# RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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# RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

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## THE RHODE ISLAND STATE CONTEXT AND NCLB

In 1997, the Rhode Island General Assembly enacted Article 31, which required all schools to set student performance targets based on state assessments. This legislation also put into place a policy framework and accountability system that required schools to align their educational process with the Rhode Island school reform agenda, as outlined in the Comprehensive Education Strategy (CES). At the core of this agenda are the expectations that the Department will create high standards and expect high achievement for all students. Because the standards and expectations are high, Article 31 recognizes that schools, due to funding disparities and particularly needy student populations, need extra support from the district, State, and other sources to meet these challenges.

Article 31 requires the Commissioner to make judgments about school performance on a regular basis. The process used for placing schools into performance categories reflects Rhode Island's agenda of rigorous standards for all students and the need for ongoing improvement for all schools. The Board of Regents and the Commissioner also expect that schools close gaps in performance between groups of students.

On January 8, 2002, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This law required states to establish a single accountability system that includes each school and district in the state. These expectations were grouped according to ten specific Principles of Accountability:

1. All schools/districts must be held accountable;
2. All students are included in the accountability system;
3. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures are systematic;
4. School/district progress is reviewed annually;
5. Progress of student subgroups is measured separately;
6. Schools/districts are held accountable primarily through assessments;
7. The accountability system includes some additional indicators;
8. English Language Arts (reading) and Mathematics are separate indicators;
9. The accountability system is valid and reliable; and
10. Participation rates for students must be at least 95%.

## INCORPORATING NCLB ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS INTO RHODE ISLAND'S EXISTING MODEL

In 2003, RIDE introduced its revised accountability system that incorporated the requirements of NCLB, the CES, and Article 31 to create a single system for classifying schools and districts. The first step in establishing this unified system was the inclusion of the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system of incremental growth in which all schools, districts, and subgroups are expected to achieve 100% proficiency by the year 2014. While states have some opportunities to amend their accountability systems annually, the intent and core values built into Rhode Island's Accountability System will remain. However, with the implementation of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) in 2005, sections of the Accountability System will change because new assessments and a new data tracking system, eRIDE, will be implemented. Figure 1 highlights the differences in the Rhode Island Accountability System before and after the NCLB regulations were incorporated.

*Figure 1*: **Core Components**

| | Previous RI Accountability System | Beginning in 2003… |
|---|---|---|
| Who | Schools | Schools and Districts |
| Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) | 3% | Individualized for each school |
| Equity Gaps | Reducing low performance | Improving performance by subgroup |
| Nonacademic Indicators | Learning Support Indicators | Attendance and Graduation |
| Improvement | More *Proficient* students | Acknowledges progress toward proficiency |
| Goal | All students reaching proficiency | All students reaching proficiency by 2014. |

Over the 2003-04 school year, RIDE applied for additional flexibilities and will continue to do so in coming years as we learn and refine our knowledge about accountability systems and the advantages and disadvantages of any changes. The schools and districts in Rhode Island are already familiar with the new flexibilities implemented over the last school year. For example, greater latitude was granted to states to include Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in their first and second year of monitored status and medically exempt students, previously included in the calculation of participation rates, can now be excluded from accountability calculations.

## THE INDEX PROFICIENCY SYSTEM

Our experience with the New Standards Reference Examinations in English Language Arts and Mathematics has taught us that simply tallying students meeting the standard does not acknowledge the progress many schools are making as students move from showing *Little Evidence of Achievement* to *Nearly Achieved the Standard*. Therefore, we have created an indexing system

that recognizes the progress schools are making in moving students from the lower to the higher levels of student performance.

Getting all students to meet the standard is difficult because it depends upon a number of factors relating to school change. These include resources, rigorous curriculum, up-to-date materials, expert instruction, and a supportive community, to name a few. Because the single most important factor in student achievement is the quality of the teacher, it is imperative that teachers engage in professional development that will enhance their knowledge, skills, and ability to teach students content and process skills and to solve problems as demanded by the standards-based classroom.

Standards-based classrooms require students to do more than memorize facts and use rules. Standards require students to organize data, think critically, analyze information, communicate clearly, critique ideas and materials, apply knowledge, use technology, predict results, and solve problems. These demands for higher levels of thinking skills require a classroom environment filled with opportunities for students to experience situations requiring the application of these skills and abilities.

