School Leader’s Guide to the 2023 Accountability Determinations

This guide is intended to help district and school leaders understand Massachusetts’ accountability system and explain the information contained in the 2023 district and school accountability reports. For questions, contact the Office of District and School Accountability Reporting at [ElementarySecondaryEd.Act@mass.gov](mailto:ElementarySecondaryEd.Act@mass.gov).

[Introduction 2](#_Toc144805058)

[Gradespans 2](#_Toc144805059)

[Reporting Groups 2](#_Toc144805060)

[Accountability Indicators 3](#_Toc144805061)

[Accountability Indicators for All Districts and Schools 3](#_Toc144805062)

[Accountability Indicators for Districts and Schools Serving High School Grades 5](#_Toc144805063)

[Accountability Indicators Middle/High or K-12 Districts and Schools 6](#_Toc144805064)

[Weighting of Accountability Indicators 7](#_Toc144805065)

[Reported Measures 8](#_Toc144805066)

[Normative Component 8](#_Toc144805067)

[Criterion-Referenced Component 9](#_Toc144805068)

[Student Group Reporting 19](#_Toc144805069)

[Progress Toward Improvement Targets 19](#_Toc144805070)

[Student Group Percentiles 19](#_Toc144805071)

[Assessment Participation 19](#_Toc144805072)

[Graduation Rates 21](#_Toc144805073)

[Classification of Schools 21](#_Toc144805074)

[Schools Requiring Assistance or Intervention 21](#_Toc144805075)

[Schools Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention 21](#_Toc144805076)

[Schools of Recognition 22](#_Toc144805077)

[Insufficient Data 22](#_Toc144805078)

[Classification of Districts 22](#_Toc144805079)

[Districts Requiring Assistance or Intervention 23](#_Toc144805080)

[Districts Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention 23](#_Toc144805081)

[Insufficient Data 23](#_Toc144805082)

[Single School Districts 24](#_Toc144805083)

[Movement Between Categories 24](#_Toc144805084)

[Understanding Accountability Reports 24](#_Toc144805085)

[School Accountability Reports 24](#_Toc144805086)

[District Accountability Reports 25](#_Toc144805087)

[District and School Reconfigurations and Accountability Determinations 26](#_Toc144805088)

[Discrepancies and Appeals 26](#_Toc144805089)

[Discrepancies 26](#_Toc144805090)

[Accountability Appeals 27](#_Toc144805091)

[Resources 27](#_Toc144805092)

[Appendix A: Criteria for Awarding Points for Progress Toward Improvement Targets 28](#_Toc144805093)

# Introduction

State and federal laws require that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) implement a system of district and school accountability. The purpose of the accountability system is to provide clear, actionable information to families, community members, and the public about district and school performance. Additionally, the accountability system helps DESE to direct resources and assistance. The framework for our accountability system allows DESE to identify districts and schools that require assistance or intervention, as well as those that are demonstrating success. It maintains a single statewide accountability system that aligns with the Commonwealth’s priorities while meeting federal education requirements.

# Gradespans

All schools are classified into one of three gradespan groups based on the grades served in the most recent year:

Table : Gradespan Groups

| **Non-High Schools** | **High Schools** | **Middle/High or K-12 Schools** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Serving a combination of grades 3-8 * Administering Next Generation MCAS tests in tested grades | * Serving a combination of grades 9-12 * Administering Next Generation MCAS tests in grade 10 | * Serving grade 10 and at least one other grade 3-8 * Administering Next Generation MCAS tests in grade 10 and at least one other grade 3-8 |

Gradespan groups play an important role in accountability determinations in several ways. They determine which indicators are included in the accountability calculations for each district and school and are used to establish comparison groups for the purposes of calculating percentiles, which represent a school’s overall performance relative to other schools that serve similar grades.

# Reporting Groups

In addition to reporting results for each district or school as a whole, accountability results are reported for the following 11 student groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; African American or Black; Hispanic or Latino; Multi-race, non-Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; students from low-income families[[1]](#footnote-2); current and former English learners (ELs)[[2]](#footnote-3); students with disabilities; and high needs students (an unduplicated count of students who are low income, ELs and former ELs and/or students with disabilities). To report data for a student group, there must be results for at least 20 students.

Data are also reported for each district’s and school’s lowest performing students in non-high school grades. While this is not a separate student group, data for these students are factored into the district’s or school’s accountability determination, as described later in this document.

# Accountability Indicators

The indicators included in each district’s or school’s accountability determination depend on the grades served in the district or school.

