RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM ESEA FLEXIBILITY UNDER NCLB

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

February 2016

Ken Wagner
Commissioner

THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE RHODE ISLAND STATE CONTEXT

Rhode Island's School Accountability system is in a period of transition. The accountability data for the 2014-15 school year is based, in large part, on the first year's administration of the PARCC assessment. The results of this testing confirmed the need for us to continue our hard work of transitioning to more rigorous expectations for students through personalization, aligned curriculum, and expert instruction. Our accountability system is intended to shine a light on the progress our schools are making on these efforts and to provide public information that allows us to:

- Focus on learning gaps;
- Document and learn from schools that are making great progress;
- Provide information that raise questions for further investigation; and
- Identify schools that need additional support and attention.

This year's accountability is sensitive to this transition period. Rhode Island submitted an ESEA Flexibility request that was approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The approved plan allowed us to adjust our accountability system to reflect the new testing program. The plan requires RI to calculate an accountability index for every school under an abbreviated set of measures, to identify Commended Schools, and to maintain our list of Priority and Focus Schools unless they met agreed upon exit criteria from that status. The plan also confirmed that we do not have to apply a label to any school (i.e. Leading, Typical, and Warning) nor do we have to identify new Priority and Focus schools. Because we are using an abbreviated system based on a new assessment system, the 2015-16 index scores are not comparable to scores from previous years and rules and procedure RIDE previously used to determine school classifications have changed.

This Technical Bulletin for classifying schools is based on this approved system. The following pages describe the process that is used to classify schools for the 2014-15 school year only. It departs from the process that was used in the most recent past years. We urge you to review the data with an understanding that we are in the midst of important change.

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES AND MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

For School Year 2014/2015 RIDE only classified schools in one category:

- Commended Schools

Classification is based on five metrics or measures of performance:

- Absolute Percent Proficient (also called "Proficiency" for short),
- Subgroup Performance Gaps Against Performance Reference Group (or "Gap-Closing"),
- Percentage of Students in Distinction Level (or "Distinction"),
- Student Growth (or "Growth") – elementary and middle level only, and
- High School Graduation Rate (or "Graduation") – high school level only.

Beyond the five metrics, the accountability system factors in Annual Measurable Objectives for subgroups for reading and mathematics proficiency, test participation and graduation rates.

It is important to note that a school is classified as only one level (elementary, middle or high). As a general rule, this is the highest grade span which the school includes and for which it has sufficient numbers to calculate the above metrics. If there are sufficient metrics in a different level other than the level containing the highest grade, then the school is classified under that level. A district is classified separately at each appropriate level. Therefore a district with grades K-12, would be evaluated at the elementary level, at the middle level and at the high school level.

COMPOSITE INDEX SCORE (CIS)

Each of Rhode Island's schools will have a Composite Index Score (CIS) ranging from 20 to 100 points, in order to be classified appropriately. Each district will have a CIS for each applicable level (i.e. elementary, middle and high). The scores will be earned within each of the five measures of performance. Within each metric, cut scores were assigned to divide the range of scores into five levels of performance. There are also two metrics which are not used for determining points in the CIS, but which are potential limiting factors in the classification of schools and districts. These are the Graduation Rate Target and the Participation Rate.

Each of the metrics of the accountability system, except for the high school graduation rate, is comprised of various subcomponents, based on different subject areas (i.e. reading and mathematics) and different student population subgroups. The subgroups used include:
1. **All Students** who were tested;
2. **The Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup**, which includes African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American students, as well as students receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL);
3. **The Consolidated Program Subgroup**, which includes students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP, also referred to as Students with Disabilities) as well as English Language Learner (ELL) students; IEP students include those who are actively receiving IEP services as well as students who have exited the IEP program within the last two years; ELL students included Monitored Year 1 and Monitored Year 2 students, and
4. **The Performance Reference Subgroup**, which includes students who are not economically disadvantaged, not in ELL programs and not receiving IEP services. This subgroup is not used for independent measurements but is used for calculating gaps.
5. **ESEA Subgroups,** which are subgroups required to be measured by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964, as reauthorized in 2001 and in the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Request. These are listed on Table 11 (page 20).