For many teachers, teaching in a standards-based classroom is very different from how they were trained to teach. Teachers need to engage in professional development to develop their expertise and ability to create a standards-based environment. Changes in beliefs and practice have to occur before changes in student performance on the state assessments will be seen. Because gains in student performance are not immediate, giving schools credit for smaller changes through an index system recognizes the efforts made by schools.

The following pages describe the steps that were taken to develop the Rhode Island Accountability System as well as changes in the Accountability System from the first year to this year (2004).

## STEP 1: INDEX SCORE CALCULATIONS

The Assessment and Accountability System is aligned to standards that are available for districts to use as guides for curriculum development. Both ELA and Mathematics assessments report student results in the six categories outlined in Figure 2. Points are then assigned to each performance level to create an Index Proficiency Score.

*Figure 2:* **Rhode Island's Index Proficiency Scale**

| Performance Level | Index Proficiency Score |
|---|---|
| Achieved the Standard with Honors | 100 |
| Achieved the Standard | 100 |
| Nearly Achieved the Standard | 75 |
| Below the Standard | 50 |
| Little Evidence of Achievement | 25 |
| No Score | 0 |

The last level of performance is *No Score*. This level assigns a zero for students who were required to take the test but for some reason did not get a score. In addition, some students may not receive a score because they did not attempt all three sessions of the test; however, this type of *No Score* (partial testing) will still contribute to the 95% participation indicator, since the students were attempting to take the test. This process reflects the ALL Kids focus of both state education policy and law that requires all public students to participate in the Rhode Island State Assessment Program (RISAP).

Every student receives seven scores on the New Standards Reference Exams. There are four subtest scores in English Language Arts and three in Mathematics. An average Index Proficiency Score is calculated separately in each subject area. The following example demonstrates how the Index Proficiency Scores are calculated:

| **STUDENT A (ELA)** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Sub-test** | **Performance Level** | **Index Points** |
| Basic Understanding | *Meets the Standard with Honors* | 100 |
| Analysis and Interpretation | *Meets the Standard* | 100 |
| Writing Effectiveness | *Meets the Standard* | 100 |
| Writing Conventions | *Nearly Meets the Standard* | 75 |
| | **TOTAL** | **375** |

375 ÷ 4 = 93.75

93.75 is the Index Score

Index Proficiency Scores must be derived for all students in the school during the three most recent years of testing. The following steps walk you through the process for calculating a three-year Index Proficiency Score for a school.

These steps are done separately for ELA and Mathematics.

**Step 1:** For the three years involved, compute the Index Proficiency Score for every student as described above.

**Step 2:** Add together the Index Scores across all three years.

**Step 3:** Add together the enrollment counts at the time of testing across the three-year period.

**Step 4:** Divide the value from Step 2 by the value of Step 3.

This procedure is also used for calculating the school's baseline and for Index Proficiency Scores for each subgroup within the school.

## STEP 2: BASELINES

As mandated by NCLB, calculating the baselines in ELA and Mathematics was the second step in determining the performance of schools and creating a cohesive accountability system. The baselines determined how much students needed to improve between 2002 and 2014 (the year NCLB legislation specifies that 100% of students will be proficient in English Language Arts and Mathematics).

Rhode Island's baselines were calculated by averaging 2000, 2001, and 2002 state assessment results. Baselines were established for ELA and Mathematics at elementary (grades K-5), middle (grades 6-8) and high (grades 9-12). After each school's Index Proficiency Score was calculated, the schools were rank-ordered. The score of the school in which 20% of Rhode Island's total enrollment at that grade was enrolled became the baseline. In other words, 80% of the students in the state are in schools at or above the baseline and 20% of students are in schools that have scores below the baseline. This step was repeated for ELA and Mathematics for each grade span as well as for the Graduation Rate for high schools. Figure 3 demonstrates the calculation.