## Accountability Indicators for All Districts and Schools

The indicators used in the accountability determinations for all schools are described below:

* *Achievement in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science:* In all schools, each school’s and student group’s MCAS achievement is measured separately by gradespan for ELA, mathematics, and science. Achievement results are reported as the school’s or group’s average composite scaled score on the Next Generation MCAS assessments. The average composite scaled score includes data for each student who was enrolled in the school as of October 1 of the same school year, and who participated in the Next Generation MCAS or MCAS-Alt assessments, except for first year ELs.[[3]](#footnote-4) Students with disabilities who participated in the MCAS-Alt are assigned a scaled score and are included in school and student group achievement results according to the table below.

Table : Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels and MCAS-Alt Scaled Scores

| **Next Generation MCAS Achievement Level** | **Next Generation MCAS Scaled Score Range** | **MCAS-Alt**  **Achievement Level** | **MCAS-Alt**  **Scaled Score** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exceeding Expectations | 530-560 |  | |
| Meeting Expectations | 500-529 | Progressing | 500 |
| Partially Meeting Expectations | 470-499 | Emerging | 485 |
| Awareness | 470 |
| Not Meeting Expectations | 440-469 | Portfolio Incomplete | 455 |

To report achievement results for a school or student group, there must be ELA and mathematics achievement data for at least 20 students in each gradespan.

* *Growth in ELA and mathematics:* All districts, schools, and groups are expected to demonstrate progress in student achievement each year. The Department uses Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) to measure how student-level achievement has grown or changed over time. Student growth percentiles are calculated separately by gradespan for ELA and mathematics and are not calculated for science. At the student level, the SGP represents how an individual student’s achievement compares to that of other students with similar MCAS histories. At the school or student group level, DESE reports the mean SGP, which represents the average student growth percentile for that school or student group, using growth results for each student who was enrolled in the school as of October 1 of the same school year. For growth results to be reported, there must be SGP data for at least 20 students in each gradespan.
* *Progress toward English proficiency:* In Massachusetts, “making progress” means that an English learner is on track to attain English proficiency within six years of first entering a Massachusetts school. A district or school may consider a student proficient when they have achieved an overall composite score of Level 4.2 on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, based on a score scale that extends from Level 1.0 (the lowest level of proficiency) to Level 6.0.

Schools that have ACCESS for ELLs results for at least 20 ELs in a gradespan have a measure of progress made by English learners toward achieving English proficiency. This is measured by calculating the percentage of tested students in each gradespan who meet annual targets that keep them on track to reaching English proficiency over six years. Students are included in the annual making progress rate for the district and school in which they were assessed if they are eligible to take either the ACCESS for ELLs assessment or the Alternate ACCESS assessment for two or more years.

The Department sets student-level growth-to-proficiency targets (i.e., benchmarks) using this six-year period. Each year that a student receives a score on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment, DESE calculates a future progress target and difficulty index for the following year for the student. The future progress target represents the minimum proficiency level score needed on the following year’s ACCESS test to remain on track to reaching English proficiency within six years. Future progress targets are reported as an ACCESS proficiency level, ranging from Levels 1.0 to 4.2. Students receive annual benchmarks if they are classified as ELs, even if they have earned an ACCESS score of Level 4.2 or higher or have been in a Massachusetts school for longer than six years.

The difficulty index estimates how challenging it will be for a student to reach next year’s target, relative to their current proficiency level. The difficulty index ranges from 1 to 99, with 1 being the lowest difficulty (i.e., not challenging to achieve the target) and 99 the highest (i.e., very challenging to achieve the target). Difficulty indices greater than 60 are considered high. For example, a student who has been in an educational program for three years but has a low ACCESS proficiency score (e.g., Level 1.5), may face a greater challenge in meeting future targets and would therefore receive a high difficulty index (e.g., 75). A student with a higher proficiency level after the same number of years in a program (e.g., Level 3.7) will likely receive a lower difficulty index (e.g., 35). Higher difficulty indices signal that a student may require additional resources or instruction in a language program to accelerate their language skills and meet their target.

On an annual basis, DESE uses progress target and difficulty index data to determine what percentage of students in each gradespan in the district or school made the expected progress toward attaining English proficiency.

