RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

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THE RHODE ISLAND STATE CONTEXT AND NCLB

On January 8, 2002, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB required states to establish a single accountability system that includes every school and district. Rhode Island proposed an accountability model incorporating NCLB requirements to the US Department of Education for approval and this model was first implemented to interpret performance on students' assessments during the 2002-03 school year.

In 1997, the Rhode Island General Assembly had enacted Article 31. That legislation put into place a policy framework and accountability system that included all Rhode Island public schools. That initial system evaluated schools for the 2000-01 and 2001-02 school years before the introduction of the NCLB-based system in 2002-03. Article 31 required schools to align their educational processes with the Rhode Island school reform agenda as outlined in the Comprehensive Education Strategy (CES). At the core of this agenda was the expectation that the Department of Education would create high standards and expect high achievement for all students.

Article 31 required the Commissioner to make judgments about school performance on a regular basis. This requirement was given additional weight with the NCLB legislation. The Board of Regents and the Commissioner expect that schools will improve performance and close gaps in performance between groups of students. The Regents' policy on Progressive Support and Intervention has evolved to support this expectation.

Rhode Island introduced a new assessment program (NECAP) for students in grades 3-8 in October 2005 to further comply with the requirements of NCLB. A NECAP high school assessment was introduced in October 2007. The final administration of the New Standards Reference Exam (NSRE) at grade 11 occurred in March 2007. A statewide assessment of science will be introduced at grades 4, 8 and 11 in May 2008.

INCORPORATING NCLB ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS INTO RHODE ISLAND'S PREVIOUS ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL

In 2003, RIDE introduced its revised accountability system that incorporated the requirements of NCLB to create a single system for classifying the performance of 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 in English language arts and mathematics 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 have remained constant.

With the implementation of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) in October 2005, sections of the Accountability System were updated for elementary and middle schools. This document continues to cover interpretation of the NSRE assessment for classifying high schools based on performance in 2006-07. The next edition of the **Technical Bulletin** will include changes based on the introduction of the grade 11 NECAP assessment in October 2007. Figure 1 highlights the differences in the Rhode Island Accountability System before and after the NCLB regulations were incorporated.

Figure 1: **Core Components of the Previous and Current Accountability System**

	Previous RI Accountability System	Beginning in 2003…
Who	Schools	Schools and Districts
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	3% Growth	Uniform statewide targets for achievement
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

THE INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE

Our early experience with the New Standards Reference Examinations in English Language Arts and Mathematics taught us that simply tallying students meeting the standard did not acknowledge the progress many schools were making as students moved from showing *Little Evidence of Achievement* to *Nearly Achieved the Standard*. Therefore, Rhode Island created an indexing system that recognizes the progress schools can make in moving students from the lower to the higher levels of student performance. This indexing approach has been continued for use with the NECAP assessments.

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 enhances their knowledge, skills, and ability to teach students academic content, process skills and strategies 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 was a transition from how they were trained to teach. Teachers have been engaging 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 process that was taken to develop the Rhode Island Accountability System and update the Accountability System into the 2006-07 school year. There had been several changes that affected the 2005-06 classifications; specifically, the testing month changed to October for elementary and middle schools with the introduction of NECAP assessments at all grades 3 – 8. An expanded definition of the school classification label "*Caution*" was introduced and additional targets related to participation rates for subgroups of students were introduced. Changes for the 2006-07 classification of elementary and middle schools were minor and concern preliminarily the definition of a commended school. **For high schools, the number of school classification categories was reduced in reporting results for the 2006-07 school year.** This change is described in a later section.

INDEX SCORE CALCULATIONS

The Assessment and Accountability System is aligned to Grade Level/Span Expectations (GLEs/GSEs) that have been presented to districts to use as guides for assessment and curriculum development. The reading, writing and mathematics assessments report student results under NECAP in four achievement levels (Proficient with Distinction, Proficient, Partially Proficient and Significantly Below Proficient). For school and district accountability analyses, these four categories were expanded to six categories as outlined in Figure 2. The high school achievement levels from the New Standards Reference Examinations (NSRE) maintain the six levels of performance used in previous years. For each student, points are assigned corresponding to each achievement level to create an Index Proficiency score.