*Figure 3:* **Elementary Mathematics: Determining the Baseline**

| School | Index Proficiency Score | Enrollment | Cumulative Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 44.2 | 4 | 4 |
| 2 | 46.9 | 6 | 10 |
| 3 | 52.5 | 12 | 22 |
| 4 | 58.6 | 8 | 30 |
| **5** | **61.7** | **10** | **40** |
| 6 | 63.9 | 6 | 46 |
| ⇩ | ⇩ | ⇩ | |
| 15 | 92.4 | 200 students | |

Baseline is set at 20% of Cumulative Enrollment

## Step 3: Intermediate Goals (IGs)

Another requirement of NCLB specifies that states identify five Intermediate Goals between the 2002 baselines and the sixth and final 2014 goal of 100% proficiency. The Intermediate Goals for elementary, middle, and high schools must increase in equal increments but they need not be spaced evenly over the twelve-year time span. This distinction allowed us some flexibility within the NCLB legislation. The Intermediate Goals were established using this method of calculation:

(100 – Baseline) + 6 = X

Baseline + X = Intermediate Goal 1

IG1 + X = IG 2, etc…

We spaced the Intermediate Goals unevenly over the twelve-year time span. There is a three-year span between each of the first three Intermediate Goals and then they increase each year until 2014. The uneven time span was designed to give schools below the 2002 baseline an opportunity to implement their school improvement plans and to catch up before Intermediate Goals began to increase each year. Steady growth is expected beginning in 2011 because we are confident that larger gains will be seen as schools become focused and their improvement plans gain momentum. Figure 4 shows the increase of Intermediate Goals from 2002 to 2014.

*Figure 4:* **Chart of Intermediate Goals [Index Proficiency Scores]**

| | 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** |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **2008** | **84.1** | **74.5** | **78.6** | **64.1** | **75.0** | **63.2** |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **2005** | **80.1** | **68.1** | **73.3** | **55.1** | **68.8** | **54.0** |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **2002 Baseline** | **76.1** | **61.7** | **68.0** | **46.1** | **62.6** | **44.8** |

## STEP 4: ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Between the Intermediate Goals are the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). The AMOs are the basis for making AYP determinations for accountability. AMOs specify the current year's minimum Index Proficiency Score that a school must achieve to be *Moderately Performing,* in contrast to being *In Need of Improvement*.

These AMOs are the same as the most recent Intermediate Goal until 2011. For example, the AMOs in 2003 and 2004 are the same as in the baseline year of 2002. The application of Intermediate Goals and AMOs is consistent with the theory of change discussed earlier. We anticipate the largest gains will take place in the latter end of the twelve-year timeline. The earlier years will recognize the need for giving schools and districts *In Need of Improvement* time to organize and implement the changes needed to support students as they move up from the lowest performance categories. Figure 5 displays both the Intermediate Goals and the AMOs from 2002 through 2014.

*Figure 5:* **Chart of Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) [Index Proficiency Scores]**

| | 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** |
| **2002 Baseline** | **76.1** | **61.7** | **68.0** | **46.1** | **62.6** | **44.8** |

## STEP 5: PLACEMENT INTO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

Schools are classified as *High Performing*, *Moderately Performing*, or as being *In Need of Improvement*. For those schools classified as *In Need of Improvement,* their progress towards meeting the current year's AMOs will be measured and described as either *making progress* or *making insufficient progress*. Schools that are *Moderately* or *High Performing* will be described as *sustaining* or *improving* their performance. Schools with the *Moderately* or *High Performing* classification may have the additional label of *Caution* if they are in their first year of having only nonacademic indicators that are below the current year's AMOs.

The formula for classification has the following elements:

1. Comparison of Index Proficiency Scores to the state AMOs for 2004;
2. Comparison using the performance for disaggregated subgroups of the student population, but only where the number of students reliably supports such an analysis. Data will be analyzed when there are 45 students in a subgroup over a three-year time span.
3. Separate analyses for ELA and Mathematics performance.
4. A final check to determine if AMOs have been met for high school graduation rates or the elementary and middle school attendance rates.
5. An analysis to determine that at least 95% of the students participated in both the ELA and Mathematics assessments.

The Rhode Island Accountability System is designed to use three years of data to evaluate schools and districts. To test whether a school has met its 2004 AMOs, the analysis will combine test scores from 2002, 2003, and 2004 and those results are compared to the state AMOs in ELA and Mathematics for 2004.