For all of the metrics, each subcomponent is measured separately. For the point-bearing metrics, subcomponents are scored using the five levels. The mean of the subcomponent scores is then calculated to create a score for each metric. The scores for each individual metric are then weighted, from a possible maximum of 6 points to a possible maximum of 34 points, together totaling a possible maximum of 100 points. The individual scores for each metric are then added together to arrive at a total score (i.e. the CIS). Table 1 below provides a summary of the metrics of performance, the subcomponents, and the weights assigned.

Table 1: Composite Index Score Point Totals

Metric	Subcomponent Populations	Subcomponent Subject(s)	Elementary & Middle Schools	High Schools
Proficiency	All Students Minority & FRPL IEP & ELL	Reading Math	34 points	34 points
Gap-closing	Minority & FRPL IEP & ELL	Reading Math	34 points	34 points
Distinction	All Students	Reading Math	6 points	6 points
Growth	All Students Minority & FRPL IEP &	Reading & Math	26 points	--
Graduation	All Students	Graduation	--	26 points
		Total:	**100 points**	**100 points**

CUT SCORES

For each of the five accountability components, cut scores were assigned to create five increments. Cut scores were adjusted to reflect the new PARCC assessments. Cut points within each component were assigned within the following framework:

1. The highest levels of performance reflect current achievement data in each category. They outline achievable yet aspirational goals for each school.
2. The lowest levels of performance also reflect the current unacceptably low performance in each category.
3. The middle ranges attempt to differentiate among the ranges of school performance based on the most recent data sets we have for schools.

A school is only measured on any subcomponent if there are results for at least 20 students. Cut scores may vary based on grade span (i.e. elementary, middle and high) and on subject area but they do not vary by subgroup. The cut scores are provided in tables below in the appropriate section for each metric.

In general, the points a school earns for each evaluated subcomponent are averaged and then multiplied by the metric weight and divided by 5 (representing the 5 point scale). For example, Absolute Percent Proficient is worth a maximum of 34 possible points; the points a school receives for this metric = (Subcomponent Average Score * 34) / 5.

Average Achievement Levels

Rhode Island's Assessment and Accountability System is aligned to Common Core Standards that have been presented to districts to use as guides for assessment and curriculum development. For each of the reading, writing and mathematics assessments, students receive a scaled score. The scale score is a numerical value that summarizes the overall level of performance attained by that student. Performance levels are the broad, categorical levels used to report student performance on an assessment that describe how well student(s) met the expectations for their grade level or course. Each performance level is defined by a range of scores for the assessment. There are five performance levels for PARCC assessments:

- **Level 1:** Did not yet meet expectations

- **Level 2:** Partially met expectations

- **Level 3:** Approached expectations

- **Level 4:** Met expectations

- **Level 5:** Exceeded expectations

Students performing at levels 4, and 5 met or exceeded expectations, and have demonstrated readiness for the next grade level and, ultimately, are on track for college and careers.

Cut scores between the different achievement levels may vary for each grade and content area. Throughout this bulletin, the percentage of students in Exceeded Expectations or in Met Expectations will be referred to collectively as the Percent Proficient or Absolute Percent Proficient.

PBA and EOY PARCC tests were used to assess the 2014/2015 year's achievement. If a student was not continuously enrolled in a school from October 1, 2014 to the end of the 2014/2015 school-year, then their scores are excluded from Percent Proficient calculations. Certain students are exempted from analysis (see the Student Exemptions section on page 21.

District percent proficient rates combine student scores for all grades from all district schools as well as for students tested at "outplacement" schools.