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

Achievement Level – NECAP Elem. & Middle Schools	**Achievement Level – NSRE High Schools**	**Index Proficiency Score**
Proficient with Distinction	Achieved the Standard with Honors	100
Proficient	Achieved the Standard	100
Partially Proficient	Nearly Achieved the Standard	75
Significantly Below Proficient (Upper Range)	Below the Standard	50
Significantly Below Proficient (Lower Range)	Little Evidence of Achievement	25
No Evidence of Achievement	No Score	0

The lowest level of achievement is either "no evidence of achievement" for elementary and middle schools or No Score for high schools. For elementary and middle schools, the scale assigns a zero for students who are at the bottom of the scale score range (score ending in 00 such as a 300 or a 500.) High school students receive a zero if they take the test but do not attempt all three sessions of the test. Both types of lowest level scores contribute to the 95% participation indicator, since the students were attempting to take the test. The ALL Kids focus of state education policy and law requires all public school students to participate in the Rhode Island State Assessment Program.

Figure 2B: **Mid-Points for Scale Score Range Dividing Significantly Below Proficient**

Not the same for each grade or content

	Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Grade 3	316	316	
Grade 4	416	416	
Grade 5	515	517	514
Grade 6	615	617	
Grade 7	715	717	
Grade 8	814	817	814

The NECAP assessments at grades 3-8 yield overall reading, mathematics and writing (grade 5 and 8 only) scores from which statewide performance (achievement) standards were set on the reading total, math total and writing total scores. The achievement level on each test corresponds to a certain number of points on the accountability index scale. For every school, the contribution of the Writing assessment (usually taken at one grade) to the overall school ELA index score for NECAP will always be weighted as 20 percent of the total ELA score.

Computation of the index scores for high schools is more complicated because every student receives seven scores on the NSRE. 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 would be calculated for a student on the NSRE high school exam (and how it was done in earlier years for the grade 4 and 8 NSRE exams).

Figure 3: **SAMPLE PERFORMANCE OF A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ON THE NSRE**

Subtest	**Achievement Level Attained by Student**	**Index Points**
Reading: Basic Understanding	*Meets the Standard with Honors*	100
Reading: 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 ELA Index Score for the Student

For the high schools (where the NSRE exam was last administered in March 2007), Index Proficiency scores are derived for all students in the school during the three most recent years of

testing. For the three-year combined index, all three years of students scores are added together and averaged.

For elementary and middle schools, the following steps are taken to compute ELA and mathematics index proficiency scores using results from the October 2006 NECAP assessments. (The steps are done separately for ELA and Mathematics.)

Step 1: Assign each student score to the grade and school of the prior school year.

Step 2: Eliminate students from the analysis who were not continuously enrolled from October 1, 2005 forward to the end of the 2005-06 school year in the school to which the score was assigned.

Step 3: Assign the Index Proficiency score for every student as defined in Figure 2A: Rhode Island's Index Proficiency Scale.

Step 4: Add the Reading index scores across all students combining all grades with test data. Mathematics index scores would be calculated in parallel fashion.

Step 5: Divide the sum of index scores by the number of students with an index score (across tested grades) at the time of testing (adjusted for valid exemptions and for step 2 above)

Step 6: For the English language arts index, take the school writing index score (separately calculated) and apply that always as 20 percent of the final ELA index score with reading contributing the other 80 percent.

To recap, for the NECAP exams at grades 3-8, the index score of a school for 2006-07 is computed from student index scores across all grades combined. Also, a very important concept in computing the accountability index scores for elementary and middle schools is that October test scores are assigned to the previous grade before computations are done. One consequence of this is that elementary schools receive scores from the first year of middle school before the index computations are done.

In Figure 4 we illustrate the attribution of test scores to the prior year using the terms "tested year" and "teaching year." Students in elementary and middle schools were tested in October (testing year), but they were tested against the grade level expectations (GLEs) of the prior year (teaching year). Thus, for example, reading, writing and mathematics test score of students tested in the eighth grade are assigned to the school where each child was a seventh grade student before the Index Proficiency scores for a school are calculated.

Figure 4: **Assignment of Scores From Testing Year to Teaching Year**

Grade During October Testing (NECAP exams)	Grade Assigned for Accountability (Teaching Year)
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	6
8	7

It should be noted that index scores are calculated from the teaching year data file, but participation rates are calculated from the testing year data file.

BASELINES

As mandated by NCLB, calculating the baselines in ELA and Mathematics was a crucial 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 NSRE results. Baselines were established for ELA and mathematics at three levels of schooling -- 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 from high to low separately for each level of school (elementary, middle and high). Starting from the lowest score, the score of the school in which 20% of Rhode Island's total enrollment at the tested grade was enrolled cumulatively became the baseline. In other words, 80% of the students in the state were in schools at or above the baseline and 20% of students were in schools that had 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 5 demonstrates this calculation using a hypothetical state with 30 elementary schools.