However, experience with three-year averaging has taught us that occasionally a school shows strong improvement in the current year that would be obscured by using a three-year average. Therefore, the Rhode Island Accountability System allows for a second comparison. If the current, single-year Index Proficiency Score is higher, then only the single year's data is used. This option cannot be used for schools with fewer than 45 students at a tested grade in the current year. These small schools will be assigned a three-year Index Proficiency Score for recordkeeping purposes.

*Figure 6* describes the range of Index Proficiency Scores that make up *High, Moderate,* and *In Need of Improvement*.

*Figure 6:* **Chart of Proficiency Index Scores Ranges that Partly Determine School Classifications**

| | Elementary Schools | | Middle Schools | | High Schools | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **ELA** | **Math** | **ELA** | **Math** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **High Performing** | **88.1 - 100** | **80.9 - 100** | **83.9 - 100** | **73.1 - 100** | **81.2 - 100** | **72.4 - 100** |
| **Moderately Performing** | **76.1 – 88.0** | **61.7 – 80.8** | **68.0 – 83.8** | **46.1 – 73.0** | **62.6 – 81.1** | **44.8 – 72.3** |
| **In Need of Improvement** | **below 76.1** | **below 61.7** | **below 68.0** | **below 46.1** | **below 62.6** | **below 44.8** |

## CLOSING EQUITY GAPS

NCLB mirrors Rhode Island's CES in that it requires the steady improvement of subgroups of the student population. In the Rhode Island Accountability System, each subgroup's progress must be calculated separately. Each school's and district's data must be disaggregated into the following eight subgroups: Economically Disadvantaged (lunch status), Native American, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, Special Needs (IEP), and Limited English Proficient (LEP).

All subgroups are held to the same baselines, Intermediate Goals, and AMOs outlined in Figure 5. Accountability for subgroups occurs only when there are 45 students or more in that particular subgroup over a three-year time span. The option to use current (single year) performance if higher than the three-year aggregate cannot be used unless there are 45 or more students in the subgroup for the current year. If there are fewer than 45 students in a subgroup at the school level over three years, there may be 45 or more at the district level, so these subgroups would be included in the district-level accountability calculations and classification processes.

## THE SAFE HARBOR PROVISION

The Safe Harbor Provision, part of NCLB, is another way to determine that schools are making progress. Safe Harbor provides an opportunity for schools classified as *In Need of Improvement* to be recognized for growth that is significant, even though the progress made does not meet the current year's AMOs. If a school, district, or any of the subgroups within the school or district fail to meet their AMOs, Safe Harbor allows us to further review their assessment data before a final decision is made on their classification. Figure 7 outlines this calculation.

The Index Proficiency Score for the prior three years is subtracted from 100 (the 2014 goal) and this give us the gap between the goal and the Index Proficiency Score. Then 10% of the gap is added to the Index Proficiency Score to arrive at the Safe Harbor target. If a school achieves this target, it will have met all of the requirements of the Safe Harbor Provision and is

**Figure 7: 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

not subject to NCLB sanctions and corrective actions. RIDE will classify these schools as *In Need of Improvement/Making Progress*.

During the first year of the revised accountability system, Safe Harbor was not applied to attendance rates. While it is still not applied to graduation rates, it will be applied to attendance rates this year. The calculations for applying the Safe Harbor test to attendance rate data are the same those applied to ELA and Mathematics. If the school closes the gap between the current attendance rate and 95% by 10%, then the school will have met the attendance rate target. If the school achieves the academic AMOs but does not meet the attendance rate, even with a Safe Harbor Review, the school will be listed as *High* or *Moderate with Caution* for the first year if this was the only indicator missed. This school will be classified as *In Need of Improvement* if it misses the indicator for the second year.

If a school or district fails the Safe Harbor Review, the last opportunity for review of assessment data is the appeal process. A school or district entering sanctions will have at least 30 days from the date of notification to challenge the accuracy of the data that would lead to their classification; other districts will have a 14-day review period.

## NONACADEMIC INDICATORS

There are two additional accountability indicators. The first is *participation rate*; schools and districts must test at least 95% of their enrolled students in ELA and Mathematics. If a school tests fewer than 95% of their students, *No Scores* will be added to their enrollments until 95% of the total enrollment is reached. If a school tests more than 95% of students, all tested student scores will be used to calculate participation rate and arrive at their classification. If a school tests less than 95% of students, additional *No Scores* will be added to a school's Index Proficiency Score, but the participation rate will be recorded as below 95%.

