



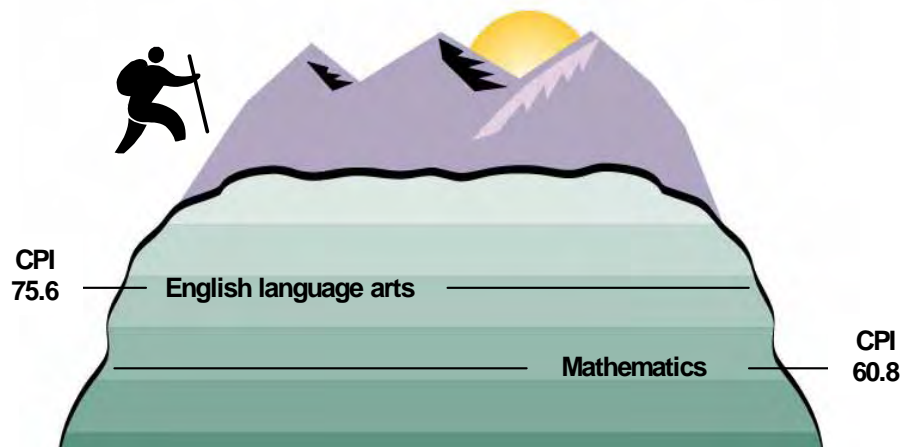
Understanding the 2004 School and District Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Determinations

Massachusetts is at the halfway point in a 20-year effort to substantially improve student achievement.

Under federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, every state must work toward the goal of having all students gain proficiency in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics by the year 2014. Massachusetts has had a good head start because of our own higher-standards initiative, launched by the 1993 Education Reform Act. Now the nation has joined us on what amounts to an historic, expeditionary effort to bring all students to higher achievement—and brighter opportunity.

Think of our efforts toward student proficiency as a climbing expedition up two mountains of higher achievement.

By 2014, our students must have scaled two “proficiency mountains”—one for ELA (reading and writing), and one for math. Students show proficiency by scoring 240 or more on their MCAS tests. Our goal, and the goal set for the nation by the No Child Left Behind Act, is to help *every* student succeed in the climb to proficiency. Once at the proficiency summit, students may forge on to tackle advanced performance challenges.



Think of every school as a climbing party.

Every district and every school within it is undertaking its own trek up the proficiency mountains - learning as they go from the experiences of others who have come before them, and exploring new approaches to help student climbers with various skills and aptitudes. Each climbing party is composed of sub-groups of hikers who share certain demographic characteristics, family circumstances, or personal challenges. Each school's job is to get all groups to the summit.

Two-year “Performance Cycles” serve as checkpoints.

Every group is expected to climb at a rate that will bring it to the proficiency summit by 2014. Interim State performance targets and individual school and district improvement targets for each two-year cycle help us keep track of students' progress up the mountains. A district, school, or subgroup's Composite Performance Index (CPI) is our measure of where a group is positioned on the mountain at a particular point in time. Our State targets for 2004 are 75.6 for English language arts and 60.8 for mathematics.

What Do a School's or District's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Determinations Tell You?

This fall, the Massachusetts Department of Education is releasing Cycle III Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations, as required by NCLB. AYP calculations (made separately for English language arts and math) are designed to help schools and districts answer the following questions:

- Are all of our students taking part in this expedition to higher achievement?
- Have we met or surpassed the State's ELA and math performance targets for this two-year cycle?
- Is our student performance improving at a rate that puts us on track to reach the proficiency summit by 2014?
- Are our elementary and middle school students attending at the expected rate, and to what extent are our high school students meeting the State's requirements for graduation?



AYP determinations, issued every year, are a tool to help school and district leaders make sure that each group of hikers for whom they are responsible is progressing at an acceptable pace toward the proficiency summit.

When students in the aggregate or a particular student subgroup do not make adequate progress in ELA or math in a given year, school and district leaders are expected to determine what is holding the group back and to provide guidance and support to get that group back on-track. When one or more groups in a school fall short of making their checkpoint targets for more than two consecutive years, the school is formally identified for improvement. Schools identified for improvement which are receiving federal Title I funds must offer their students alternative assignment options and/or supplemental support services, and all schools are required to revise or develop improvement plans to address the needs of these students. After four years of not making AYP, a school is identified for corrective action; districts in which these schools are located must make significant changes at the schools, including changes in curriculum, instruction, governance or staffing. After five years of a school not making AYP, a district must prepare a plan to restructure the school. Districts which fail to make AYP at the district level in consecutive years face similar consequences.

Every school in the state receives AYP ratings in English and math for its aggregate student performance (all students combined), and for each student subgroup.

Subgroups include students with disabilities; limited English proficiency (LEP); and economic disadvantages. There are also five different racial and ethnic subgroups. Reporting the performance of student subgroups is an important element in the federal law, designed to make sure that satisfactory averaged achievement scores do not mask underachievement by any of these student groups. Schools and districts that make AYP for all of their students and for all of the qualifying subgroups have a lot to be proud of; however, even very high-performing systems may find that one or more subgroups need additional attention to keep pace on this expeditionary climb. AYP is a tool to help pinpoint exactly where to focus that extra support.

How AYP Determinations Are Calculated