The percentage of students in a school or district who score Met Expectations or Exceeded Expectations is worth 34 points out of 100 in Rhode Island's classification system. There are six subcomponents (Reading and Math for All Students, Minority/Poverty, and IEP/ELL). Each subcomponent is only measured if there are at least 20 students in that subgroup who were tested. Districts are measured separately at each applicable level (elementary, middle and high). Cut scores for absolute percent proficient are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 2: Absolute Percent Proficient Cut Scores for 2014/2015

Metric	Subgroups	Grade Span & Subject	1 Point	2 Point	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Absolute Percent Proficient (34 points)	All students Minority + Poverty IEP + ELL	EL ELA/Literacy	<20	≥20 <40	≥40 <55	≥55 <70	≥70
		MS ELA/Literacy	<15	≥15 <30	≥30 <45	≥45 <60	≥60
		HS ELA/Literacy	<15	≥15 <30	≥30 <45	≥45 <60	≥60
		ES Math	<20	≥20 <35	≥35 <50	≥50 <65	≥65
		MS Math	<10	≥10 <20	≥20 <35	≥35 <50	≥50
		HS Math	<10	≥10 <20	≥20 <35	≥35 <50	≥50

Note: Numbers in the cells above refer to the percentage of students scoring Met Expectations or Exceeded Expectations on PARCC.

For each school or district, the percentage of students who are proficient for each subgroup is independently calculated in reading and in mathematics. Points from 1 to 5 are then assigned for each subgroup and subject based on the cut scores shown in the table above. The mean of these six values – or however many there are with enough students to measure – is then calculated. The equation below is used to assign Absolute Proficiency Metric points in each school or district.

$$\text{Points Assigned to Absolute Proficiency Metric} = \frac{\text{Average Score} * 34}{5}$$

Results for a school or district may range from 6.8 to 34 points.

SUBGROUP PERFORMANCE GAPS AGAINST PERFORMANCE REFERENCE GROUP

Subgroup Performance Gaps compared against the Performance Reference Group (PRG) account for 34 points out of 100 in Rhode Island's classification system. For each school, the percentage of who are not economically disadvantaged, not in ELL programs and not receiving IEP services) for reading and mathematics. The proficiency rate for the PRG is also calculated for each district for reading and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and, high school levels, as appropriate. Likewise, proficiency rates are calculated for the Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup (i.e. African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American and/or economically disadvantaged students) and for the Consolidated Program Subgroup (i.e. students in ELL programs and/or students receiving IEP services). Proficiency rates for these subgroups are then subtracted from the PRG proficiency rate, as long as there are at least 20 tested students in both the comparison and reference group for each subject. These are then compared to the cut scores provided in Table 5 below. Students scoring Met Expectations and Exceeded Expectations are calculated for the PRG (i.e. students who are not economically disadvantaged, not in ELL programs and not receiving IEP services) for reading and mathematics. The proficiency rate for the PRG is also calculated for each district for reading and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and, high school levels, as appropriate. Likewise, proficiency rates are calculated for the Consolidated Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup (i.e. African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American and/or economically disadvantaged students) and for the Consolidated Program Subgroup (i.e. students in ELL programs and/or students receiving IEP services). Proficiency rates for these subgroups are then subtracted from the PRG proficiency rate, as long as there are at least 20 tested students in both the comparison and reference group for each subject. These are then compared to the cut scores provided in Table 5 below.

Table 3: Subgroup Performance Gaps against Performance Reference Group Cut Scores for 2014/2015

Metric	Subgroups	Grade Span & Subject	1 Point	2 Point	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Subgroup Performance Gaps against Performance Reference Group (34 points)	Minority + Poverty IEP + ELL	ELA/Literacy	≥40	≥ 30 < 40	≥ 20 < 30	≥ 10 < 20	< 10
			≥55	≥ 45 < 55	≥ 35 < 45	≥ 20 < 35	< 20
	Minority + Poverty IEP + ELL	Math	≥40	≥ 30 < 40	≥ 20 < 30	≥ 10 < 20	< 10

Note: Numbers in the cells above refer to the difference between the percentages of students scoring Met Expectations and Exceeded Expectations on PARCC in the Performance Reference Group and the subgroup being compared.

