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Rhode Island School and District Performance and Accountability System

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School-Performance Classifications

An Explanation of the Process



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○ **Rhode Island's Accountability Plan**

Rhode Island's accountability plan, approved in May 2003 by the U.S. Department of Education and slightly revised in July 2004, specifies how the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) will comply with numerous provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, most notably the requirements to test students in grades 3 through 8 plus a high-school grade, to develop timelines to bring all students to proficiency by the year 2014, and to establish a system to determine which schools and districts are failing to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

○ **Standards: The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)**

Working with two other New England states (New Hampshire and Vermont), Rhode Island has formed the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), the first such interstate agreement in the nation. The partner states have established grade-level expectations for grades 3 through 8 that have been adopted by all three states. Work is underway to establish standards for the early grades and for high-school grades.

○ **Testing: New Standards Reference Exams**

The state assessment system in Rhode Island determines whether students have met the standards appropriate for their grade in school.

To determine school classifications for 2004, Rhode Island uses the New Standards Reference Examinations in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. These exams are administered in grades 4, 8, and 11.

English-language learners in grades 3 through 8 are assessed in their understanding of the content area of English language arts and mathematics. All English-language learners take the MAC II exams to assess their progress toward becoming proficient in English.

The state assessment system will change in 2005. Along with New Hampshire and Vermont, we will begin testing all students in grades 3 through 8 in both mathematics and reading, and we will test students in grades 5 and 8 in writing. Measured Progress, of New Hampshire, will develop the new assessments for the three states. These tests will be piloted in the fall of 2004.

We will also be revising the high-school assessments, and we will add a science assessment by 2007.

○ **School-Performance Classifications: High, Moderate, In Need of Improvement**

Schools and districts are classified based on an "Index Proficiency Score." Rhode Island's assessments report results in five levels: achieved the standard with honors, achieved the standard, nearly achieved the standard, below the standard, little evidence of achievement. Those eligible students who did not take the test receive "no score." On the proficiency scale, a score will be assigned to each level:

The Index Proficiency Score	
Rhode Island's Performance Levels	Index Proficiency Scale
Achieved the Standard with Honors	100
Achieved the Standard	100
Nearly Achieved the Standard	75
Below the Standard	50
Little Evidence of	25

School and district classifications are determined by the scores and participation rates of all students in each subtest either over the past three years or in the most recent year, whichever is higher.

Rhode Island's standard for proficiency is high by all measures — among the highest of any state in the nation. The index-proficiency score gives schools and districts credit as they move students, at every level, toward proficiency. It encourages continuous improvement for students and teachers as they make progress toward achieving the standard.

○ **Annual Measurable Objectives, or Targets**

School classifications also note whether the school is making progress. These designations are based on both intermediate goals and annual measurable objectives (AMOs), or targets.

To set these goals and objectives, RIDE has established a baseline score for each grade level, in both English language arts and mathematics. These baseline scores are:

	<u>English language arts</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>
Elementary School	76.1	61.7
Middle School	68.0	46.1
High School	62.6	44.8

Roughly speaking, these baselines represent the 20th percentile for each test at each level. For example, the elementary-school English language arts baseline of 76.1 means that 80 percent of the state's elementary-school pupils are in schools with a higher score and 20 percent are in schools with that score or lower.

From each baseline, RIDE has set five equal intermediate goals that will culminate in a score of 100 (100-percent proficiency) by the year 2014. For example, the elementary-school mathematics scores must improve by 6.4 points at each intermediate goal in order to reach 100 by the year 2014; the first intermediate goal for elementary mathematics, therefore, is a score of 68.1 by the year 2005.

Annual Measurable Objectives/Targets						
	Elementary		Middle		High	
Year	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
2014	100	100	100	100	100	100
2013	96.1	93.7	94.5	91.1	93.6	90.8
2012	92.1	87.3	89.2	82.1	87.4	81.6
2011	88.1	80.9	83.9	73.1	81.2	72.4
2010	84.1	74.5	78.6	64.1	75.0	63.2
2009	84.1	74.5	78.6	64.1	75.0	63.2
2008	84.1	74.5	78.6	64.1	75.0	63.2
2007	80.1	68.1	73.3	55.1	68.8	54.0
2006	80.1	68.1	73.3	55.1	68.8	54.0
2005	80.1	68.1	73.3	55.1	68.8	54.0
2004	76.1	61.7	68.0	46.1	62.6	44.8
2003	76.1	61.7	68.0	46.1	62.6	44.8
Baseline 2002	76.1	61.7	68.0	46.1	62.6	44.8

Though the intermediate goals are equal, the time between the intermediate goals is not equal. The first goals are separated by three-year intervals (2005, 2008, 2011), then by one-year intervals (2012, 2013, final goal at 2014). RIDE believes that the most rapid progress will take place in later years, as the grade-level expectations, the new assessments, teacher practices, and school culture align to respond to school-improvement initiatives. The intermediate goals provide time for school-reform efforts to be fully implemented.

