

Accountability Determinations FAQ

April 2013

On Track to Proficiency

1. What is growth to proficiency?

In developing a next generation institutional accountability system that incorporates student academic growth as part of our [Accountability - ESEA waiver](#), SED adopted the student growth percentile (SGP) and growth to proficiency methodologies made available by the Center for Assessment (Betebenner, 2008, 2009, 2011). These methodologies measure student growth and make determinations about whether below proficient students have made sufficient growth to be on track to become proficient within four years of first being administered the State assessment and three years of being able to calculate growth in elementary/middle level English language arts or mathematics or by grade 8, whichever comes sooner.

2. How is growth to proficiency calculated and what data are used?

The growth to proficiency model uses as much as three years of historical assessment data to determine how much growth students who started out as Level 1 or 2 (i.e. below proficient) were required to demonstrate in order to ultimately become proficient in three years or by grade 8. The model analyzes three years of growth (3rd to 4th, 4th to 5th, 5th to 6th) for students who became proficient in 7th grade in NYS in the past and calculate how much growth is required for students to do the same in future years. The model then assigns a growth target to each Level 1 and 2 student; meeting the targets in 2011-12 means the student is considered on track to proficient for the purposes of the State's performance index.

Data used for each grade are as follows:

- Grade 4: Calculate growth between grades 3 and 4 using grade 3 prior assessment score and grade 4 current year assessment score
- Grade 5: Calculate growth between grades 3 and 4 and grades 4 and 5 using grades 3 & 4 prior assessment scores and grade 5 current year assessment score
- Grade 6: Calculate growth between grades 3 and 4, grades 4 and 5, and grades 5 and 6 using grades 3, 4, & 5 prior assessment scores and grade 6 current year assessment score
- Grade 7: Calculate growth between grade 4 and 5, grades 5 and 6, and grades 6 and 7 using grades 4, 5, & 6 prior assessment scores and grade 7 current year assessment score

Visit [ESEA Waiver Attachments](#) for the statistical foundation for the model (See: *A Technical Overview of the Student Growth Percentile Methodology for the New York State Education Department.*)

3. What does it mean to be “on track to proficient” and what does it mean to be "not on track"?

A student who receives the designation “on track” means that the student scored Level 1 or 2 on the ELA or Math assessment in 2011-12 **and** has met his/her growth target for the academic year. These

students are considered “on-track to proficient.” Growth targets and designations are calculated each year for student who scores in Level 1 or 2 in 2011-12, except as noted in Question 6.

A student who starts out as not proficient in grade 3 could get credit for being on track to proficient based on their performance in Grade 4, Grade 5, and Grade 6 even if the student does not yet reach proficiency in those grades. However, by Grade 7 the student must be proficient in order for a school to receive "full credit" (i.e. Level 3) for the student's performance on NY's Performance Index. If the student remains at Level 1 or 2 in Grade 7, he or she goes into the Performance Index based on level of performance only (either no credit or half credit – see calculation of performance index below).

"Not on Track" means that the student's Achievement Level (i.e., Level 1 or 2) was used to compute the performance index. This is either because the student did not achieve his/her growth target in 2011-12 or the student did not have a growth target for the 2011-12 school year (see Question 6 below for the reasons why a student would not have a growth target.)

4. How does this designation get used in the calculation of the performance index?

Students who are considered on track to proficiency are counted the same they would be if they were at Level 3 (or Proficient) for the purposes of calculating the state’s performance index (PI). The calculation of the PI is as follows:

$$PI = [(number\ of\ continuously\ enrolled\ tested\ students\ scoring\ at\ Level\ 1\ \mathbf{On\ Track} + Level\ 1\ \mathbf{On\ Track} + Level\ 2\ \mathbf{On\ Track} + Level\ 2\ \mathbf{On\ Track} + Level\ 2\ NOT\ On\ Track + Level\ 3 + Level\ 3 + Level\ 4 + Level\ 4) \div number\ of\ continuously\ enrolled\ tested\ students] \times 100$$

		<i>Sample Count of Students Performing at Level</i>					
Grade	Student Count	Level 1 -On Track	Level 1 -Not On Track	Level 2 - On Track	Level 2 - Not On Track	Level 3	Level 4
4	35	2	7	7	3	10	6
5	43	1	2	10	6	10	14
6	30	1	2	6	7	10	4
Total	108	4	11	23	16	30	24

$$\text{Calculation of PI} = [(4+4+23+23+16+30+30+24+24) \div 108] \times 100 = 165$$

5. Which students get a student growth percentile and on-track designation?

Students in grades 4 through 7 receive a growth percentile and on-track designation, except for those students noted in Question 6. Students in grade 3 and 8 cannot receive an on-track designation and their performance is included in the PI based solely on their achievement level (i.e. Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4).