The second nonacademic indicator measures attendance at the elementary and middle school levels and graduation rate at the high school level. Rhode Island's required attendance rate to meet AYP is 90% and the final goal is 95%. Schools that have attendance rates that fluctuate between 90% and 95% are considered to have passed this indicator. Schools with attendance rates below 90% will have the opportunity for a Safe Harbor Review of this indicator. If it is found that schools have increased their attendance rate in accordance with the Safe Harbor Provision, then they have met this indicator.

RIDE stipulates that every school must have a 95% high school graduation rate by the year 2014. A baseline was established using the same method of calculation as the other baselines. All high schools' graduation rates were rank ordered from lowest to highest. The high school in which 20% of the state's high school students were enrolled had a 71.4 % graduation rate. The AMOs for high school graduation rates are outlined in Figure 8.

*Figure 8:* **Graduation Rate AMOs**

| Year | AMO |
|---|---|
| 2014 | 95.0 |
| 2013 | 90.9 |
| 2012 | 87.0 |
| 2011 | 83.1 |
| 2010 | 79.2 |
| 2009 | 79.2 |
| 2008 | 79.2 |
| 2007 | 75.3 |
| 2006 | 75.3 |
| 2005 | 75.3 |
| 2004* | 71.4 |
| 2003 | 71.4 |
| 2002 | 71.4 |

**Current Year's AMO*

## DATA ROUNDING RULES

For 2004 classifications, data rounding is used for participation rates and for attendance rates. For participation rates (ELA or Math), a rate of 94.5 or higher is allowed to meet the 95.0% target for participation. For attendance rates, a rate of 89.5 or higher is allowed to meet the current criterion of 90.0% attendance. Data rounding is not used for the graduation rate.

Generally, data rounding is not used for other purposes. At present, data rounding is not used for proficiency index scores either in meeting AMO goals, Safe Harbor targets, or for the *Improving* indicator.

## THE CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

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
- High Performing and Sustaining
- High Performing with Caution
- Moderately Performing and Improving
- Moderately Performing and Sustaining
- Moderately Performing with Caution
- In Need of Improvement and Making Progress*
- In Need of Improvement and Insufficient Progress**

* Schools in this category are performing below the AMOs in the aggregate or in one or more subgroups but have made improvement when the Safe Harbor Provision is applied.

** Schools in this category are performing below the AMOs in the aggregate or in one or more of the subgroups. Additionally, they have **not** made adequate progress when the Safe Harbor Provision is used and/or have at least one of the nonacademic indicators below the current AMOs for two consecutive years. Also, schools correcting one type of academic AYP deficiency from the prior year (ELA or Mathematics) but entering a different academic AYP deficiency for the current year are included in this category.

The school classification decisions are made using all 21 data elements shown in Figure 9. The classification of districts is made by combining these data elements for each educational level: 21 high school, 21 middle school, and 21 elementary school.

*Figure 9:* **Data Elements**

| | |
|---|---|
| School-level performance in ELA and Mathematics | 2 |
| Subgroup performance (there are eight subgroups) in ELA and Mathematics | 16 |
| Nonacademic Indicators (either attendance or graduation rate) | 1 |
| 95% participation rate in ELA and Mathematics | 2 |
| TOTAL | 21 |

## HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS

These schools meet the criteria listed below.

- School Index Proficiency scores above the 3rd Intermediate Goal (2011) in both ELA and Mathematics
- No subgroups with Index Proficiency Scores below the AMO for the current year
- Attendance rate above 90% or graduation rate at or above the 3rd Intermediate Goal of 83.1%
- At least 95% of students completed or attempted the ELA and Mathematics assessments.

Schools that are *High Performing* based on assessment data, but have a nonacademic indicator (that is not repeated from the previous year) below the current AMOs are noted with a *Caution* designation.

If the indicator causing the *Caution* is still below the AMO for two years, then a school is considered *In Need of Improvement; Insufficient Progress*.

## MODERATELY PERFORMING SCHOOLS

A school is classified as *Moderately Performing* if it meets the criteria listed below.

- Assessment Index Proficiency Scores, including all subgroups, at or above the current AMOs
- An attendance rate above 90% or graduation rate above 71.4%
- At least 95% of students completed or attempted the ELA and Mathematics assessments

Schools that are *Moderately Performing* based on assessment data but have a nonacademic indicator (that is not repeated from the previous year) below the current AMOs are noted with a *Caution* designation.

If the indicator causing the *Caution* is still below the AMO for two years, then a school is considered *In Need of Improvement; Insufficient Progress*.

## IMPROVING OR SUSTAINING SCHOOLS

*High* and *Moderately Performing* schools are given an additional designation based on the degree of improvement seen in their school Index Proficiency Scores. Schools are designated as either *Improving or Sustaining*. Because our goal is continued improvement in student performance, these additional designations are assigned so everyone understands not only where a school's performance *is*, but also where the school *is going*.

*High and Moderately Performing* schools are classified as **improving** if they meet all of the criteria above and increase the school Index Proficiency Score in both ELA and Mathematics by at least 2

points from the previous year. *High* and *Moderately* performing schools that do not meet this condition are classified as **sustaining.**

## SCHOOLS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

Schools are classified as *In Need of Improvement* if they have any of the eighteen academic data elements below the current year's AMOs. If a school has any of the nonacademic indicators below the current AMO for two consecutive years, they are also considered *In Need of Improvement*.

***Making Progress:*** Schools *In Need of Improvement* are designated as *Making Progress or Making Insufficient Progress*. Schools are considered to be *Making Progress* if they have improved the Index Proficiency Scores that are below the current AMOs enough to meet the Safe Harbor Provision requirements.

***Insufficient Progress:*** Schools *In Need of Improvement* designated as making *Insufficient Progress* have not increased the Index Proficiency Scores that are below the current AMOs enough to meet the Safe Harbor Provision requirements for one or more years. Schools that have not met the AMO in the same content area for two years or more are subject to NCLB/PS&I sanctions and interventions. Schools that have not met the current AMOs for two years in any of their nonacademic indicators are also classified in this category.

Schools *In Need of Improvement* with the designation of *Insufficient Progress* will be subject to the NCLB and/or Progressive Support and Intervention (PS&I) sanctions and corrective processes if they have this designation for two or more years in the same content area. For example, if a school fails to make adequate progress in ELA in 2003 and 2004, then the school will be subject to appropriate NCLB/PS&I sanctions. If that school makes progress in ELA in 2004, but now fails to meet the 2004 AMOs in Mathematics, then a new timeline begins and the school is not subject to the federal/state sanctions required for a school that makes insufficient progress for two consecutive years in the same content area (or nonacademic indicator). A school must make progress for two consecutive years in the identified content area in order to be removed from an NCLB sanction status.

## ANNUAL REVIEW

Every school's classification report will include a status designation to further explain the consequences of their classifications.

*Figure 10:* **Status Designation Key**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | New School (first year of operation) |
| 2 | Watch (a school *In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress* or in a *Caution* status for the first year) |
| 3 | Choice (Title I school) |
| 4 | Supplemental Services (Title I school) |
| 5 | Corrective Action (Title I school) |
| 6 | Delay, Title I school, first year as *Making Progress* or *Moderate/High Performing* |
| 7 | PS&I, non-Title I school, two or more years as *Insufficient Progress* |
| 8 | Restructuring (Title I school) |
| T | Title I school |

## FLEXIBILITY WITHIN THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Rhode Island's School and District Accountability System has built-in flexibility to ensure as much fairness as possible. These aspects of the Accountability System serve to add reliability to the data. The flexibilities include:

- 3-year and 1-year review
- Error Bands
- Cell Size
- Small Schools
- Schools with Several Tested Grades
- Allowable Student Exemptions

### 3-YEAR AND 1-YEAR REVIEW OF DATA

Rhode Island's Accountability System includes analyses of data across three years and one year. During the 2003 classification process, if a school did not make the 2003 AMOs for any combination of subgroups, a Safe Harbor review was conducted to see if that school made significant progress in that area. However, if the school failed that test, then the same AMO and Safe Harbor reviews were conducted using only one year of data.

In order to provide schools multiple opportunities to demonstrate growth, instead of performing the three-year review followed by the one-year review, calculations were done automatically to find the higher Index Score and the greatest rate of growth among the school's academic indicators. The most favorable increase in growth was then used to determine the progress made by that school. A one-year review is possible only when there are at least 45 students.