○ ***Additional Factors: 21 Indicators***

Schools and districts are measured by the performance (index-proficiency score) and the yearly progress of all students in the aggregate and by disaggregated groups: by race, ethnicity, poverty status, and education status (special needs, limited English).

Equity for All Students
NCLB addresses equity gaps by requiring data be disaggregated by the following groups:

- ✓ **Asian students**
- ✓ **Black students**
- ✓ **Hispanic students**
- ✓ **Native American students**
- ✓ **White students**
- ✓ **Students who are economically disadvantaged**
- ✓ **Students with limited proficiency in**

Only schools in which all disaggregated groups have met the most recent intermediate goals are classified as high or moderately performing.

Three other factors determine school and district classifications: all schools must have a participation rate (percent of students who completed or attempted the state assessments) of 95 percent; high schools must meet annual objectives regarding the graduation rate; middle schools and elementary schools must meet annual objectives regarding the attendance rate.

High School Graduation Rate	
2014	95. 0
2013	90. 9
2012	87. 0
2011	83. 1
2010	79. 2
2009	79. 2
2008	79. 2
2007	75. 2

The graduation rate goal for 2014 is 95%.

○ ***How We Account for No Scores and Non-participants***

Students who do not participate in the state assessments and have no valid exemption (e.g., medical exemption) receive a “no score,” which equates to an index score of zero. This score is part of the calculation of the school and district index scores and the index scores for every group to which the student belongs.

Up to five percent of the nonparticipants, however, may be excluded from calculation of the school and district scoring. For example, if 2 percent of the students in a school do not participate, their scores are not counted as part of the index score for the school, nor for any group within the school. If 7 percent of the students in a school do not participate, 5 percent may be excluded from the calculation, but the “no scores” of the remaining 2 percent will count as part of the calculation of the index scores for the school. In effect, the scores of those students are marked against the school twice: they bring down both the participation rate *and* the index scores for the school.

○ **Indicators: How We Determine School Classifications**

In summary, school and district classifications are based on 21 pieces of data, or indicators.

<p>Schools will be classified as high, moderate, or in need of improvement</p> <p>* Classifications will be based on 21 pieces of data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School-level performance in ELA and mathematics; 2 ▪ Group performance in ELA and mathematics; 16 ▪ Non-academic indicator (attendance or graduation

If a school has met all targets for all groups and its two index scores for the school as a whole are above the intermediate goals for the year 2011, the school is classified as high performing.

Other schools that have met all targets for all groups are classified as moderately performing.

If a school misses any targets, it is classified as in need of improvement.

Except that: If a school meets all assessment targets and misses only one of the other targets (attendance, graduation, or participation rates), it is classified as high performing or moderately performing “with caution,” a status it may retain for one year only.

○ **School Improvement: Improving, Sustaining, Making Progress, Insufficient Progress**

To be considered improving, high-performing and moderately performing schools must raise their scores by 2 points each year and maintain or increase their attendance or graduation rate. Otherwise, these schools will be classified as “sustaining.”

Schools classified as in need of improvement may invoke the “safe-harbor provision.” A school has met safe harbor if it has decreased by 10 percent the gap between a score of 100 (100-percent proficient) and its previous year's score. Schools that are in need of improvement are classified as “making progress” if they have met the annual target or the safe-harbor provision, both for the school as a whole and for all groups. Safe harbor may also apply to the calculation of the attendance-rate targets for elementary schools and middle schools: Schools must close the gap between the previous year's attendance rate and the 95% attendance-rate goal by 10 percent to make safe harbor.

Schools that are in need of improvement and have not met safe harbor are classified as making “insufficient progress.”

The Safe Harbor Provision

The Safe Harbor provision requires that:

- Σ a school that has not met its AMOs *but*;
- Σ has reduced by 10 percent the gap between a score of 100 and the previous year's score;
- Σ has then met the Safe Harbor Provision and is not subject to NCLB sanctions and corrective actions;
- Σ the state will classify this school as In Need of Improvement/Making Progress.

