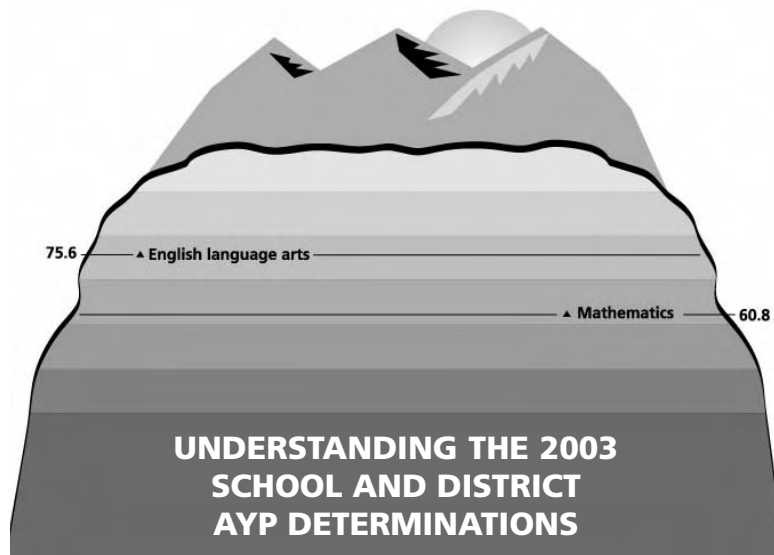


HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT  **BRIGHTER OPPORTUNITY**

Helping *All* Students Make the Climb



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 it as a massive, statewide expedition up two mountains of higher achievement. By 2014, our students must have scaled two mountains representing proficient skill levels—one for math, and one for English language arts (reading and writing). Students show proficiency by scoring 240 or more on their MCAS tests. Advanced students can (and should) set their sights even higher than the 240 “proficient” level. But the basic goal set for the nation by No Child Left Behind is to help every student climb to proficiency, at least.

Think of every school as a climbing party. Every district (and every school within it) is undertaking its own trek up the mountains—learning as they go from other climbing parties that are making good progress, and discovering more ways to help student climbers with varying degrees of skill and aptitude. Each climbing party is composed of groups of hikers who share certain characteristics, such as demographic background or a disability.

Two-year “Performance Cycles” serve as checkpoints. Interim State performance targets and individual school and district improvement targets for each two-year cycle help us keep track of each hiking group’s progress. Every group needs to climb at a rate that will bring its students to the proficiency summit by 2014. We are now at the midpoint of the third cycle, which includes the years 2003 and 2004. The interim State targets for Cycle III (based on a 100-point elevation at the proficiency summit) are 75.6 for English language arts and 60.8 for mathematics.

Adequate Yearly Progress (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 a group does 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 hiking groups in a school or district fall short of making their checkpoint targets for more than two consecutive years, state education leaders may be called in to help local leaders figure out ways to improve those groups’ rate of ascent toward the ELA and math proficiency summits.



What Do a School's or District's AYP Determinations Tell You?

This fall, the Massachusetts Department of Education is releasing the 2003 Mid-Cycle Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The AYP calculations (done separately for English language arts and math) are designed to help schools and districts answer the following questions:

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

Every school in the state is receiving an AYP rating in English and math for its *aggregate* student performance (all students combined), and for each student subgroup of 20 or more students. Subgroups include students with disabilities; limited English proficiency (LEP); and economic disadvantages. There are five demographic groups as well: African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and White students.

Subgroup performance reporting 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. Many very high-performing schools will find that one or more subgroups need additional attention to keep pace on this expeditionary climb. AYP is a tool to help them pinpoint exactly where to focus that extra support.

How AYP Determinations Are Calculated

AYP =	AYP Determination Factors for ELA & Math	Cycle III Targets (2-year period ending in 2004)
(A + B)	A. Participation Rate: <i>Are all (or almost all) students taking part?</i>	95% or greater participation in state assessments (including MCAS and MCAS-Alt for those with disabilities)
	B. Performance: <i>Have we met the state's target Composite Performance Index (CPI) for the current review period?</i>	State Cycle III performance targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite Performance Index (100-point scale) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75.6 — English Language Arts 60.8 — Mathematics
OR		
(A + C + D)	A. Participation Rate: <i>Are all (or almost all) students taking part?</i>	95% or greater participation in state assessments (including MCAS and MCAS-Alt for those with disabilities)
	C. Improvement: <i>Is our rate of improvement such that all students will reach proficiency by 2014?</i>	A district, school or subgroup's Cycle III improvement target is 100 minus its baseline CPI, divided by 6, the number of cycles left before we reach 2014 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003 mid-cycle AYP target = 2/3 of Cycle III target
	D. Performance or Improvement on Additional Indicator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8: <i>Does our attendance meet the state target or represent a 1% improvement over 2002?</i> • High School: <i>Did our Class of 2003 meet the state graduation rate target?</i> 	Attendance criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of 92% or above or • At least 1 percentage point improvement over prior year Grade 12 graduation rate criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class of 2003 graduation rate, as of September 1, 2003, of 70% or higher