6. Why do some students not have an on-track designation?

There are several reasons why a student may not receive a growth percentile and designation, which include:

- Students who are Level 3 or 4 in the current or prior year do not receive an on-track designation;
- Students missing one or both assessment scores necessary to calculate growth between two years;
- Students in grade 3 do not receive a growth percentile or designation because there is no baseline assessment score from which to calculate growth;
- Students in grade 8 are not considered for on track to proficiency because this is the horizon for the designation, meaning students are either proficient or not in grade 8;
- Students with atypical grade progressions (students who skip or are retained in grade) are not included in growth percentile calculations
 - A student who is retained in grade cannot receive an on-track designation for the year in which the student was retained in grade (e.g., a student who was enrolled in the same grade in both 2010-11 and 2011-12 cannot get an on-track designation for 2011-12.)
 - A student who skips a grade cannot receive an on-track designation for the year in which the student skipped the grade (e.g., a student who was in grade 4 in 2010-11 and grade 6 in 2011-12).

To identify students who are considered on track and not on track in 2011-12, review the Accountability Verification Reports available in the Level 2 Reporting (L2RPT) environment. For information on how to access these reports in L2RPT, see [IRS - Level 2 Reports](#).

7. Are new students included in growth to proficiency calculations? What about students who leave the district or a school?

Following institutional accountability guidelines, students are included in these calculations if they meet continuous enrollment guidelines, meaning they must be enrolled on BEDS day and assessment day to be considered for inclusion in the performance index. Students who enter the district or the school after BEDS day are excluded from these calculations, as well as students who leave the district or school before assessment day.

8. What happens to students who score Level 3 after being in Level 1 or 2 in the previous year?

Such students are reported as proficient. “On track to proficient” is a designation that is given only to students who are performing at Level 1 or 2 in 2011-12 and who have met their growth target.

9. Does a student who was proficient in a prior year and then became not proficient in a subsequent year get a new on track to proficient trajectory? For example if a student was proficient in grade 4 in 2009-10 and not proficient in grade 5 in 2010-11, can they be on track to proficient in grade 6 in 2011-12? How about grade 7 in 2012-13?

In this example, if the student performed at Level 1 or 2 in 2011-12 but made sufficient growth between grade 5 and grade 6, then the student is considered on track to return to proficiency by the end of grade 7 and the student would be designated in 2011-12 as on track to proficiency.

10. Why do students with similar scores on the assessment have different on-track designations?

Students with similar scores may receive different on-track designations because each student has a different growth trajectory and targets based on his or her academic history. While some students may have scored similarly this year or last, the amount of growth between years must be analyzed to determine if the student is on track to proficiency in three years or by grade 8.

For instance, two students may have a scale score of 644 in 2011-12, with one considered on track and the other considered not on track. The student who is considered on track met his or her growth target, which is based on other students with a similar starting point who become proficient in three years or by grade 8, while the other student did not.

11. How much growth do students need to be considered on track to proficient?

Growth targets vary based on how far away the student is from proficient, as well as by how much growth was demonstrated by students in the past with similar test histories who became proficient in three years. Students farther away from proficient must demonstrate more growth year over year than students close to (but not at) proficient, i.e. a student who scores at a low Level 1 in grade 4 would need to demonstrate more growth than another 4th grade student who is a high Level 2.

Secondary-Level Assessment Cut Point Modifications

12. What changes were made to the cut points for determining accountability performance levels on Regents examinations in 2011-12?