This process was not repeated using the new NECAP data for elementary and middle schools. All AMOs and Intermediate Goals remain as originally defined for interpreting the elementary and middle school NECAP assessments. Alternate simulation models using the preliminary NECAP results showed diverse results that were not compelling improvements over the original AMO baseline and trajectory to the year 2014. Using guidance from our Technical Advisory Committee and in accordance with our desire to avoid changing processes of the accountability system without a compelling reason, AMO values adopted under NSRE were kept in place for the NECAP assessments.

Figure 5: **Elementary Mathematics: Model for Determining the Original Baseline for 2002**

School	Index Proficiency Score	Enrollment	Cumulative Enrollment
1	44.2	40	40
2	46.9	60	100
3	52.5	120	220
4	58.6	80	300
5	**61.7**	**100**	**400**
6	63.9	60	460
⇩	⇩	⇩	
30	92.4	50	2000 students

Elementary Baseline is set when Cumulative Enrollment is 20% of total state elementary enrollment

Intermediate Goals (IGs)

Another requirement of NCLB specifies that states identify at least five Intermediate Goals between the 2002 baselines and the sixth and final 2014 goal of 100% proficiency. By law, 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 believe 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. These intermediate goals remain in effect and have not been altered by introduction of the NECAP assessments. They will be reviewed for high schools after data from the first administration of the high school NECAP examination is analyzed.

Figure 6: **Chart of Intermediate Goals [Index Proficiency Scores]**

	Elementary		Middle		High	
Year	**ELA**	**Math**	**ELA**	**Math**	**ELA**	**Math**
2013-2014	**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**
2001-2002 Baseline	**76.1**	**61.7**	**68.0**	**46.1**	**62.6**	**44.8**

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

The full chart of annual targets contains what are called the Annual Measurable Objectives. The AMOs are the basis for making AYP determinations for accountability.

AMOs for certain years are the same as the most recent Intermediate Goal until 2011. For example, the AMOs in 2003 and 2004 were 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 part of the twelve-year timeline. The earlier years 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 7 displays both the Intermediate Goals and the AMOs from 2002 through 2014.

Figure 7: **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**

* AMO targets for the 2006-07 classification of schools using October 2006 NECAP scores and March 2007 NSRE scores.

PLACEMENT INTO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

Historical note for 2004-05 and previous school classifications.

After many years of spring statewide assessments, Rhode Island shifted to a fall statewide assessment program beginning with October 2005. Rather than test twice in a short period of time (and against two different sets of grade level standards), the normally scheduled Spring 2005 assessments at elementary and middle schools were deferred in favor of the introduction of the new NECAP assessments in October 2005. High school assessments continued normally in Spring 2005 (also 2006 and 2007) using the New Standards Reference Examinations with a transition to high school NECAP assessments in October 2007.

For the transition year of 2004-05, Rhode Island was directed by the U.S. Secretary of Education to use the school-wide attendance rate only to classify elementary and middle schools for accountability purposes. Because the range of evaluation indicators was so restricted for 2004-05, elementary and middle schools were classified for 2005 as either making adequate yearly progress (AYP) or not making adequate yearly progress. The more detailed classification categories were used in 2005 only for the high schools (where the full array of target indicators was available).

The high school classification for 2005 used a unique classification label of moderately performing/safe harbor for schools that passed all targets but needed to use the safe harbor formula in one or more instances. Also, the "caution" designation could be given if only one target was missed (any target) or if two targets were missed but within the same subpopulation.

For the 2003 and 2004 accountability classification cycles, schools had been 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 was measured and described as either *making progress* or *making insufficient progress*. Schools that were *Moderately* or *High Performing* were described as *sustaining* or *improving* their performance. Schools with the *Moderately* or *High Performing* classification could have the additional label of *Caution* if they were in their first year of having only nonacademic indicators that were below the current year's AMOs.

New Classification Categories

With the introduction of the NECAP assessments in October 2005, the accountability classification labels were modified. These new labels were also applied to high schools in the 2005-06 school year. Schools were still classified as High Performing or Moderately Performing in essentially the same process as before, but the "in need of improvement/insufficient progress category was relabeled simply as "Insufficient Progress." The category of "in need of improvement/making progress" was eliminated. Essentially, these schools have passed AYP by using the "safe harbor" improvement formula in one or more situations. They are now classified as High Performing or Moderately Performing depending on the Index Proficiency score.

The school classification labels for 2005-06 (elementary, middle and high schools) and 2006-07 (elementary and middle schools) are:

(1) High Performing and Commended

(2) **High Performing**
(3) **High Performing with Caution**
(4) **Moderately Performing and Commended**
(5) **Moderately Performing**
(6) **Moderately Performing with Caution**
(7) **[No longer in use]**
(8) **Insufficient Progress (x/y)**

(Note: In the 2004-05 classification of elementary and middle schools, code 0 was used to indicate "Not Making AYP" and code 9 for "AYP Met" in place of more detailed labels.)

The term x/y following "insufficient progress" represents the number of targets passed compared to the number of targets evaluated. The total number of targets evaluated does not include passing using the minimum N criterion. For example, a small elementary school might only be evaluated against school-wide ELA and math scores, white subgroup ELA and math scores and IEP subgroup ELA and math scores. The six targets would each be associated with a test participation rate increasing the number of targets to 12. With the addition of the attendance rate target, the school would be evaluated against 13 targets. If 8 targets were met, the school would be listed as *insufficient progress (8/13)*.

Schools have been previously "commended" in a review cycle separate from the school classification. Beginning in 2005-06, "commended" is used as an integral part of the classification label. Thus, schools may be "high performing and commended" or "moderately performing and commended". A school must meet criteria in both ELA and math to be called commended (see description in later section). In previous years, schools with the highest classification label were called "high performing and improving."

A school meeting AYP in the previous year and currently satisfying the AYP requirement for school-wide math and school-wide ELA will receive the label **high performing with caution** or **moderately performing with caution** if not more than three AYP targets have been missed. If the number of targets missed exceeds three, the school's label will be **insufficient progress**.

The school classification labels for high schools for 2006-07 are:

(9) Met AYP
(8) Insufficient Progress (x/y)
(13) Caution (x/y) [Caution is to be interpreted as for elementary and middle schools except that the distinctions of high performing and moderately performing are not made for high schools for this testing cycle.

Thus, high schools for the 2006-07 classification have an abbreviated set of classification categories. Terms such as high performing and commended are not used in the 2006-07 cycle for high schools. After the first use of the new NECAP assessment for high schools (October 2007), we anticipate a return to a more extended classification to be applied toward the end of the 2007-08 school year.

Rules for the more detailed classification terms "high performing", "moderately performing" and "commended" (excluding high schools for the 2006-07 school year) follow:

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
- All evaluated subgroups have Index Proficiency Scores at or above the AMO for the current year or have met the Safe Harbor improvement test.
- Attendance rate above 90% or graduation rate at or above the 3rd Intermediate Goal of 83.1%
- At least 95% of students school wide and in all evaluated subgroups completed or attempted the ELA and Mathematics assessments.

Schools that are High Performing school-wide at the 2011 AMO level in ELA and Math but missed not more than three targets (excluding the school-wide ELA and math targets) following a year of making all targets will be designated as **high performing with caution**.

MODERATELY PERFORMING SCHOOLS

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

- The school-wide Index Proficiency Scores and all evaluated subgroup scores are at or above the current AMOs or meet the Safe Harbor provision
- An attendance rate at or above 90% or graduation rate at or above 75.3%
- At least 95% of students school-wide and in all evaluated subgroups completed or attempted the ELA and Mathematics assessments

Schools that are *Moderately Performing* but have missed not more than three targets (excluding the school-wide ELA and math targets) following a year of meeting all

targets may be given a **moderately performing with caution** designation.

COMMENDED SCHOOLS

High and *Moderately Performing* schools are given an additional designation of commended based on the degree of improvement seen in their school Index Proficiency scores. *High and Moderately Performing* elementary and middle schools are classified as **commended** if they improve by 2 index points (without the error band allowance) on both ELA and math index scores and were commended in the 2005-06 classification of schools. High and moderately performing high schools are commended if they meet the 2 index point gain requirement in both ELA and math for two consecutive testing cycles. Schools that achieve a very high index score (where improvement becomes mathematically difficult) may be credited toward a commended status in lieu of an improvement score. High Performing schools receive this commendation credit if the index scores are at or above the following: (high school: ELA 91, math 88), (middle level: ELA 94, math 89) and (elementary level: ELA 94, math 92).

SCHOOLS WITH INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS

Schools are classified as making *Insufficient Progress* if they have missed any of the 37 NCLB targets. However, in cases where a school met all targets in the prior year, the school may be given the label *High Performing with Caution* or *Moderately Performing with Caution* if not more than three targets were missed (excluding the school-wide ELA and math targets). Otherwise the classification label will be *Insufficient Progress*. A school cannot receive a caution designation for two consecutive years. Note that for the 2006-07 classification of high schools, a school may receive a caution label, but the terms high performing and moderately performing are not used in the abbreviated classification system for 2006-07.

Figure 8 describes the range of Index Proficiency Scores that define *High Performing, Moderately Performing,* and Insufficient Progress.

Figure 8: **Chart of Proficiency Index Score Ranges that Partly Determines School Classifications for the 2006-07 School Year**

	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**	**NA***	**NA***
Moderately Performing	**80.1 – 88.0**	**68.1 – 80.8**	**73.3 – 83.8**	**55.1 – 73.0**	**NA***	**NA***
Insufficient Progress	**below 80.1**	**below 68.1**	**below 73.3**	**below 55.1**	**below 68.8**	**below 54.0**

* This label not applicable for 2006-07 classification.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY STATUS OF SCHOOLS

Schools have a theoretical maximum of 37 targets to pass which derive from the following steps:

1. Comparison of school-wide ELA and Math Index Proficiency scores to the state AMOs for 2006-07;
2. Comparison to the state AMOs for 2006-07 using the performance of disaggregated subgroups of students, but only where the number of students reliably supports such an analysis. Data will be analyzed when there are 45 students in a subgroup. (The "45" criterion is based on the summation of all test scores in the school during one cycle of testing for elementary and middle schools. For high schools, the summation of grade 11 test scores over a three-year period is used to check for a group size of 45.)
3. Determination of whether AMOs have been met for high school graduation rates or for elementary and middle school attendance rates.
4. Determination of whether at least 95% of the students school-wide participated in both the ELA and mathematics assessments. Starting with the 2005-06 classifications, this 95% participation requirement is also reviewed for all student subgroups identified for evaluation in rule (2) above.

The school classification decisions are made using all 37 data elements as shown in Figure 9. The classification of districts is made by reviewing these data elements for each educational level: 37 targets for high schools, 37 for middle schools, and 37 for elementary schools.

Figure 9: **Accountability Targets**

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 (school wide)	2
95% participation rate for subgroups	16
TOTAL	37

* Subgroups are students with IEPs, students in LEP programs (including the two year monitor period after exit), students in poverty (receiving free or reduced price lunch), Hispanic students and students in white (non-Hispanic), black, Asian, and Native American racial categories.

Beginning in 2005-06, any subgroup evaluated for academic performance (i.e. above the minimum N criterion of 45 students) must also have a 95% test participation rate. With eight potential subgroups, this added 16 potential additional targets (ELA and math participation rates are reviewed separately) compared to previous accountability requirements.

AYP Status and In Need of Improvement Status

Schools are reported as having made Adequate Yearly Progress (**AYP**) or not having made AYP. Schools with a classification label of "Insufficient Progress," "Moderately Performing with Caution" or "High Performing with Caution" have not passed AYP. High schools simply labeled as "Caution" for 2006-07 also have not passed AYP. Schools which do not pass AYP for two or more years are given the addition status of **In Need of Improvement**.

Schools in a caution classification are regarded as not having made AYP because NCLB regulations require that every target be met in order to pass AYP. Schools that have not met an AMO in the same content area (ELA or math) for two years or more are subject to NCLB/PS&I sanctions and interventions. Schools that have not met the AMOs for two years in one of the nonacademic indicators are also subject to these sanctions and interventions.

It takes two consecutive years of not making AYP to be designated as a school "In Need of Improvement." It also takes two consecutive years of making AYP to be removed from that designation. For a school "In Need of Improvement," a subsequent year of making AYP puts it into a "Delay" status using federal terminology. This means that whatever sanctions applied in the previous year continue until a second consecutive year of making AYP is achieved.

For example, if a school fails to make adequate yearly progress in ELA in 2006 and 2007, then the school will be subject to appropriate NCLB/PS&I sanctions. For a school that missed an ELA target in 2006, but then met ELA targets in 2007, but failed to meet the 2007 AMOs in Mathematics, 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 meet all targets for two consecutive years in order to be removed from NCLB/PS&I sanction status.

SANCTION OR INTERVENTION CATEGORIES

Every school receives an accountability "status" designation to further explain the consequences of its classification from a multiple-year perspective. Some of the sanction codes apply only to schools receiving federal Title I funds.

Figure 10: **General Sanction or Intervention Status Key**

1	New School (first year of operation)
2	Watch (a school with *Insufficient Progress* or in a *Caution* status for the first year)
3	In Need of Improvement, Choice (Title I school)
4	In Need of Improvement, Supplemental Services (Title I school)
5	In Need of Improvement, Corrective Action (Title I school)
6	In Need of Improvement, Delay, first year making AYP for a school "In Need of Improvement" in the prior year.
7	In Need of Improvement, PS&I, non-Title I school, two or more years of not meeting AYP in the same content area or nonacademic indicator. (A separate indicator notes number of years in this status.)
8	In Need of Improvement, Restructuring (Title I school) (A separate indicator presents number of years in restructuring.)
T	Title I school

* A school may receive multiple codes. For example, a T, 3, 4 school is a Title I school providing both Choice (to select another school) and Supplemental Educational Services.

Note: Parenthetical values are used with status codes 7 and 8 to indicate the number of consecutive years in that status.

CLOSING EQUITY GAPS

NCLB mirrors Rhode Island's Comprehensive Education Strategy (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 7. For reliability purposes, accountability for subgroups is applied when there are 45 students in the subgroup for analysis. For elementary and middle schools, the count of students in the analysis is based on the current year of testing summed over all grades with test scores. For high schools, the test for 45 or more students is based on a three-year aggregation of students. If there are fewer than 45 students in a subgroup at the school level, there may be 45 or more at the district level, so these subgroups would be included in the district-level accountability calculations and used to determine the district classification. In addition, students served in out-placement programs are added into the district level file for calculations.

THE SAFE HARBOR PROVISION

The Safe Harbor Provision, part of NCLB, is another way to determine if schools are making adequate yearly progress. Safe Harbor provides an opportunity for schools or student subgroups to be recognized for growth that is significant, even though the progress made does not meet the current year's AMO. If a school, district, or any of the evaluated subgroups within the school or district fails to meet an AMO, Safe Harbor allows us to further review the assessment data before a final decision is made on the school or district's classification. Figure 11 outlines this calculation.

Figure 11: Example of Safe Harbor Target Calculation

A school has a Mathematics Index Proficiency Score of 42 in the previous year test cycle.

100 – 42 = 58 (the gap)
10% of the gap is 5.8%
Safe harbor target becomes:
42 + 5.8 = 47.8

For elementary and middle schools, the Index Proficiency score for the prior year is subtracted from 100 (the 2014 goal) and this gives us the gap between the goal and the Index Proficiency score. Then 10% of the gap is added to the prior year Index Proficiency score to arrive at the Safe Harbor target. If a school achieves this target in the current year, it will have met the requirement of the Safe Harbor Provision. Meeting the Safe Harbor target is treated as an alternate way of demonstrating adequate yearly progress.

For high schools, the approach to safe harbor is the same except that prior year data is considered to be the prior three-year aggregate index and the current score is the higher of the current three-year score or single year score (eligible if N is greater than 45).

The Safe Harbor formula is also applied to attendance rates. The calculations for applying the Safe Harbor test to attendance rate data are the same as those applied to ELA and mathematics. If the school closes the gap between the current attendance rate and 90% by 10%, then the school will have met the attendance rate target. No safe harbor or other improvement formula is in use for the graduation rate or for test participation rates.

If a school or district fails the Safe Harbor Review, the last opportunity for review of assessment data is the appeal process as described in a later section. A school or district entering sanctions will have 17 days to challenge the accuracy of the data that would lead to its classification.

NONACADEMIC INDICATORS

There are two types of nonacademic accountability indicators. The first is *participation rate*; schools and districts must test at least 95% of their enrolled students in ELA and mathematics. School and subgroup test participation rates are based on the grade levels actually tested each fall. An important addition starting in 2005-06 is that all subgroups evaluated for academic purposes must also have at least a 95% test participation rate. Participation rates are reported separately for English language arts and for Mathematics.

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%. 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. We cannot use a

Safe Harbor or improvement indicator for the graduation rate until we are able to publish disaggregated graduation rates.

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 for the academic baselines. To determine the baselines, all high school graduation rates were rank ordered from lowest to highest in 2002. Starting with the high school with the lowest graduation rate, and counting enrollments cumulatively, the high school at 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 12 culminating in a 95% graduation rate requirement for the class of 2014.