For example: If a school passes the current year's AMO in ELA by three index points using a three-year average, and passes the **same** AMO in ELA by ten index points using a one-year average, the one-year average was used to determine the classification of this school.

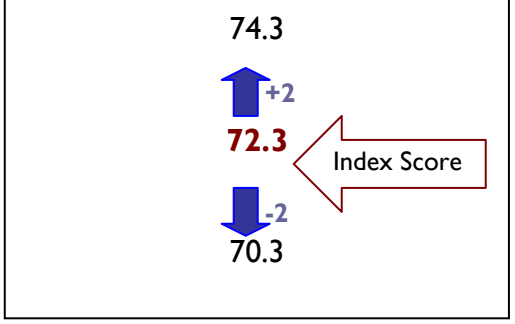
## ERROR BANDS

Errors are inherent to any assessment system. Rhode Island's Accountability System process considers measurement errors associated with any testing program. We want to be sure that school or district Index Proficiency Scores, and the scores for each subgroup, are related to actual improvement over time rather than random or measurement errors. To minimize the effects of error in our decision making, we use error bands for the Index Proficiency Sores.

The error band for schools depends on school size and is generally less than one index point.
The error band for subgroups is a constant two index points.

Very small schools receive higher error bands. The example tells us is that we can be 95% confident that one of this schools' subgroups actual performance would be between 70.3% and 74.3% if they have at least 45 students in the subgroup and the calculated Index Score is 72.3.

***FIGURE 11:* EXAMPLE USING ERROR BANDS FOR SUBGROUPS**




## CELL SIZE

As determinations are made about school performance using subgroups of student populations, we want to avoid making decisions based on small participation sizes (*n)* that would make a school's classification statistically unreliable. For this purpose, decisions will be made about subgroups only when there is a minimum of 45 students within the group across a three-year or one-year period.

*Figure 12:* EXAMPLE:

| SCHOOL A ( number of students) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2002** | **2003** | **2004** | **TOTAL** |
| IEP | 15 + | 24 + | 21 = | 60 |
| LEP | 6 + | 8 + | 9 = | 23 |
| Black | 7 + | 6 + | 11 = | 24 |
| Hispanic | 16 + | 14 + | 18 = | 48 |

For School A, Index Scores would be calculated for the IEP (*n = 60)* and Hispanic (*n = 48)* subgroups. Index Scores would not be calculated for the LEP (*n = 23)* and the Black (*n = 24)* subgroups because this school does not have more than 45 students across the three years. Because School A does not have at least 45 students in the LEP and Black subgroups, this school would be given a pass on these data elements and would be considered as having met these subgroup AMOs.

Note: For LEP students, the tally to determine whether 45 or more students are represented is based on the number of students actively receiving LEP services at the time they were tested. If there this

45 criterion is met, LEP monitored students are added into the LEP group for capturing the Index Proficiency Scores. LEP monitored students are former LEP students who were exited from LEP program services within the past two years.

## SMALL SCHOOLS

Schools that have fewer than 45 students enrolled across a three-year period must be classified as part of the State's accountability process. The process for classifying small schools allows us to adjust for the smaller population of students by creating a wider error band. This means that these schools will be classified in the same manner as all of the other schools; however, we do not disaggregate any of the subgroup data because they have fewer than 45 students across the three years of data. These schools will be considered to have met all subgroup AMOs.

## SCHOOLS WITH SEVERAL TESTED GRADES

If a school's grade configuration includes more than one tested grade, an Index Proficiency Score is calculated by combining student performance results across grades. The total Index Proficiency Score is then compared to the current AMOs of the highest grade in that school.

## ALLOWABLE EXEMPTIONS

*LEP Students in the U.S. for Less Than One Year:* These students are exempt from participating in the ELA exam if they have entered the U.S. after June 30th of the prior year. These students' scores will be used in calculating the participation rate but not used in calculating the Index Score. However, these students must participate in the Mathematics exam.

*Medically Exempt Students:* These students have medical issues that prevent them from taking any of the assessments that make up the Rhode Island State Assessment Program. The superintendent, on behalf of the student, submits a letter outlining the student's medical condition and sends it to the Director of the Office of Assessment and Accountability. 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 Enrolled after October 1st:* These students are removed from enrollment rosters and their scores are not used in accountability calculations of the school. However, these students are counted for the basic participation rate calculations.