* *Chronic absenteeism:* Chronic absenteeism is defined as the percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of their days in membership. In a typical 180-day school year, this is the percentage of students who miss 18 or more days. To calculate the chronic absenteeism rate for a school or student group, DESE determines whether each student is or is not chronically absent based on the student’s total number of days in attendance and their total number of days in membership, as reported by the district in the Student Information Management System (SIMS). The rate is reported as the percentage of students in the school or group who are chronically absent. The chronic absenteeism calculation includes both excused and unexcused absences[[4]](#footnote-5) and is calculated separately by gradespan (i.e., for students in grades 1 through 8 in non-high schools and grades 9 through 12 in high schools). To be included in a school’s chronic absenteeism rate, a student must be enrolled in the school for at least 20 days at any point in the school year. However, if a student is enrolled in multiple schools within the same district in a single school year, the student is excluded from school-level chronic absenteeism rates but is included in the district rate. Chronic absenteeism rates are reported for each school and student group with at least 20 students enrolled in each gradespan.

To account for the effect of the pandemic and other illnesses on student attendance in the 2021-2022 school year, DESE uses a modified chronic absenteeism rate for 2022 in the calculation of school and student group percentiles. This rate represents the percentage of students who missed 20 percent or more of their days in membership. The table below outlines which chronic absenteeism rates are included in the 2023 accountability calculations.

Table : Chronic Absenteeism Rates Included in Accountability Calculations

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2022 Chronic absenteeism rate (10% of days missed)** | **2022 Chronic absenteeism rate (20% of days missed)** | **2023 Chronic absenteeism rate (10% of days missed)** |
| Criterion-referenced component (progress toward targets) | ✔ | - | ✔ |
| Normative component (school and student group percentiles) | - | ✔ | ✔ |

On the 2023 accountability reports, only the 2022 chronic absenteeism rate representing 10 percent of days missed is displayed.

## Accountability Indicators for Districts and Schools Serving High School Grades

In addition to the indicators described above, accountability determinations for districts and schools serving high school grades also include the following measures:

* *Four-year cohort graduation rate:* High school accountability determinations include the four-year cohort graduation rate, which represents the percentage of students in a cohort that graduate in four years or less. The cohort graduation rate is reported for any school and student group with at least 20 students enrolled in the cohort. For accountability determinations in any given year, the cohort graduation rate from the prior school year is used. For example, 2023 accountability calculations based on the four-year rate use data from 2022. The graduation rate from the 2022 cohort is used in accountability determinations because this allows DESE to use a data set that has been thoroughly reviewed by district and DESE staff. The Department will not have complete graduation rate data for the 2023 cohort until late 2023, after the October SIMS reporting period and the 2023 cohort data review period have closed.
* *Extended engagement rate:* Theextended engagement rate is the total of the five-year cohort graduation rate plus the percentage of students from the cohort that remain enrolled in the school after five years. For accountability determinations in any given year, the extended engagement rate is lagged. For example, the extended engagement rate used in the 2023 accountability determinations incorporates the 2021 five-year cohort graduation rate. The extended engagement rate is reported for any school and student group with at least 20 students enrolled in the cohort.
* *Annual dropout rate:* High school accountability determinations include the annual dropout rate, which measures the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who drop out of school each year. The annual dropout rate is reported for any school and student group with at least 20 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. For accountability determinations in any given year, the annual dropout rate from the prior year is used. For example, 2023 accountability determinations use dropout rate data from 2022.
* *Advanced coursework completion:* High school accountability determinations include a measure of advanced coursework completion. This indicator is reported as the percentage of all students enrolled in 11th and 12th grades that complete at least one advanced course, based on data provided by districts via the Student Course Schedule (SCS) data collection. Advanced courses include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Project Lead the Way (PLTW), dual enrollment for post-secondary credit, Chapter 74-approved vocational/technical secondary cooperative education programs and Articulation Agreement courses, and other DESE-selected rigorous courses. Eligible courses extend beyond traditional AP courses and do not necessitate student participation in AP tests. This indicator is included in the results for any school or student group with at least 20 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12. See DESE’s [List of Advanced Courses for Accountability Reporting](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/advanced-courses.docx) for the complete list of courses included in the advanced coursework completion calculation. of courses included in the advanced coursework completion calculation.

## Accountability Indicators Middle/High or K-12 Districts and Schools

In Massachusetts, most public school districts serve grades Kindergarten through 12. Additionally, there are some schools, referred to as middle/high schools, which serve a combination of non-high school and high school grades (e.g., grades 7 through 12, grades K through 12, etc.). Because results from the Next Generation MCAS tests in grades 3 through 8 cannot be combined with results from the high school MCAS tests, accountability determinations for K-12 districts and middle/high or K-12 schools are made by assessing each district’s, school’s, and student group’s performance on each of the accountability indicators in non-high school and high school grades separately. An example of the indicators used in a K-12 district’s accountability determination is included in the table below.