Figure12: **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

* This AMO for the graduating class of 2007 is one of the targets used in the classification of high schools for the 2006-07 school year.

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:

- 3-year and 1-year review for high schools
- Error Bands
- Rounding Rules

- Cell Size
- Procedures for Very Small Schools
- Schools with Two or Three Educational Levels (elementary, middle, high)
- Student Exemptions

3-Year and 1-Year Review of Data

In order to provide high schools multiple opportunities to demonstrate performance and growth, calculations are done automatically to find the higher Index Score (current year or three-year average) and the greater resulting rate of growth for the high school's academic indicators. The most favorable increase in growth is then used to determine the progress made by that high school. However, a one-year review is possible only when there are at least 45 students in the one-year calculation of the index score. For example, If a high school passes the current year's AMO in ELA by three index points using a three-year average, and passes the current AMO in ELA by ten index points using a one-year average, the one-year average is used to determine the classification of this school.

For elementary and middle schools, analysis of NECAP scores is done on a single year basis (aggregating across grades) as the primary method of testing against AMO targets and to determine whether the minimum N criterion has been met for subgroups.

Error Bands

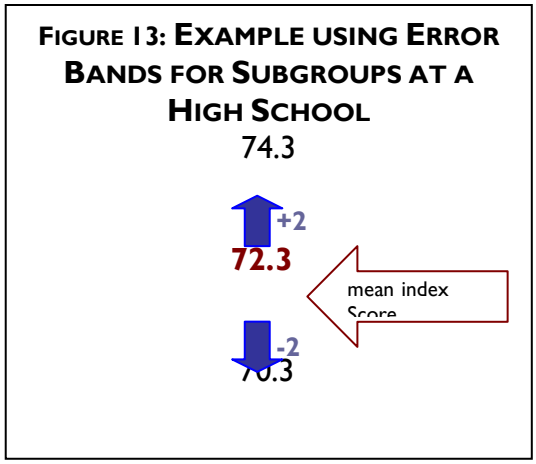
Errors are inherent to any assessment system. Rhode Island's Accountability System process considers measurement errors associated with any testing program. We want to be sure that school or district Index Proficiency Scores, and the scores for each subgroup, are related to actual improvement over time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

The error band for elementary and middle schools and for their subgroups is largely dependent on the standard deviation of student scores and the number of students tested. An upper limit of the mean index score of the school or subgroup is calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

The error band for high schools depends largely on school size and is generally less than one index point using a 95 percent confidence interval. The error band for high school subgroups is set at a constant two index points.

Very small schools receive larger error bands.

Figure 13: Example using Error Bands for Subgroups at a High School



The high school example in Figure 13 tells us is that we can be 95% confident that the represented subgroup's actual performance would be between 70.3% and 74.3% assuming at least 45 students in the subgroup and the calculated mean Index Score is 72.3.

DATA ROUNDING RULES

For 2007 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 criterion of 90.0% attendance. Data rounding is not used for the graduation rate. Because academic AMO targets include a single decimal place, rounding has a minimal effect on meeting AMO goals or Safe Harbor targets. Rounding of the index score is not used to establish "commended" performance.

CELL SIZE

Since 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 are made about subgroups only when there is a minimum of 45 students within the group across a three-year or one-year period (NSRE and NECAP respectively).

Figure 14: **Minimum Cell Size Example: (Elementary School)**

SCHOOL A (number of students)				
	Grade 3	**Grade 4**	**Grade 5**	**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 grades with test data. Because School A does not have at least 45 students in the LEP and Black subgroups, this school would not be evaluated on these data elements.

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 plus the count of LEP monitored students. LEP monitored students are former LEP students who were exited from LEP program services within the past two years.

PROCEDURES FOR VERY SMALL SCHOOLS

Schools that have fewer than 45 students enrolled across tested grades in the current testing year or for high schools fewer than 45 grade 11 students enrolled across a three-year period are defined as very small schools. Regardless of size, NCLB requires that all schools be classified. 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 generally 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 in the analysis.

SCHOOLS WITH TWO OR THREE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

If a school's grade configuration includes more than one educational level (elementary, middle, high school), an Index Proficiency score for 2006-07 is calculated by combining NECAP student performance results across all grades 2-7. (October test scores at grade 3 are assigned to the school of the student in the prior year at grade 2 before Index Proficiency scores are calculated and grade 8 October test scores are assigned to grade 7, etc.) The total Index Proficiency score is then compared to the current AMO that applies to the highest grade in that school.