Points from 1 to 5 are then assigned for each subject and subgroup comparison based on the cut scores shown in the table above. The mean of these four values – or however many there are with enough students to measure – is then calculated. The equation below is used to assign Subgroup Performance Gaps Metric points in each school or district.

$$\text{Points Assigned to Subgroup Performance Gaps against PRG} = \frac{\text{Average Score} * 34}{5}$$

Results for a school or district may range from 6.8 to 34 points.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN DISTINCTION LEVEL

The Percentage of Students in Distinction Level account for 6 points out of 100 in Rhode Island's classification system. All other accountability measures in this system sum Met Expectations and Exceeded Expectations in calculations. This measure simply measures the percentage of students who Exceeded Expectations for ELA/Literacy and for mathematics in the school – or at each level in the district. These percentages are then compared to the cut scores provided in Table 6 below.

Table 4: Percentage of Students in Distinction Cut Scores for 2014/2015

Metric	Subgroups	Grade Span & Subject	1 Point	2 Point	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Percentage of Tested students in Distinction Level (5 points)	All students	ELA/ Literacy	<3	≥ 3 < 6	≥ 6 < 10	≥ 10 < 15	≥15
		Math	<3	≥ 3 < 6	≥ 6 < 10	≥ 10 < 15	≥15

Note: Numbers in the cells above refer to the percentage of students scoring Exceeded Expectations on PARCC. Points from 1 to 5 are then assigned for each subject based on the cut scores shown in the table above. The mean of these two values is calculated – or one score is taken alone, if there were at least 20 students tested in that subject but not the other. The equation below is used to assign Percentage of Students in Distinction points in each school or district.

Points Assigned to Percentage of Students in Distinction $\dfrac{\text{Average Score} * 6}{5}$

Results for a school or district may range from 1.2 to 6 points.

Student Growth accounts for 26 points for elementary and middle schools in Rhode Island's classification system. Growth is calculated using the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) methodology developed by Damian Betebenner and described in detail elsewhere (see for example, http://www.nciea.org/publication_PDFs/normative_criterion_growth_DB08.pdf and http://www.nciea.org/publication_PDFs/growthandStandard_DB09.pdf). Each student's PARCC score is compared to his previous years' NECAP scores and the growth is calculated relative to peers with a similar prior academic history.

For this measure, student level percentile records in ELA/Literacy and in mathematics have been combined to increase the number of records available for determining median percentiles for each of the three subgroups (All students, Minority/Poverty and IEP/ELL). Each subgroup is only measured if there are at least 20 students in that subgroup who were tested. Cut scores for growth are provided in Table 7 below.

Table 5: Growth Cut Scores for 2014/2015 - Elementary and Middle Schools Only

Metric	Subgroups	Grade Span & Subject	1 Point	2 Point	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Growth (25 points, ES & MS only)	All students Minority + Poverty IEP + ELL	ELA/Literacy + Math (combined)	< 35	≥ 35 < 45	≥ 45 < 55	≥ 55 < 65	≥ 65

Note: Numbers in the cells above refer to the median student growth percentile of a school or district.

For each school or district, a median percentile score is determined for each of the subgroups. Points from 1 to 5 are then assigned for each of these subgroups based on their median percentile scores and the cut points shown in the table above. The mean of these three values – or however many there are with enough students to measure – is then calculated. The equation below is used to assign Student Growth points in each elementary or middle school or district, at the elementary or middle levels.

$$\text{Points Assigned to Student Growth} = \frac{\text{Average Score} * 26}{5}$$

Results for a school or district may range from 5.2 to 26 points.

The High School Graduation Rate accounts for 26 points for high schools in Rhode Island's classification system. For each school or district, four different graduation rates are calculated based on cohorts:

1. The 4-year graduation rate is based on the cohort of students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2010-2011.
2. The 5-year graduation rate is based on the cohort of students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2009-2010.
3. The 6-year graduation rate is based on the cohort of students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2008-2009.
4. From these rates, a weighted graduation rate is calculated based on 50% of the 4-year cohort rate, 25% of the 5-year cohort rate and 25% of the 6-year cohort rate. This this weighted rate is referred to as the "Composite Graduation Rate".