The revised cut points used in the Performance Index calculation for accountability at the secondary level in English and mathematics are shown in the table below:

Score/Accountability Performance Levels for Regents English	Score/Accountability Performance Levels for Regents Mathematics
90–100 = Acc Level 4	90–100 = Acc Level 4
75–89 = Acc Level 3	80–89 = Acc Level 3
65–74 = Acc Level 2	65–79 = Acc Level 2
0–64 = Acc Level 1	0–64 = Acc Level 1

13. What cuts points are used to determine performance levels on Regents examinations for annual reporting in 2011-12?

The cut points used to determine performance levels on Regents examinations for annual reporting in 2011-12 are shown in the table below:

Score/Performance Levels for Annual Regents Exam Reporting
85–100 = Level 4
65–84 = Level 3
55–64 = Level 2
0–54 = Level 1

14. How are Regents Competency Test (RCT) scores included in the Performance Index (PI) calculations at the secondary level in 2011-12?

Students who pass or fail an RCT are counted as performing at Accountability Level 1 when PIs are calculated at the secondary level in 2011-12.

2011-12 Safe Harbor Targets

15. Why are the 2011-12 Safe Harbor (SH) Targets for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics different on the 2011-12 New York State Accountability Report and the 2010-11 Accountability and Overview Report (AOR)?

The SH Targets in the AORs were calculated prior to the ESEA Waiver approval, using Performance Indices (PIs) without the growth performance levels at the elementary/middle level and modified cut points at the secondary level. The SH Targets in the Accountability Report were calculated after the waiver approval, using PIs with the growth performance levels at the elementary/middle level and the modified cut points at the secondary level. These new PIs were made available to districts on the Information and Reporting Services Portal (IRSP) in July 2012 under “ESEA 2010-11 Revised Performance Indices.” For more information about accessing data on the IRSP, see [IRS Portal](#).

Effective AMOs

16. What Effective Annual Measurable Objectives (EAMOs) were used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2011-12?

Revised EAMOs for elementary/middle-level ELA, math, and science and secondary-level ELA and math by accountability subgroup and group size used to determine AYP in 2011-12 are available at [Accountability - AMOs](#). See “Effective Annual Measurable Objectives for AYP Determination Based on 2011-12 Results.”

Verifying Data in the Report Cards

17. How can I confirm that the data in my 2011-12 report cards are accurate?

Most data in the 2011-12 report cards are available in verification reports in the Level 2 Reporting (L2RPT) environment. For example, data used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress for accountability are in the Elementary/Middle-Level and High School Accountability Data Verification Reports. For more information about these reports and accessing them, see [IRS - Level 2 Reports](#).

18. How can I appeal my Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determination?

If you believe that your AYP determination is inaccurate because the data you submitted was either 1) inaccurately loaded by your Regional Information Center (RIC) or Big 5 City School District, or 2) incorrectly calculated by the New York State Education Department, you may submit an appeal using the [Accountability Appeal Application for AYP Determinations Using 2011-12 Data](#) available at [Accountability Homepage](#). NOTE: Appeals will not be accepted based in errors on the part of schools or districts to submit accurate data by the reporting deadline.

19. When will I receive information regarding the Local Assistance Plan, Focus School, Priority School, Reward School, and Focus District designations?

Information on these designations is scheduled to be released to districts in May with public release in the summer of 2013. Please note that no schools will be newly identified as Priority Schools and no districts will be newly identified as Focus Districts based on 2011-12 school year data. New Focus Schools will be identified based on 2011-12 school year data only if a district requests that a school not currently identified as a Focus School receive that designation in place of a school currently identified as a Focus School.

Notification to the Field

20. When and how were districts notified of changes to the computation of the Performance Indices?

- [Memo to the Board of Regents Summarizing the Provisions of New York's ESEA Waiver Request](#)
- [ESEA Waiver Attachments](#) – See Attachment 21 for more detail on the number of students considered on-track to proficient in 2010-11; See *A Technical Overview of the Student Growth Percentile Methodology for the New York State Education Department* for the statistical foundation for the model.
- [ESEA Waiver Webinars](#)
- [May 2012 Memo to the Field - Summary of Provisions of New York's ESEA Waiver Request](#)
- [January 2013 Memo to the Field - Reminder of Key Changes to Accountability Determinations](#)
- [April 2013 Memo to the Field - Release of Accountability Determinations Based on 2011-12 School Year Results](#)

Other questions or concerns

If you have other questions or concerns about accountability determinations, please e-mail them to accountinfo@mail.nysed.gov