STUDENT EXEMPTIONS

LEP Students in the U.S. for Less Than One Year: These students are exempt from participating in the NECAP reading or writing exams if they have entered the U.S. after October 1st of the prior year. For the NSRE ELA exam taken in March of grade 11, an LEP student in the U.S. less than one year refers to an enrollment after June 30 of the prior year. All students must participate in the mathematics exam. For the ELA exams, LEP students in the U.S. for less than one year are excluded from the calculation of the Index Proficiency scores and the test participation rates. For the mathematics exam, LEP students in the U.S. for less than one year are included in the participation rate, but excluded from the index proficiency score.

Special State Consideration: Typically, 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 submits a letter outlining the student's special circumstances 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 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.

Note: Some students with significant cognitive disabilities take the **Rhode Island Alternate Assessment** in place of the NECAP or NSRE 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 NECAP/NSRE 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.

CLASSIFICATION AND APPEALS PROCESS TIMELINE

Rhode Island moved its elementary and middle school assessments from March to October in 2005 to improve the sequence of planning, budgeting and implementation of interventions. The preliminary assessment results, with the exception of the first year will, as of 2007, be made available in January. Based on the release of this information, those schools that will be responsible to provide choice and supplemental services will be provided notice of that fact before the end of each school year. School performance categories for elementary and middle schools were released in May 2007. The timeline for high school classifications based on the New Standards Reference Exams will remain with summer reporting of student test scores (after March testing), a late August classification of schools needing to implement any of the Title I consequences, and a November AYP classification of all high schools – until the new NECAP grade 11 assessments are in place beginning in October, 2007.

Figure 15: **TIMELINE FOR AYP NOTIFICATION AND APPEALS**

NECAP	NSRE (High Schools only)	Process
October 2006	March 2007	Testing Window
Feb.-March, 2007	July 2007	Analysis of assessment data for accuracy and application of processing rules (e.g., disaggregating, October 1st enrollment checks, etc.).
April 6-25, 2007	Oct. 10-Nov. 2, 2007	Appeal process occurs for all schools.
May 2007	November 2007	Final release of school classifications.

APPEALS PROCESS

NCLB specifies an appeals period to allow Title I schools and districts to challenge the designation of being *In Need of Improvement*. 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, the accuracy of exemption codes and other 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 schools that could potentially change their *In Need of Improvement* status or *Insufficient Progress* classification. Reviews for schools in a *Moderate* or *High performing* classification 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 school district superintendents to:

Peter McWalters, Commissioner

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

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 AYP are designated as in a *Watch status*. A district is considered *In Need of Improvement* or in NCLB terminology "Identified for Improvement" if, for two consecutive years, it fails to pass AYP in two of the three grade levels (elementary, middle, and high) or if 40% or more of its schools are classified as making *Insufficient Progress*. Districts, like schools, are required to meet all targets 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* status and is still regarded as a district "In Need of Improvement."

Figure 16: **District Classifications**

District Performance	Classification
Following a year of not being in *Watch* or *In Need of Improvement*, the district does not meet AYP at 2 or 3 levels (elementary, middle, high) or at least 40% of schools in the district are classified as making *Insufficient Progress*.	*Watch status*
For two or more years, the district does not meet AYP at 2 or 3 levels (elementary, middle, high) or at least 40% of schools in the district are *In Need of Improvement*.	*In Need of Improvement*
A district previously identified as *In Need of Improvement* makes AYP in the current year.	Delay status, indicating *In Need of Improvement* status continues until a second consecutive year of improvement is demonstrated.
A district had *watch* status last year but meets the district requirement for AYP in the current year.	Clear – No classification assigned

District performance classifications are published shortly after high school performance classifications are released to communities. 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. Additional state remedies are described in the Progressive Support and Intervention policies. The data elements (targets) used to classify districts, are the same data elements that are used to classify schools.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARDS

The 2007 Rhode Island Accountability Report Cards for high schools will be added to the elementary and middle school report cards in mid-November 2007 on the RIDE website

(www.ride.ri.gov). 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*** Reports are based on very different calculations and cannot be compared to the ***Accountability*** Report Cards. For example, 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 accountability report cards. The Assessment Report Cards for elementary and middle schools are now designed by the assessment contractor and were delivered to schools and districts in the basic delivery of assessment results in January 2007. Basic assessment results for high schools were released to the public media in September 2007 and will be posted (with subgroup results) as assessment report cards along with new accountability report cards in November 2007.