Table : Indicators for Districts and Schools Serving Non-High School and High School Grades

| **Indicators for Non-High School Grades** | **Indicators for High School Grades** |
| --- | --- |
| * ELA average composite scaled score * Mathematics average composite scaled score * Science average composite scaled score * ELA mean SGP * Mathematics mean SGP * Progress toward English proficiency * Chronic absenteeism rate | * ELA average composite scaled score * Mathematics average composite scaled score * Science average composite scaled score * ELA mean SGP * Mathematics mean SGP * Progress toward English proficiency * Four-year cohort graduation rate * Extended engagement rate * Annual dropout rate * Chronic absenteeism * Advanced coursework completion rate |

## Weighting of Accountability Indicators

For 2023 accountability reporting, DESE uses a ratio of achievement to growth of 3 to 1. Depending on the availability of data for each accountability indicator, the actual percentages may vary, as shown in the tables below.

Table : Accountability Indicator Weightings for Non-High Schools

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Measures** | **Weighting (3:1)** | |
| **With data for the EL Progress Indicator** | **Without data for the EL Progress Indicator** |
| Achievement | * ELA, math, and science achievement | 60% | 67.5% |
| Student growth | * ELA and math SGP | 20% | 22.5% |
| Progress toward English proficiency | * Progress made by students toward attaining English language proficiency | 10% | -- |
| Additional indicators | * Chronic absenteeism | 10% | 10% |

Table : Accountability Indicator Weightings for High Schools

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Measures** | **Weighting (3:1)** | |
| **With data for the EL Progress Indicator** | **Without data for the EL Progress Indicator** |
| Achievement | * ELA, math, and science achievement | 40% | 47.5% |
| Student growth | * ELA and math SGP | 20% | 22.5% |
| High school completion | * Four-year cohort graduation rate * Extended engagement rate * Annual dropout rate | 20% | 20% |
| Progress toward English proficiency | * Progress made by students toward attaining English language proficiency | 10% | -- |
| Additional indicators | * Chronic absenteeism * Advanced coursework completion | 10% | 10% |

The tables above include two weighting columns: one for schools with data for the EL progress indicator, and one for schools without data for that indicator. In schools without sufficient data for the English EL progress indicator, the weight for that indicator is distributed proportionally across achievement and growth to maintain the 3 to 1 ratio.

The weighting is applied to the indicator (for example, achievement or growth), and each measure within the indicator has an equal share of the weight. For example, if achievement is weighted at 60 percent, then ELA, mathematics, and science are each worth 20 percent. In a school that does not administer the science assessment, ELA and mathematics are each worth 30 percent.

In middle/high and K-12 schools and districts, the weighting in Table 5 is applied to the indicators for non-high school grades and the weighting in Table 6 is applied to the indicators for high school grades. Additionally, at the high school level, the high school completion indicators are considered part of achievement when measuring the ratio of achievement to growth.

# Reported Measures

Accountability determinations consist of a normative component and a criterion-referenced component, which are used to classify districts and schools into accountability categories.

## Normative Component

The normative component, or accountability percentile, measures the performance of all students in a school compared to other schools in the state. This measure is reported as a percentile, from 1 to 99, which is calculated using two years of data for all available accountability indicators for the school. Schools are grouped together by gradespan based on the statewide assessments that they administer: non-high schools, serving a combination of grades 3 through 8; middle/high and K-12 schools, serving one or more grades 3 through 8 and grade 10; and high schools, where the only tested grade is grade 10.

Within the non-high school gradespan group, 2022 data for each individual indicator are separately compared, ranked, and assigned a percentile.[[5]](#footnote-6) The individual indicator percentiles are then combined and weighted according to the indicator weighting rules described in Table 5. The same process is applied to the 2023 data for each accountability indicator. The resulting 2022 and 2023 weighted values are then combined in a weighted average, with 2022 data worth 40 percent and 2023 data worth 60 percent. The resulting weighted average is then ranked and assigned a percentile. This final number, the accountability percentile, provides information about how a non-high school is doing compared to other all non-high schools in the state.

A similar process is used to calculated high school accountability percentiles; however, the number of indicators and their weights differ, as shown in Table 6 above. Additionally, when calculating ranks for the advanced coursework, graduation rate, extended engagement rate, and dropout rate indicators, data for all schools serving high school grades, including middle/high and K-12 schools, are compared.

To calculate the accountability percentile for middle/high and K-12 schools, DESE calculates the two-year weighted percentiles for the non-high school and high school gradespans separately, as described above. The non-high school and high school values are then combined into a single number by weighting them based on the proportion of the school’s total enrollment in each gradespan. This number is then ranked and assigned a final percentile, which represents the accountability percentile for the middle/high or K-12 school. To receive a percentile, a middle/high or K-12 school must have sufficient achievement and growth data in both the non-high school and high school grades.

