed to meet the specified target.
Met	School met the target.
Met w/ SH (or Met w/ Safe Harbor) for a <i>proficiency</i> target	School made target because they reduced the percentage of non-proficient students by 10% or more from the previous year.
Met w/ SH (or Met w/ Safe Harbor) for a <i>participation</i> target	School made the participation target. Even though they did not test 95% of students in that group, the average participation rate over the past two or three years still exceeds 95%, so the target is considered to be met.
Met w/ CI (or Met w/ Conf. Int.)	School made the target because the margin of error around their result encompasses the target.
Met w/ Growth	School made the target based on the number of students who were proficient PLUS the number of students who are on track to become proficient within 3 years.
No Data or N/A	There were no students in the group.
Insuf. Data	There were fewer than 40 students in the group, so their result is not part of the calculations.

AYP and Title I Schools

How is AYP different for Title I schools?

There are two major differences between Title I schools and non-Title I schools in terms of AYP. One has to do with how AYP is determined and the second has to do with the consequences of not making AYP.

For schools that receive Title I funding, all of the typical AYP calculations are the same. However, if a Title I school does not make AYP outright, then AYP is recalculated *based only on the performance of the school’s Title I students*. If the school’s Title I students make AYP, then the school is considered to have made AYP. For this reason, the number of students and the number of AYP targets reported for a Title I school can sometimes be much lower than the total number of students and targets in the school. This extra calculation may be applied in only one subject area (Reading or Math) or it can be applied in both subject areas if it helps the school make AYP.

If a non-Title I school fails to make AYP, there are no legally-determined consequences. However, if a Title I school fails to make AYP in the same subject for two or more consecutive years, there are a number of sanctions and other provisions that are specified by federal law. See: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/abcayp/overview/ayp#10> for further information on the type and nature of those provisions.

Additional Sources of Information on AYP

Wake County Public Schools

http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/report_topics/no_child_behind.html

NC Department of Public Instruction

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/abcayp/>

US Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/ayp/edpicks.jhtml?src=az>