Example:
A school has a
**Mathematics Index
Proficiency Score of 42.**

**100 - 42 = 58 [the gap]
10% of the gap is 5.8%
42 + 5.8 = 47.8**

○ **Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP**

All schools that have met all targets – whether by meeting their annual measurable objectives (AMOs) or through the safe-harbor provision – have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). That is, all schools that are improving, sustaining, or making sufficient progress have made AYP.

THE CLASSIFICATIONS

Rhode Island's Accountability System classifies every public school in the state. Each school is classified in one of the following categories:

High Performing and Improving
or
High Performing and Sustaining
or
High Performing with Caution
(attendance, graduation rate, test participation)

Moderately Performing and Improving
or
Moderately Performing and Sustaining
or
Moderately Performing with Caution
(attendance, graduation rate, test participation)

School in Need of Improvement/Making Progress
or
School in Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress

Classification of School Districts

Not all school districts are classified.

Districts are classified as “in need of improvement” if:

The district as a whole (aggregated data from all students) has missed one or more targets at more than one school level (elementary, middle, high school)

Or

40% or more of the schools in the district have been classified as “In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress”

○ **Minimum Sample Sizes and Accounting for Measurement Errors**

Under the Rhode Island system, decisions are made about groups of students only when there are at least 45 students within the group – either over a three-year span or, if a single year of test results is used to determine the classification, in that single year. Schools that have fewer than 45 students across a three-year span must still be classified, however. In these small schools, it is not possible to disaggregate any of the groups.

Cell Size of 45				
Rhode Island will make decisions about groups only when there are a minimum of 45 students within the group across a three-year timeframe.				
Example: School A				
	2001	2002	2003	Total
IEP	15+	24+	21 =	60
LEP	6+	8+	9 =	23
Black	7+	6+	11 =	24
Hispanic	16+	14+	18 =	48

Cell Size of 45, continued				
School A				
	2001	2002	2003	Total
IEP	15+	24+	21 =	*60
LEP	6+	8+	9 =	**23
Black	7+	6+	11 =	**24
Hispanic	16+	14+	18 =	*48

So for this school, AMOs would be calculated for the following groups:

- *IEP: N = 60
- *Hispanic N = 48

AMOs would **not** be calculated for the following groups:

- **LEP: N = 22

The Rhode Island accountability system takes into account measurement errors associated with any testing program. We want to be sure that each school and district index-proficiency score, and the scores for each group, are related to actual improvement rather than to random measurement errors.

So the system applies “error bands” to each measurement. The error band for each school or district varies depending on the size of the school or district, but is always plus or minus less than 1 point on the scale; the error band for each group is plus or minus 2 points on the scale. A district, school, or group has met its target if the score falls within the error band. For example, if the target is a score of 76.1, the group will have hit the target if its index proficiency score is 74.1 or higher.

○ **What are the Consequences If You Don't Make AYP?**

Through a process known as “Progressive Support and Intervention,” RIDE works with the districts that are classified as “in need of improvement” two consecutive years and may offer additional help to schools classified as making “insufficient progress,” under the authority of the state law on “Intervention and support for failing schools” R.I.G.L. 16-7.1-5. The law mandates that RIDE offer technical and policy support for at least three years to these schools. After three years, “there shall be progressive levels of control” by RIDE, which may lead to “reconstitution” of the schools. Reconstitution can involve restructuring of schools or even closing schools. State law does not establish a specific timetable or sequence of actions.

Schools that receive federal Title I funds, aimed at high-poverty schools, are also subject to the provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which *does* establish a specific timetable and sequence for state actions.

Title I schools may be “identified for improvement” if they do not make AYP for two consecutive years:

- Two consecutive years of missing targets (in the same subject area or set of indicators): Students may transfer to other schools in the district (school choice)
- Three consecutive years: School choice, plus students may receive free supplemental educational services
- Four years: School choice, supplemental services, plus the school may be subject to various forms of corrective action, such as restructuring
- Five years: School choice, supplemental services, plus the school must be restructured, which may mean replacing most of the staff, reopening the school as a charter school, or turning the school operations over to the state.

To be absolved from these consequences, a school must make AYP for two consecutive years.

For additional information:

See the RIDE Web site, www.ridoe.net, under “*School and District Report Cards*”

Or see the *Information Works!* Web site, www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu