

## Definition of Terms Used in School and District Classifications

### **Index Proficiency Score**

This is a calculation of the overall level of proficiency of the students – or of a demographic subgroup of students – in a school.<sup>1</sup> An average is calculated for all grades combined for each content area (Reading, Math and Writing). An overall school English Language Arts (ELA) score is calculated based 80% on the Reading score and 20% on the Writing score. It is important to note that for Index Proficiency Score calculations, students are assigned back to the school that they attended the year prior to taking October New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) assessments.

### **Error**

The Error value is an estimate of how much a score may vary due to random chance or measurement errors. The Index Proficiency Score plus or minus the Error value provides the probable range within which the “true” value lies (the 95% confidence interval). For school classifications, the Error value is added to the Index Proficiency Score before checking the score against a target.

### **Percent of Students Tested**

This is a calculation of the percentage of eligible students who attempted to take either the NECAP assessment or the Rhode Island Alternative Assessment. Separate rates are calculated for English Language Arts and for Mathematics.

### **Graduation Rate**

This is the percentage of students enrolled in a school who graduated within a certain timeframe. Rhode Island uses a hybrid rate that is based 60% on a 4-year rate and 40% on a 5-year rate. The 4-year rate is based on the students who entered the ninth grade for the first time in 2006-07 and graduated within four years. The 5-year rate is based on students who entered the ninth grade for the first time in 2005-06 and graduated within five years.

### **Attendance Rate**

This is the average percentage of students across all grades enrolled in a school who attended school each day.

### **Target or Target Score (also called Annual Measurable Objective or AMO)**

These are the accountability goals that the state sets every year for schools to meet. Targets are set for Index Proficiency Scores in ELA and mathematics, Percent of Students Tested in ELA and math, and either Attendance Rate (elementary and middle schools) or Graduation Rate (high schools). Targets for proficiency and percent tested must be met by certain demographic subgroups as well as by the school as a whole.

### **Targets Evaluated**

Each school is evaluated every year against up to 37 state targets. The size and demographic makeup of the school determines the number of Targets Evaluated. A school is only held accountable for targets if it has enough students in a particular demographic group to provide valid results.

### **Targets Met (or Passing)**

This is the number of targets that a school actually meets, whether they are met by reaching the Annual Measurable Objective, through the Safe Harbor provision, or through minimum sample size (graduation only).

---

<sup>1</sup> For clarity, definitions in this document are given for schools. In most cases, these terms can also be applied to districts or the state as a whole. Additional detailed information can be found in the Technical Bulletin.

## **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status**

This is an overall determination of whether or not a school or district met its targets.

### **Made AYP**

A school Made AYP if it met all of its targets.

A district Made AYP if more than 60% of its schools Made AYP and it met District Level AYP in more than one school level.

### **Did Not Make AYP**

A school Did Not Make AYP if it missed any of its targets.

A district Did Not Make AYP if 40% or more of its schools Did Not Make AYP or if it did not meet District Level AYP in two or three levels.

## **District Level AYP Status**

At each school level – elementary, middle and high – districts are evaluated on the same 37 possible targets as are schools. District Level AYP Status indicates whether, at that level, the district as a whole met all targets at that level (Met AYP) or missed one or more targets (Did Not Meet AYP).

## **Classification**

Based on its current and past AYP status, a school is classified into one of five categories for accountability purposes.

### **Met AYP**

A school is classified as Met AYP if it met all of its targets and was not In Need of Improvement.

### **Caution**

A school that made AYP in the previous year and currently met targets for school-wide mathematics and school-wide ELA proficiency will be classified as Caution if no more than three AYP targets have been missed. A school cannot receive a Caution label if it was In Need of Improvement or Caution in the prior year.

### **Insufficient Progress**

A school is classified as making Insufficient Progress if it has missed any of its targets and does not meet all requirements to be classified as Caution.

### **Delay**

A school that was In Need of Improvement and did not meet all of its targets the prior year but that met all of its targets this year, is classified as in Delay. A school in Delay is still considered to be In Need of Improvement, although there is no progression of the sanctions faced.

### **Met AYP and Commended**

If a school has met all of its targets for two consecutive years – and if it is a high school, if it is not in “approval withheld” status as a result of the Commissioner’s Review of its High School Diploma System – then it may be classified as Met AYP and Commended if it has met any one of three conditions:

#### **High Achievement:**

Based on their school-wide Index Proficiency Scores, schools must be in the top 10 percent of all schools for two consecutive years in both ELA and mathematics. Elementary schools, middle schools and high schools are ranked independently.

