

STEP ONE: PRIORITIZE THE NEEDS OF STUDENT GROUPS



Facilitator: This step requires the team to reconcile philosophical and ethical dilemmas regarding which student groups and areas of weakness to target. The facilitator's role is to resolve conflicting opinions in a way that allows all individuals to feel heard.

In Step 1 the planning team will review data on the makeup of the student body and determine which students are most in need of different and/or additional instruction and support to meet state learning standards. The team will then prioritize which groups of students it will focus on in the current planning process. It may decide that the needs of the whole student body are great enough that the plan should target all students as a group. If so, next determine whether any subgroups will need additional assistance beyond what will be planned for all students. In Step 2 the team will set goals for the groups it chose to target.

Before analyzing MCAS data, it is important to understand how it is used to measure school performance. The team should review the most current School Leaders' Guide to Accountability and AYP Reports (www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/) before beginning Step 1.

Expectations for this step

- The team will develop a common understanding of (1) the makeup of the student body, (2) the general performance of all students and (3) the performance of individual subgroups as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).
- Team members will prioritize the student subgroups they will focus on in the current planning process.
- Team members will begin to develop a better understanding of data analysis methods.
- Principals will have the opportunity to establish their role in the process and to practice a collaborative leadership style with the team.

Facilitator: Introduce the idea of the “waiting room”: A flip chart is used to record interesting insights and possible solutions as well as concerns that cannot be addressed immediately. The waiting room captures this information while keeping everyone focused on issues related to the current step.

Tool Kit

Worksheets

1-A Identifying the lowest performing groups
(Word)

1-B Targeted student groups (Word)

Other Materials and Equipment

Copies of completed Step 0 worksheets for all team members

Copies of Worksheets 0-B and 0-C on transparency film

Copies of the school's AYP Report

Overhead projector and transparency markers

Resources

Current School Leaders' Guide to Accountability and AYP Reports from MA DOE Web site:
www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/

1.1 Identify which student groups have the lowest performance

Facilitator: Looking at the data on an overhead projector helps focus the team. It is also helpful if team members have their own copies of the data.

Guiding Question: Which student groups have the lowest performance?

- 1. Working with one content area at a time, look at the school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report. Ask:**
 - Are there any subgroups that did not make AYP?
 - If so, for what reason?
 - Did they fail to make AYP because they did not reach the state performance target or their improvement target, and/or
 - Did they fail to make AYP for other reasons such as their Participation rate or Attendance/Competency Determination (CD) rate?
- 2. If a subgroup did not make AYP based on Performance or Improvement, record the subgroup on [Worksheet 1-A \(Identifying the lowest achieving groups\)](#).**
- 3. Look at [Worksheet 0-B \(MCAS data disaggregated by student group\)](#) for the current cycle. Discuss the relative performance of the subgroups of students at the school.**

Ask:

- Which groups have the highest percentage of students in warning?

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- Which groups have the lowest percentage of students in proficient and advanced?
 - Which groups have the lowest Proficiency Index or Composite Performance Index?
- 4. Based on the discussion, record the lowest performing groups on [Worksheet 1-A](#) (if not already listed).**
- 5. For each group listed on [Worksheet 1-A](#), discuss the following:**
- How many students are represented in this group?
 - What is the difference between the Proficiency Index or Composite Performance Index of this group and that of the students who are not in this group?
 - How does the Proficiency Index or Composite Performance Index of this group compare to the current state performance target (Cycle IV: mathematics = 68.7 / ELA = 80.5)?

6. Record answers on **Worksheet 1-A**.**Table 1.1: Identifying the lowest performing student groups (Worksheet 1-A)**

Student group	Content area	Grades included	# of students in group	Performance gap compared to students not in group	PI / CPI Compared to State Performance Target (Cycle IV Math = 68.7 ELA = 80.5)	Notes on previous cycle data	Percent overlap with population of other groups
All students	ELA	K-5	217	N/A	-22	-10 CPI points from Cycle III	90% Low-Income 50% Afr.-Amer. 20% Hispanic
Spec. Ed. students	Math	6-8	32	-12	-31	+2 CPI points from Cycle III	15% of all students
Limited English Proficient students	ELA	9-12	26	-27	-29	-12 CPI points from Cycle III	12% of all students 0% of Spec. Ed. students

NOTE: When comparing data for LEP students across years, be aware that the definition of students included in this group has changed several times. Please consult the “School Leaders’ Guide to the Cycle III Accountability and AYP Reports” at www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp.

7. Look at copies of [Worksheet 0-B](#) for the previous cycle to identify multiyear trends for subgroups.

Ask:

- Do similar patterns appear over previous years for the identified subgroups?
- Which subgroups appear to have the lowest performance across the last few years?
- Are there groups of students whose performance has remained flat or declined?

8. Add any newly identified subgroups to your list and make any relevant notes about subgroup performance in the previous cycle on [Worksheet 1-A](#).