## CLASSIFICATION AND APPEALS PROCESS TIMELINE

| Event | Date |
|---|---|
| Title I schools which did not pass all AYP indicators in 2003 receive their 2004 NCLB classifications | August 19 |
| All schools receive their NCLB Classifications for Appeals Review | October 13 |
| End of appeals window for Districts and Schools | October 25 |
| Accountability Workshops | October 19-22 |
| Announcement of Classifications (accountability report cards, classifications, and report card notifications to Superintendents posted) | November 22 |

NCLB specifies an appeals period to allow Title I schools and districts to challenge the designation of being *In Need of Improvement*. Currently in Rhode Island, this is interpreted as a challenge to the accuracy of student enrollment counts or the coding of student background or program characteristics, the accuracy of exemption codes and similar issues. Occasionally, an appeal will involve the review of missing a single target by a very small margin in the context of other performance indicators.

RIDE makes every effort to respond to appeals by Title I schools that could potentially change their *In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress* status. Reviews for schools *Making Progress* or in a *Moderate* or *High* performing status are generally denied unless a systematic processing error appears to have occurred. The general position is that the accuracy of coding and enrollment counts should be guaranteed by districts at the beginning of the testing process rather than at the end. In addition, following March 2004 testing, districts were given access to the testing demographic file from May 12th to May 18th and asked to check and update the accuracy of coding.

Appeals must be submitted in writing by school district superintendents to:

Mary Ann Snider, Director
RIDE; Office of Assessment and Accountability
255 Westminster Street, 5th Floor
Providence, RI 02903

The following information should be included in the appeal:

1. School's name
2. School's code number
3. error(s) in the file
4. indicator involved
5. explanation of error

Appeals that would not alter the status of *In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress* because other uncontested AYP indicators have not been passed are generally not accepted.

## DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY AND CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

NCLB regulations require all school districts to be held to the same accountability standards as schools. Districts in their first year of not meeting the current AMOs are designated as *In Need of Improvement/ Watch*. A district is considered *In Need of Improvement* from an intervention perspective if, for two consecutive years, it fails to meet the required AMOs in two of the three grade levels (elementary, middle, and high) or if 40% or more of its schools are classified as *In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress*. Districts, like schools, are required to make progress for two consecutive years before they can be removed from the *In Need of Improvement* list. In the first year of improvement, a district is considered to be in *Delay*.

*Figure 13:* **District In Need of Improvement Classifications**

| District Performance | Classification |
|---|---|
| The district misses one or more of the current AMOs at 2 or 3 levels (elementary, middle, high) for the first year or at least 40% of schools in the district are *In Need of Improvement/ Insufficient Progress* for the first year. | *In Need of Improvement/Watch status* |
| For two or more years, the district misses one or more of the current AMOs at 2 or 3 levels (elementary, middle, high) or at least 40% of schools in the district are *In Need of Improvement/Insufficient Progress* for two years or more. | *In Need of Improvement* |
| The district (or 40% of schools in the district) previously identified for improvement meets the current AMOs at 2 or 3 levels (elementary, middle, high) for the first year. | Delay, indicating *In Need of Improvement* status continues until a second consecutive year of improvement is demonstrated. |
| A district had *watch* status last year but is not *In Need of Improvement* this year | Clear – No classification assigned |

A district performance classification occurs at the same time that school-level results are released to communities on November 22, 2004. Districts designated as being *In Need of Improvement* are subject to both NCLB and Progressive Support and Intervention protocols as determined by the Commissioner of Education under the Article 31 legislation. The federal and state sanctions are fully described in the Progressive Support and Intervention document. The data elements used to classify districts can be found on page 16, Figure 9.

## ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARDS

The 2004 Rhode Island Assessment Report Cards and the Accountability Report Cards will be available in late November on the RIDE website (www.ridoe.net). The information in this Technical Bulletin explains how the calculations were done in order to create the Accountability Report Cards for schools and districts. It is important to note that the ELA and Mathematics Assessment Report Cards are based on very different calculations and cannot be compared to the Accountability Report Cards. A full description of the differences between the two will accompany the report cards and may be found on the RIDE website.