The accountability percentile is calculated only at the school level; it is not calculated at the district level. Additionally, accountability percentiles are not calculated for schools ending in grade 3 or other small schools that do not have sufficient achievement and growth data.

## Criterion-Referenced Component

The criterion-referenced component measures a district’s or school’s progress toward improvement targets. The Department uses data from all students in the district or school and, in the case of non-high school grades, the lowest performing students in the district or school to determine overall progress toward targets.

### Establishing the Lowest Performing Students Group in Non-High School Grades

To better control for student transiency, DESE measures the performance of each school’s lowest performing students who have been enrolled for multiple years. Schools remain responsible for the annual performance of all students, as aggregate and student group results include all students enrolled in the school as of October 1. However, results for the lowest performing students group include only those students who have been enrolled in the same school for two consecutive years.

The Department uses a cohort approach to measure the performance of the lowest performing students in each school serving non-high school grades. In the cohort model, the school must have more than one tested grade (3 through 8), have at least 40 *eligible* students who were enrolled and tested in the school in the previous year, and test enough students in the current year for the lowest performing students to represent a reportable group (the greater of 25 percent of eligible students, or 20 or more students). To be included in the lowest performing students group, each student must meet certain eligibility requirements. Eligible students:

* Were enrolled and tested in the school during the 2021-22 school year, and remained enrolled in the same school in the 2022-23 school year;
* Were not a first- or second-year EL in 2023; and
* Received ELA and mathematics MCAS scaled scores as the result of taking the standard administration of the MCAS test in 2022 (i.e., the student did not take the MCAS-Alt in ELA and/or mathematics).

Once eligibility is determined, DESE identifies the lowest performing students group by averaging each eligible student’s 2022 ELA and mathematics MCAS scaled scores and then ranking the average scaled scores of all eligible students in the school. The lowest performing students group represents the greater of 25 percent of eligible students or 20 students. The Department compares the results of this cohort of students in 2022 to the results of the same students in 2023 and reports on progress toward improvement targets accordingly.

In 2023, DESE did not identify lowest performing student groups in high schools due to the impact of the pandemic on the availability of historical MCAS data for current high school students. The Department intends to resume the practice of identifying the lowest performing students in grade high schools in future accountability reporting cycles.

### Establishing the Lowest Performing Students Group in Districts

The process for establishing the lowest performing students group in each district is like the process for schools, with a few exceptions. At the district level, eligible students have been enrolled in the same district, but not necessarily the same school, for two consecutive years. Additionally, the district’s lowest performing students group is established separately from its schools’ groups: when ranking each student’s average ELA and mathematics scaled scores, students from all non-high school grades within the district are compared. This means that there may be students in the district’s lowest performing students group who are not included in any of its schools’ lowest performing students groups.

The Department’s [Establishing the Lowest Performing Students Group document](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/lowest-performing-group.docx) describes the detailed methodology used to establish this group. If a district or school does not have test results for enough students to establish a reportable lowest performing students group in each gradespan, the district’s or school’s accountability determination is based on the performance of all students.

### Targets

For each district or school as a whole and for the lowest performing students group, improvement targets are set for each of the accountability indicators as shown in the tables below.

Table : Setting Targets for Accountability Indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Non-High School Grades** | | **High School Grades** | |
| **All**  **Students** | **Lowest Performing Students** | **All**  **Students** | **Lowest Performing Students** |
| ELA achievement | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | - |
| Math achievement | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | - |
| Science achievement | ✔ | - | ✔ | - |
| ELA SGP | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | - |
| Math SGP | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | - |
| Four-year cohort graduation rate | - | - | ✔ | - |
| Extended engagement rate | - | - | ✔ | - |
| Annual dropout rate | - | - | ✔ | - |
| EL progress | ✔ | - | ✔ | - |
| Chronic absenteeism | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | - |
| Advanced coursework completion | - | - | ✔ | - |

In 2023, targets are set only for one year, using 2022 data as the baseline. [Increments for 2024-2027](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/accountability-targets.xlsx) are provided for informational purposes only and are subject to change.