The graduation rate for accountability purposes is the higher of the 4-year rate and the composite rate. For the purposes of this measure, rates are only calculated for the All Students subgroup, provided that there were at least 20 students in the cohort. The graduation rate is then compared to the cut scores provided in Table 8 below.

Table 6: High School Graduation Rate Cut Scores for 2013 – High Schools Only

Metric	Subgroups	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
HS Graduation Rates (20 points, HS only)*	All students	< 65	≥ 65 < 75	≥ 75 < 85	≥ 85 < 90	≥ 90

Note: Numbers in the cells above refer to the 4-year or composite graduation rate, whichever is higher.
* Schools whose graduation rates are higher than their annual target and/or schools that have a graduation rate higher than the state average may receive one additional point.

Points from 1 to 5 are then assigned based on the graduation rate and the cut points shown in the table above. In addition, the graduation rate score also includes a sixth possible point. If the 2012-13 graduation rate (i.e. the higher of the 4-year rate and the composite rate) is greater than or equal to the Graduation Rate Target or if it is greater than the statewide average graduation rate, then the school or district is assigned an extra point. (Please see the Graduation Rate Target section below for an explanation of how this is calculated).

Therefore, the equation below is used to assign High School Graduation Rate points in each high school or district for the high school level.

$$\text{Points Assigned to HS Graduation Rate} = \frac{\text{Average Score} * 26}{6}$$

Results for a school or district may range from 4.3 to 26 points.

CIS CALCULATION

Based on the scores earned for each metric, a Composite Index Score (CIS) is calculated for each Rhode Island school and for each district at each applicable level (i.e. elementary, middle and high). In most cases, this is the sum of scores for each metric. In some circumstances, however, no score can be calculated for a metric. This may occur because of the grade span of a school (e.g. a K-2 school will not have any students tested on PARCC). Or a school may not have been in existence long enough to calculate graduation rates, growth, or improvement. In addition, if no subcomponent (i.e. subgroup and subject combination) of a metric meets the n-size requirement of greater than or equal to 20 students, that metric is not calculated. It is important to remember that adjustments were made to the calculation of the CIS this year because it is based on a new assessment system. For these reason, comparisons to last year's CIS would be invalid and the rules used previously to determine school classifications are no longer in place.

If all but one metric has a score, then the following steps are taken:

1. The points attributed to metrics that are measured are summed.
2. This total is then divided by the sum of the maximum possible points for those metrics to create a ratio.
3. This average is then multiplied by the maximum possible points for the other (non-measured) metric.
4. This number is then added to the initial sum, to calculate the CIS for that school or district at that level. In other words,

$$\text{CIS} = (\text{Pts, Measured Metrics}) + \frac{\text{Pts, Measured Metrics} * (\text{Max Pts, Missing Metric})}{(\text{Max Pts, Measured Metrics})}$$

Example: An elementary school does not have enough students in different subgroups to calculate subgroup gaps (34 possible points), but does have enough students to calculate the other metrics. If that school earns 52 out of a possible 66 points in those metrics, it would receive
52 + (52*34)/66 = 52 + 26.8 = 78.8 points.

If more than one metric does not have a score, then no CIS is calculated.

PARTICIPATION RATE

The Participation Rate is not assigned points for the CIS, but remains an important limiting factor in Rhode Island's accountability system. Schools and districts must test at least 95% of their enrolled students in reading and mathematics. Allowable exemptions from test participation are listed in the Student Exemptions section on page 21.

If a school has a CIS that fall within the Commended range but fails to test at least 95% of its students in the All Students subgroup in either reading or math for the 2014-15 school year, it will not earn the Commended classification, regardless of the Composite Index Score.

GRADUATION RATE TARGET

Similar to the Participation Rate, the Graduation Rate Target is an important factor in Rhode Island's accountability system. High schools and school districts are expected to cut in half the percentage of students not graduating by 2016. Graduation rates of the class of 2010 are used as baseline for this process. The annual targets from 2010 increase annually by the same amount to the 2016 target. This operationally defines graduation rate targets for schools and districts from 2011 to 2016.