1.2 Identify any overlap in the composition of these groups



Guiding Question: Is there significant overlap in the composition of the selected groups?

- 1. Looking at [Worksheet 0-C \(Cross-tabulation of student groups\)](#), consider the overlap between each targeted group and other subgroups. Ask:**

- What percent of students in the target group overlap with the other subgroup?
- What percent of students who are NOT in the target group overlap with the other subgroup?
- Are these percents comparable?

Example: Is the percentage of LEP students who are Low Income similar to the percentage of Not LEP who are low income?

2. **Record answers on [Worksheet 1-A \(Identifying the lowest achieving groups\)](#). (See [Table 1.1 on page 50](#).)**

1.3 Prioritize which groups will be the focus of the planning process



Guiding Question: Should the whole student population be a focus of the planning process, and/or should specific subgroups be targeted?

In some cases the need to target all students may already be evident. If so proceed to Step 1.3.3. Other schools should consider the performance of their higher achieving groups to see if they require attention.

1. **Looking at the data on the higher performing groups, ask:**

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- Which student groups have the highest Proficiency Index or Composite Performance Index?
 - How many students are represented in the higher performing groups?
 - What percentage of these higher performing groups scored Proficient or Advanced?
 - How does the Proficiency Index or Composite Performance Index of this group compare to the current state performance target (Cycle IV: mathematics = 68.7 / ELA = 80.5)?
2. **Record the answers on the bottom of [Worksheet 1-A \(Identifying the lowest performing groups\)](#).**
 3. **Looking at [Worksheets 1-A](#) consider whether the plan should address the performance of the whole student population.**
 - Given the performance of students in the higher performing groups, is the performance of the overall student population low enough to be a priority in the planning process at this time? If so, should students be targeted in the aggregate or in separate groups?
 - Do most of the students in the school fall into one of the low performing subgroups? If so, consider targeting the whole student population rather than making a distinction between students who are and are not in that subgroup.
 - Do the students in the higher and lower achieving groups participate in the same programs and receive the same curriculum and instruction? If not, consider targeting the groups separately.
 4. **If targeting all students in the aggregate, record “all students” as the first group on [Worksheet 1-B \(Targeted student groups\)](#).**

- 5. Again, look at [Worksheets 1-A](#) and consider which subgroups should be targeted in the plan.**
 - Which student groups have the lowest and/or declining performance?
 - Which student groups have the highest number of students?
 - Given the overlap between certain groups, could the needs of most of the students in two or more groups be addressed by targeting one group?
 - If targeting all students, which groups will likely need support in addition to what will be provided for the whole group?

- 6. Based on the answers to these questions, select up to three groups per content area to target in the current plan (including “all students” if applicable).**
 - When deciding how many groups to target in the plan, remember that PIM is an ongoing process, and groups that are not targeted in the current plan can be targeted in future years. If the performance of all students is very low, it may make sense to make large scale changes that affect all students before targeting individual student groups.
 - Although students in some grades do not take the MCAS, they may be included by targeting a grade span (e.g., K-3), as the school’s improvement strategies will likely be designed for more grades than just the tested grade.

7. Record the selected groups on **Worksheet 1-B**, and record any key points from the discussion in the rationale box. (See Table 1.2 on page 55.)

Table 1.2: Targeted student groups (Worksheet 1-B)

Content area(s): English language arts and mathematics
Goals will be written for the following student groups:
1. All students in Grades K-5 (English language arts)
2. Special Education students in Grades 6-8 (Mathematics)
3. Limited English Proficient Students in Grades 9-12 (English language arts)
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>The planning team decided to target a grade span for ELA to account for the learning experiences that will need to be different in Grades K-2, and to include teachers of those grade levels in the implementation of the plan.</p> <p>The performance of our Special Education students was significantly lower than the aggregate in Grades 6-8.</p> <p>The performance of our Limited English Proficient Students is significantly lower than the aggregate population at the high school.</p>

Checklist



Before moving on to Step 2, make sure the team has done the following for English language arts and mathematics:

- Identified student groups with the lowest or declining performance using the school's AYP report and [Worksheet 0-B \(MCAS data disaggregated by student group\)](#)
- Used [Worksheet 0-C \(Cross-tabulation of student groups\)](#) to identify any overlap in the identified low performing groups
- Considered the performance of the higher performing groups to determine whether all students at the school should be targeted in the plan
- Decided to target the aggregate student population and identified up to two subgroups expected to need additional support, or chosen not to target the aggregate student population and selected up to three subgroups to target in the plan

Worksheet 1-B: Targeted student groups

Guiding Question: Which student groups should be the focus of the planning process? (Select up to three groups per content area)

Content area:

	Targeted student group	Rationale for selecting group
1.		
2.		
3.		

Content area:

	Targeted student group	Rationale for selecting group
1.		
2.		
3.		