### Target-Setting Methodology

**The processes used to identify improvement increments and set targets for each accountability indicator are described below. For a complete list of indicators and 2023 improvement increments, see DESE’s** [Target-Setting Methodology](https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/target-setting.docx) **document.**

#### MCAS Achievement

Due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic to achievement results statewide, DESE’s traditional target-setting methodology, which looked at improvement demonstrated by schools with similar performance, could not be applied uniformly in 2023. Instead, for the purposes of setting achievement targets, DESE assigned each student group, school, and district to a “path” based on how their 2022 achievement compared to achievement in 2019:

* *Recovery Path: T*he MCAS average scaled score for the given group and subject was higher in 2019 than in 2022. These groups experienced declines in student achievement and are expected to improve achievement in a specified number of years to return to (and ultimately surpass) 2019 achievement levels.
* *Path Forward:* The MCAS average scaled score for the given group and subject was higher in 2022 than in 2019, *or* the improvement increment calculated using the recovery path for the group and subject is less rigorous than that assigned in 2019. These groups experienced little to no decline in achievement from 2019 to 2022 and are expected to continue to improve achievement.

##### Recovery Path

The Department measured school-level achievement declines from 2019 to 2022 for each student group and subject and established recovery quartiles based on ranges of loss. The largest declines in average scaled score were placed into recovery quartile 1, the smallest declines were placed into quartile 4.

For each recovery quartile, DESE assigned a maximum number of years to recover (i.e., to return to 2019 levels of achievement). Schools with the largest losses are provided the most years to recover.

Table : Recovery Quartiles and Years to Recovery

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Recovery Quartile** | **Number of Years to Recovery** |
| 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 |
| 4 | 1 |

Each school and group on the recovery path was assigned a recovery quartile and a specific number of years to recovery (i.e., to return to 2019 levels of achievement) based on their own change in performance (i.e., the difference in average scaled score between 2022 and 2019).

To calculate the individual targets for each student group on the recovery path, the difference in average scaled score between 2022 and 2019 was divided by the number of years allotted for recovery based on their assigned recovery quartile. This value, or annual improvement increment, was then added to their 2022 achievement baseline to determine the 2023 target. The table below provides two examples of this process.

Table : Example of Setting Targets for Schools and Districts on the Recovery Path

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **2019 Achievement (MCAS Average Scaled Score)** | **2022 Achievement (MCAS Average Scaled Score)** | **Change (Amount of Loss)** | **Recovery Quartile** | **Number of Years to Recover** | **Annual Improvement Increment (Change ÷ Number of Years to Recover)** | **2023 Achievement Target (2022 Achievement + Annual Improvement Increment)** |
| School A | 492.0 | 483.0 | -9.0 | 2 | 3 | 3.0 | 486.0 |
| School B | 487.0 | 485.0 | -2.0 | 4 | 1 | 2.0 | 487.0 |

To receive a target, a school or student group must have 2022 achievement results for at least 20 students in both ELA and mathematics. In schools that serve students in both non-high school and high school grades, the school must have 2022 achievement results for at least 20 students in both gradespans (e.g., non-high school and high school) to receive a target.

##### Path Forward

The Department used a different approach for setting targets for districts, schools, and student groups on the path forward. The Department first placed schools into quartiles according to their historical school percentiles and then looked at schools within each quartile that demonstrated improvement on the MCAS tests. In doing so, DESE could identify what change looked like across improvers only and apply the same expectation of improvement to the 2023 targets. By grouping schools according to their school percentiles, DESE was able to set targets based on change demonstrated by schools with similar historical accountability results.

Schools were placed into quartiles based on 2022 accountability percentile data to assign improvement increments, which were added to each school and group’s 2022 baseline average scaled score to determine the 2023 target for that school or group. To receive a 2023 target, a school or group must have 2022 achievement results for at least 20 students in both ELA and mathematics. In schools that serve students in both non-high school and high school grades, the school must have 2022 achievement results for at least 20 students in both gradespans (e.g., non-high school and high school) to receive a target.

At the district-level, the process was similar, but because districts do not receive percentiles, all districts were compared to one another. Improvement increments were established by using the median improvement of improvers using district-level data.

#### Growth in ELA and Mathematics

Targets for the ELA and mathematics student growth indicators are set differently than for the achievement indicators. The goal for all districts, schools, and student groups is to achieve or exceed an SGP of 50. Groups with a mean SGP of 50 or higher receive full credit (3 or 4 points) for this indicator.

#### Progress Toward English Proficiency

Targets for EL progress indicator are based on the 25th percentile improvement within each difficulty index quartile and are differentiated by non-high school and high school gradespans. Incorporating the gradespan and difficulty index ensures that EL progress targets are equitable, as schools and districts are compared only to others that serve students of similar ages and level of challenge in achieving English language proficiency.