The steps used to calculate annual targets are as follows:
1. The Baseline is defined as the 2010 accountability graduation rate (i.e. the higher of the 4-year and the composite rate).
2. The 2016 Target is defined as the midpoint between the Baseline and 100%.

$$2016\ Target\ =\ Baseline\ +\ \frac{(100 - Baseline)}{2}$$

3. The Gap is defined as the difference between the Baseline and the 2016 Target.

$$Gap\ =\ \frac{(100 - Baseline)}{2}$$

4. Annual targets are set by dividing the Gap in six even, annual increments and adding them to the Baseline.

$$Annual\ Target\ =\ Baseline\ +\ \frac{Gap * (Years\ since\ Baseline)}{6}$$

Or, written differently,

$$Annual\ Target\ =\ Baseline\ +\ \frac{(100 - Baseline) * (Years\ since\ Baseline)}{12}$$

5. If the current year's accountability graduation rate (i.e. the higher of the 4-year and the composite rate) is greater than or equal to the Annual Target, then the school or district is considered to have met the target.

Example: A school has a graduation rate of 76% in 2010 (Baseline). This means that

$$Growth\ Provision\ Rate\ =\ Prior\ Rate\ +\ \frac{(100\ Prior\ Rate)}{10}$$

it has 24% of its students not graduating; which must be reduced to 12% by 2016. 2016 Target = 76% + (100-76%)/2 OR 2016 Target = 88%. And the annual targets increase by 2% every year, as shown in Table 10.

Table 7: Graduation Rate Target Example

Year	Graduation Target
2010 (Baseline)	76%
2011 Target	78%
2012 Target	80%
2013 Target	82%
2014 Target	84%
2015 Target	86%
2016 Target	88%

If any cohort has less than 20 students, then a graduation rate cannot be calculated. If, as a result, either the Baseline or the current year cannot be calculated, then the graduation rate metric is not evaluated.

Growth provisions, similar to safe harbor provisions, are available to schools and districts which fail to meet their graduation rate. This requires that there is at least a 10% reduction in the gap between the accountability graduation rate of the prior year and 100% graduation. This is calculated as follows:

1. Prior Rate is defined as the previous year's graduation rate.

2. If the current year's accountability graduation rate (i.e. the higher of the 4-year and the composite rate) is greater than or equal to the Growth Provision Rate, then the school or district is considered to have met the graduation rate annual target.

4. Annual targets are set by dividing the Gap in six even, annual increments and adding them to the Baseline.

$$Annual\ Target\ =\ Baseline\ +\ \frac{Gap * (Years\ since\ Baseline)}{6}$$

Or, written differently,

$$Annual\ Target\ =\ Baseline\ +\ \frac{(100 - Baseline) * (Years\ since\ Baseline)}{12}$$

Example: In one school 64% of students were proficient in reading in 2010-11. This

means that the 2017 Target = 64 + (100-64)/2 OR 2017 Target = 82%. And the annual targets increase by 3% every year, as shown in Table 11.

Table 8: NCLB Subgroups and Super-subgroups

All Students

African American

Asian

Pacific Islander

Hispanic

Native American

White

Multi-Racial

Students with Disabilities

English Language Learners

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Minority Super-subgroup

Program Super-subgroup

CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

Classification of schools into Commended, Leading, Typical, Warning, Focus and Priority is based primarily on the Composite Index Score but also other factors including Participation Rates, Graduation Rate Target, Annual Measurable Objectives, and prior year classification. Classification is calculated based on the criteria outlined in Table 12 below.