#### **Closing Equity Gaps:**

Schools with demographic/program diversity are defined as schools where at least three demographic subgroups are large enough to be evaluated against accountability targets. A

diverse school may be commended if three or more subgroups have a gain in their Index Proficiency Scores which are at least two points higher than the statewide gain for all students. A school must meet this condition for both ELA and mathematics.

**Significant Improvement:**

A school may be commended if it has increased its school-wide Index Proficiency Scores in both ELA and mathematics by at least 1.5 points for two consecutive testing cycles and if the most recent scores are greater than or equal to the state average.

**In Need of Improvement**

This is a designation given to a school that has not made AYP for two or more consecutive years. A school In Need of Improvement faces possible sanctions. In Need of Improvement applies if the school did not meet targets in the same content area (ELA or mathematics) or in one of the nonacademic indicators for two years or more. It takes two consecutive years of making AYP to get out of In Need of Improvement status.

**Years In Need of Improvement**

This is a measure of the length of time since a school was initially designated as In Need of Improvement. It includes years in which a school may have been in Delay.

**Using Safe Harbor (also referred to as Making Sufficient Progress)**

If a school does not reach one of its Annual Measurable Objectives, a calculation may be made to see if the school has made notable progress from previous years towards that AMO. If so, then the school is considered to have met that target Using Safe Harbor. There is no Safe Harbor calculation for test participation rates.

**Title I Status**

This is an indication of whether or not a school is eligible for, and receives, extra federal funds under the federal Title I program.

**Title I School**

A Title I School receives these funds and is subject to specific sanctions under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) if it is In Need of Improvement.

**Non-Title I School**

A Non-Title I School does not receive funds under Title I. It may still be subject to sanctions through the state accountability system if it is In Need of Improvement.

**NCLB Sanctions (schools only)**

The No Child Left Behind law requires that a Title I School that is In Need of Improvement face certain consequences. These NCLB Sanctions get more severe each year that a school does not make AYP. Sanctions are added each year to those imposed in the previous years.

**None**

A school that has met AYP for two or more consecutive years does not face any sanctions.

**Watch**

A school that was not already In Need of Improvement that does not make AYP is in Watch. There are no specific consequences but this is a warning to a school that if it misses the same target(s) the following year, it will be In Need of Improvement.

**In Need of Improvement**

A Non-Title I School that is In Need of Improvement may face sanctions through the state accountability system.

**Public School Choice**

A Title I School that is In Need of Improvement must send a letter to parents notifying them that their child may be eligible to transfer to other schools in the district that are not In Need of Improvement.

**Supplemental Educational Services (SES)**

A Title I School that was already In Need of Improvement that misses targets in the same area again must also offer some parents free tutoring for their children.

**Corrective Action**

A Title I School that already had to offer SES that misses targets in the same area again faces possible large-scale changes imposed by the district. The district must choose from the following federally mandated improvement options: replace some of the school's staff; change the curriculum; appoint an expert to advise the school; extend the school day or school year; or change how the school is managed.

**Restructuring**

A Title I School that already was in Corrective Action that misses targets in the same area again faces reorganization of operations by the district. The district must choose one of the following options: replace most of the staff; reopen the school as a charter school; or contract with an outside group to manage the school. Under certain circumstances, the state might take over the school's operations.

**Intervention Status (districts only)**

Similar to In Need of Improvement status for schools, a district in Intervention Status faces possible sanctions and intervention by the state. It takes two consecutive years of not making AYP (missing similar targets) for a district to enter Intervention Status and, once in it, it takes two consecutive years of making AYP for a district to leave this status.

**Continuing (districts only)**

Similar to Delay for schools, a district school that was in Intervention Status the prior year but that has met all of its targets this year is in Continuing status. It is still considered to be in Intervention Status.

**Intervention Year**

This is a measure of the number of years that a district has been in Intervention Status and continued to miss targets. It does not include years in Continuing status.

**Percent Proficient**

This is a measure of the percentage of students who achieved either at the level of Proficient or Proficient with Distinction (i.e. 3 or 4) on NECAP assessments. This is different from the Index Proficiency Score. It is not used for school classifications but may be referenced for additional information.