For 2023 target setting, DESE used the improvement increments calculated in 2019 for progress toward English proficiency. Due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of improvers between 2019 and 2022 was too small to use to calculate 2023 improvement increments. In future years, DESE expects to use more recent years’ results in the calculation of improvement increments.

Schools and districts were placed into quartiles based on their 2022 average difficulty index to assign improvement increments, which were added to each school or district’s 2022 baseline progress rate to determine the 2023 target.[[6]](#footnote-7) To receive a 2023 target, a school or district must have results for at least 20 students for both the EL progress indicator and the ELA and mathematics achievement indicators.

#### Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate, Extended Engagement Rate, and Advanced Coursework Completion

The target-setting process used for the four-year cohort graduation rate, extended engagement rate, and advanced coursework completion rate indicators is the same as the process used to set targets for the MCAS achievement indicators for districts, schools, and groups on the path forward. Actual change in the rates for each indicator is measured separately over multiple years to project improvement increments.

The Department determined that setting targets for these indicators based on the median improvement over three years within each quartile allows for conservative, yet reasonable improvement increments to be set for each school and student group. Schools are placed into quartiles based on 2022 accountability percentile data to assign improvement increments, which are added to each school’s and student group’s baseline to determine the 2023 target for that school or group. To receive a 2023 target for a particular indicator, a school or student group must have baseline results for at least 20 students for both the indicator in question and ELA and mathematics achievement indicators.[[7]](#footnote-8)

At the district level, the process is similar, but because districts do not receive percentiles, all districts are compared to one another to determine median change among improvers.

#### Annual Dropout Rate

Because dropout rates in Massachusetts’ districts and school are generally low, DESE uses a slightly different approach to setting targets and assigning points for the annual dropout rate indicator than for the other indicators. Points are assigned based on change in the dropout rate by a percentage of the previous year’s rate, not by a certain number of percentage points. For example, if a school has a dropout rate of 2.0 percent, it can earn full credit by reducing its rate to 1.8 percent (a 10 percent reduction, equivalent to 0.2 percentage points). The same school could exceed its target by reducing its dropout rate to 1.6 percent (a 20 percent reduction, equivalent to 0.4 percentage points). Annual targets are assigned based on the “Met Target” threshold for each individual district, school, and student group.[[8]](#footnote-9)

#### Chronic Absenteeism

In 2019, DESE placed schools into quartiles according to their school percentiles from 2015 to 2017, and then looked at schools within each quartile that demonstrated annual improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate (representing 10 percent of days missed). In doing so, DESE could identify what change looked like across improvers only. By grouping schools according to their school percentiles, DESE was able to set targets based on change demonstrated by schools with similar historical accountability results. At the time, DESE determined that setting targets for the chronic absenteeism indicator based on the median improvement over three years within each quartile allowed for ambitious, yet reasonable improvement increments to be set for each school and group.

For 2023 target setting, DESE used the improvement increments calculated in 2019 for the chronic absenteeism indicator. Due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of improvers between 2019 and 2022 was too small to use to calculate 2023 improvement increments. In future years, DESE expects to use more recent years’ results in the calculation of improvement increments.

Schools were placed into quartiles based on 2022 accountability percentile data to assign improvement increments, which were added to each school and group’s baseline chronic absenteeism rate to determine the 2023 target for that school or group.[[9]](#footnote-10) To receive a 2023 target, a school or student group must have baseline results for at least 20 students for both the chronic absenteeism indicator and the ELA and mathematics achievement indicators. student group

At the district level, the process is similar, but because districts do not receive percentiles, all districts are compared to one another to determine median change among improvers.

### Criterion-Referenced Component Calculation

The criterion-referenced target percentage measures each district’s, school’s, and student group’s change in performance from one year to the next. Based on each target and actual performance, DESE assigns points for each indicator as shown in the table below.

Table : Criterion-Referenced Point Assignments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Points** | **Label for achievement, high school completion, EL progress, and additional indicators** | **Label for growth**  **indicators** |
| 4 | Exceeded target | Exceeded Typical Growth |
| 3 | Met target | Typical Growth – High |
| 2 | Improved | Typical Growth – Low |
| 1 | No change | Low Growth |
| 0 | Declined | Very Low Growth |

Detailed criteria for assigning points for each accountability indicator are described in [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Criteria).

For the district or school, the actual points earned and the total possible points are reported for each indicator. The points earned are combined, weighted according to the weightings described in Tables 4 and 5 above, and calculated into a percentage of possible points for the all students group. The same is done for the lowest performing students group. The percentage of possible points values for the all students group and the lowest performing students group are averaged equally, resulting in the district’s or school’s criterion-referenced target percentage. The goal is to earn a target percentage of 75 or higher, which indicates that on average, the district or school is meeting or exceeding targets for each accountability indicator. An example of this calculation for a non-high school is displayed in the table below.