Table 9: Classification Criteria

Criteria	Classification
CIS Score ≥ 77 and either: Percent proficient points ≥ 27.2 or Subgroup gap points ≥ 27.2	Commended

FLEXIBILITY WITHIN THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Rhode Island's school and district accountability system includes several flexibilities to ensure as much fairness as possible. These aspects of the accountability system serve to add reliability to the system. The flexibilities include:

- Student Exemptions
- Error Bands
- Rounding Rules
- Cell Size

STUDENT EXEMPTIONS

ELL Students in the U.S. for Less Than One Year: These students are exempt from participating in the PARCC reading or writing exams if they have entered the U.S. after October 1st of the testing year. All students must participate in the mathematics exam. For the reading exam, ELL students in the U.S. for less than one year are excluded from proficiency calculations and the test participation rate. For the mathematics exam, ELL students in the U.S. for less than one year are included in the participation rate, but excluded from proficiency calculations.

State-Approved Special Consideration: Typically, these students have acute medical, emotional or other issues that prevent them from taking the assessments that make up the Rhode Island State Assessment Program. The superintendent submits a letter outlining the student's special circumstances to the Director of the Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum. Once approved, that student is then removed from the enrollment roster of that school for purposes of accountability calculations.

Home-schooled Students: Home-schooled students may have an arrangement with the district to be tested. However, these students, and their scores, are removed from all accountability calculations for the school and the district.

Students who Enroll or Withdraw from a School During the Period of Testing: Such students are removed from enrollment rosters and their scores are not used in accountability calculations of the school.

It bears noting that some students with significant cognitive disabilities take the **Rhode Island Alternate Assessment** in place of the PARCC exams. Thus, this is not technically an exemption. These students are included in the accountability system calculations. Similarly, students who are tuitioned to "outplacement" educational services within Rhode Island are expected to take either the PARCC assessments or the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment. These outplacement students are assigned to the school district of financial responsibility when district-level accountability reports are produced.

ERROR BANDS

Errors are inherent to any assessment system. Rhode Island's accountability process considers measurement errors associated with its testing program. To be sure that school or district proficiency rates, and the rates for each subgroup, are related to actual improvement over time rather than random or measurement errors error bands are used in calculating AMOs.

For the purposes of this report, *Standard Error* (SE) is defined as a measurement of the standard error of a percentage (e.g., *% Meets and Exceeds Expectations*, used throughout this report). Mathematically, SE's were calculated as follows:

$$(SE) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{pq}{N}\right)}$$ where p is the percent of students who are proficient, $q = (100-p)$ and N is the population or group size.

It is important to note that the derived SE is based on the size of the group being examined and its respective performance (read*: % Meets and Exceeds Expectations*) on the PARCC tests. Standard errors can be used to create a confidence interval around the derived percentage so that you can see the range in which the "true" (e.g., measured without error) value is located. To do so, you can take the SE and multiply it by 1.96 (for a 95% confidence interval). The resultant product is then added and subtracted from the percent proficient, p, for example, to create a range of values in which you can be 95% confident that the "true" value is located. For example, viewing the percent proficient (p) as the center point, if one adds the value of SE (1.96) to p and also subtracts this value from p, then the full confidence interval is created with both an upper and lower boundary. So, if p equals 70% and the SE equals .5, then the product of SE and 1.96 equals .5(1.96) or .965.

Adding and subtracting this number from 70% creates the confidence interval, which ranges from 69.04% to 70.97%. This is the range in which one can be 95% confident that the "true" lies.

DATA ROUNDING RULES

Data rounding is used for participation rates. A rate of 94.5% or higher is allowed to meet the 95% target. Data rounding is not used for the graduation rate.

CELL SIZE

Since determinations are made about school performance using subgroups of student populations, an effort is made to avoid making decisions based on a small number of students (*n*) that would make a school's classification statistically unreliable. For this purpose, decisions are made about subgroups only when there is a minimum of 20 students within the group assessed.

Table 10: Minimum Cell Size Example: (Elementary School)

	Number of Students Tested by Grade and Student Subgroup			
Subgroup	**Grade 3**	**Grade 4**	**Grade 5**	*TOTAL*
IEP	15 +	24 +	21 =	60
ELL	5 +	6 +	7 =	18
Black	5 +	4 +	6 =	15
Hispanic	16 +	14 +	18 =	48

NOTE: For ELL students, the tally to determine whether 20 or more students are represented is based on the number of students actively receiving ELL services at the time they were tested plus the count of ELL monitored students. ELL monitored students are former ELL students who were exited from ELL program services within the past two years. IEP students include those who are actively receiving IEP services as well as students who have exited the IEP program within the last two years.

