



No Child Left Behind Frequently Asked Questions

What is AYP?

AYP stands for adequate yearly progress. It is the measure of whether a school system or school is making progress in academic achievement based on student performance on annual tests.

Why does AYP exist?

AYP is a requirement of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB stipulates that 100 percent of students must score proficient in Reading/Language Arts and Math by 2014. School systems and schools must make advances every year toward this goal to achieve adequate yearly progress and be in good standing.

Who must achieve AYP?

Each state, school district and school must meet the specified AYP benchmarks as a whole and for each of eight student subgroups. The student subgroups are: white, black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students and students with disabilities. If a school has fewer than 45 students in any subgroup, results for that subgroup count towards the school system's status, not the individual school.

Can a student count for more than one student subgroup?

Yes. For example, a student may be white and qualify for special education services.

Do private schools have to be measured for AYP?

No.

What is a high priority school?

A high priority school is a school that has missed the same benchmark for two or more consecutive years. Once a school is designated high priority, it must meet AYP for two years to return to good standing. It takes two years to get on the list of high priority schools or systems and two years to get off.

What is a target school?

A school is identified as target the first year it fails to meet at least one benchmark. If a school fails the same benchmark the next year it is moved to high priority.

What is Title I?

Title I is a federal program that provides financial assistance to districts and schools with 40% or more of economically disadvantaged students. Districts and schools that receive these federal funds are referred to as Title I districts or Title I schools.

What happens if a Title I school does not achieve AYP?

The law only identifies a school as high priority after a school misses AYP in the same area for two consecutive years. At this point, the school must offer students the option of transferring to a school that has made AYP and devote a portion of funding to professional development. The list of corrective actions evolves each consecutive year a school does not achieve AYP.

How is student achievement measured for AYP?

Students in grades 3-8 take annual achievement tests in math and reading/language arts. High school students take exams in English II and Algebra I. Students also take an additional writing assessment in grades 5, 8, and 11. Elementary schools are also measured for attendance and high schools for graduation rate.

How does a school achieve AYP?

Schools must meet the following criteria:

1. Test 95 percent of students
2. Meet the performance benchmarks in math and reading/language arts for all students and each student subgroup, or make sufficient progress towards reaching the benchmark
3. Meet a 93% attendance rate for elementary and middle schools, and a 90% graduation rate for high schools

What are the performance benchmarks?

The State Board of Education voted this year to reset Tennessee's academic benchmarks under No Child Left Behind.

Table 4c.1

New Elementary/Middle School Level Benchmarks Reset 2009-10 (AMOs) Model 3			
School Year	R/LA Target	Math Target	Attendance Rate
2002-2003 through 2003-2004	77%	72%	93%
2004-2005 through 2006-2007	83%	79%	93%
2007-2008 through 2008-2009	89%	86%	93%
2009-2010	32%	20%	93%
2010-2011	49%	40%	93%
2011-2012	66%	60%	93%
2012-2013	83%	80%	93%
2013-2014	100%	100%	93%

Table 4c.2

New High School Level Benchmarks Reset 2009-10 (AMOs) Model 3			
School Year	R/LA Target	Math Target	Graduation Rate
2002-2003 through 2003-2004	86%	65%	90%
2004-2005 through 2006-2007	90%	75%	90%
2007-2008 through 2008-2009	93%	83%	90%
2009-2010	49%	25%	90%
2010-2011	61%	44%	90%
2011-2012	74%	63%	90%
2012-2013	87%	81%	90%
2013-2014	100%	100%	90%

What is Safe Harbor?

Safe Harbor is a provision of the law that recognizes significant progress in achievement even if a school does not meet the prescribed benchmark. Safe Harbor is achieved by reducing the percentage of students scoring below proficient by 10% for any group that does not otherwise meet the annual benchmarks for AYP. The benchmarks for attendance or graduation rate must also be met.

What is the State Department of Education doing to improve my child's school?

State education officials work with local administrators to develop an appropriate improvement plan, in addition to policies to help all schools raise achievement. Some examples of statewide efforts are:

- There are \$87 million in federal School Improvement Grants assisting eligible high priority schools.
- Academic specialists and turnaround support consultants are also available to support high priority schools.
- The \$500 million Race to the Top grant that Tennessee won has resources that will pay for more intensive teacher training to help students reach academic goals. Districts will be able to use their share of funds to make sure that their schools are getting the support they need to help students excel.
- The Tennessee Diploma Project has increased standards and adopted new graduation requirements to improve the quality of education for Tennessee students.
- The department disseminates best education practices through numerous professional development opportunities year-round. Tennessee's Electronic Learning Center, launched in December 2008, hosts extensive resources and training sessions in an online format that can be accessed at anytime.

How can I learn about school choice and supplemental educational services?

School districts must offer school choice to Title I schools identified as high priority, and supplemental educational services to Title I schools identified as high priority for two or more years.

You can find information on our Web site about supplemental educational services at www.tennessee.gov/education/fedprog/fpses.shtml, and information regarding school choice at www.tennessee.gov/education/fedprog/fpschchoice.shtml.

What can I do, as a parent, to help my school improve?

All schools must develop school improvement plans, and schools identified as high priority must revise those plans, with input from parents. You can contact your school to become a member of the School Improvement Planning team. Of course, the best thing that you can do is support your own children in their educational efforts. For information on family and community engagement, visit www.tennessee.gov/education/fedprog/fpinvolveparents.shtml.