In the example in Table 13, rates would be calculated for the IEP (*n = 60*) and Hispanic (*n = 48)* subgroups. Rates would not be calculated for the ELL (*n = 18)* and the Black (*n = 15)* subgroups because this school does not have at least than 20 students across the three grades with test data.

CLASSIFICATION AND APPEALS PROCESS TIMELINE

The last opportunity for review of assessment data is the appeal process. A school or district will have 14 days to challenge the accuracy of the data that would lead to its classification. The timeline for 2014/2015 classifications using PARCC assessments at grades 3-8 and 11 are found in Table 14 below:

Table 14: Timeline for Classification and Appeals

Time Frame	Process or Product
December , 2015	Data files sent to districts/schools through District Exchange
December 7 -11, 2015	Webinar… how to read the files, file layout, directions for reviewing the files, and technical report. (data managers, principals)
December 18, 2015	Files changes returned to RIDE through District Exchange. Files not returned by this date will be assumed correct.
February 3, 2016	Embargoed files sent to districts through District Exhange
XX/XX/XXXX	Public Release.

These dates are tentative and may change without further notice.

APPEALS PROCESS

Federal law specifies an appeals period to allow Title I schools and districts to challenge their classifications. In Rhode Island, this is typically interpreted as a chance to request formally a review of the accuracy of student enrollment counts or the coding of student background or program characteristics, as well as the accuracy of exemption codes or other similar issues. **A request to give the Commissioner of Education discretion to review an appeal when a single target is missed by a very small margin in the context of other performance indicators was denied by the US Department of Education.**

RIDE makes every effort to respond to appeals by schools that could potentially change their classification. Reviews are performed as resources permit. RIDE takes the position that the accuracy of student coding and enrollment counts should be guaranteed by districts at the beginning of the testing process rather than at the end.

Appeals must be submitted by the school district superintendent to:

> Ken Wagner, Commissioner
> Rhode Island Department of Education
> Office of Instruction, Assessment and Accountability
> 255 Westminster Street
> Providence, RI 02903

Accountability calculations are made for school districts at each applicable level (elementary, middle and high) in addition to those made for all individual schools within a district. All students who have received instruction in the district for at least one school year are included in an analysis of reading and mathematics performance. The review is done separately for all elementary schools merged into one data set, all middle schools merged and all high schools merged. Districts are also held to the same test participation rate, graduation rate and requirements that exist for schools. Students tuitioned to "outplacement" schools are included in the analysis of district performance. Calculation of proficiency rates, CIS points and other procedural methods parallel the methods described earlier for schools.

District accountability measurements may sometimes appear to be inconsistent with school classifications. However, it often occurs that subgroups are not reviewed for individual schools because they have fewer than 20 students, but are reviewed at the district level when schools are combined for analysis. In addition, data for "outplacement" students are added into district analyses, but are not used for school analyses.

<u>School and Accountability Report Cards</u>

The 2015 Rhode Island school, district and state Report Cards will be placed on the RIDE website (www.ride.ri.gov) as soon as they are available. There are two types of report cards:
1. The School Report Card, which includes information on all applicable groups and participation rates, plus the graduation rate (high schools only).
2. The Accountability Report Card includes the points received in each individual metric and total CIS, and the overall accountability classification for Commended schools.

The information in this *Technical Bulletin* explains how the calculations were done in order to create the Report Cards for schools and districts. It is important to note that the assessment reports prepared by the assessment contractor, Pearson, cannot be directly compared to the school and district Report Cards. Students not enrolled in a school for a full academic year are included in basic assessment reports, but are not included in accountability analyses or published report cards. PARCC assessment reports have already been completed by the assessment contractor and were delivered to schools and districts in the basic delivery of assessment results in November 2015.