Table : Sample Criterion-Referenced Target Percentage Calculation, Non-High School

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **All Students** (50%) | | | **Lowest Performing Students** (50%) | | |
| **Points**  **Earned** | **Total Possible Points** | **Weight** | **Points**  **Earned** | **Total Possible Points** | **Weight** |
| ELA scaled score | 3 | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | **-** |
| Math scaled score | 2 | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | **-** |
| Science scaled score | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | **-** |
| **Achievement total** | **7** | 12 | 60% | **4** | 8 | 67.5% |
| ELA SGP | 4 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 | - |
| Math SGP | 3 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 | - |
| **Growth total** | **7** | 8 | 20% | **8** | 8 | 22.5% |
| **EL progress** | **2** | 4 | 10% | **-** | - | - |
| **Chronic absenteeism** | **3** | 4 | 10% | **4** | 4 | 10% |
| **Weighted total** | **6.1** | 9.6 | - | **4.9** | 7.6 | - |
| **Percentage of possible points** | **63.5%** | | - | **64.5%** | | - |
| **Criterion-referenced target percentage** | **64%** | | | | | |

The criterion-referenced target percentage is calculated by dividing the weighted total points earned by the weighted total possible points. The calculation for each is below:

* Weighted total of points earned = (Total achievement points earned x Achievement weight) + (Total growth points earned x Growth weight) + (Total high school completion points earned x High school completion weight) + (EL progress points earned x EL progress weight) + (Total additional indicator points earned x Additional indicator weight)
* Weighted total of possible points = (Total achievement possible points x Achievement weight) + (Total growth possible points x Growth weight) + (Total high school completion possible points x High school completion weight) + (EL progress possible points x EL progress weight) + (Total additional indicator possible points x Additional indicator weight)

At the high school level, a similar calculation is done using all available indicators and the related indicator weightings. An example of this calculation for a high school is displayed in the table below.

Table : Sample Criterion-Referenced Target Percentage Calculation, High School

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **All Students** (100%) | | | **Lowest Performing Students** | | |
| Points  Earned | Total Possible Points | Weight | Points  Earned | Total Possible Points | Weight |
| ELA scaled score | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Math scaled score | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Science scaled score | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **Achievement total** | **7** | 12 | 40% | **-** | - | - |
| ELA SGP | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Math SGP | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **Growth total** | **7** | 8 | 20% | **-** | - | - |
| 4-year cohort graduation rate | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Extended engagement rate | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Annual dropout rate | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **High school completion total** | **10** | 12 | 20% | **-** | - | - |
| **EL progress** | **2** | 4 | 10% | **-** | - | - |
| Chronic absenteeism | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Advanced coursework completion | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **Additional indicators total** | **6** | 8 | 10% | **-** | - | - |
| **Weighted total** | **7.0** | 10.0 | - | **-** | - | - |
| **Percentage of possible points** | **70.0%** | | - | **-** | | - |
| **Criterion-referenced target percentage** | **70%** | | | | | |

For middle/high and K-12 schools and districts, progress toward targets for each of the accountability indicators is measured separately for all students and the lowest performing students in non-high school grades and high school grades, resulting in one criterion-referenced target percentage for the non-high school gradespan and one for the high school gradespan. Those values are weighted according to the proportion of enrolled students within the district or school and are combined into a single criterion-referenced target percentage for the district or school. A sample calculation is shown in the table below.

Table : Sample Criterion-Referenced Target Percentage Calculation, Middle/High and K-12 Schools and Districts

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Non-High School Grades** | | | | | | **High School Grades** | | | | | |
| **All students** | | | **Lowest Performing Students** | | | **All Students** | | | **Lowest Performing Students** | | |
| Points Earned | Total Possible Points | Weight | Points Earned | Total Possible Points | Weight | Points Earned | Total Possible Points | Weight | Points Earned | Total Possible Points | Weight |
| ELA achievement | 3 | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | **-** | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Math achievement | 2 | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | **-** | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Science achievement | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | **-** | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **Achievement total** | **7** | 12 | 60% | **4** | 8 | 67.5% | **7** | 12 | 40% | **-** | - | - |
| ELA growth | 4 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Math growth | 3 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 | - | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **Growth total** | **7** | 8 | 20% | **8** | 8 | 22.5% | **7** | 8 | 20% | **-** | - | - |
| 4-year cohort graduation rate | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Extended engagement rate | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Annual dropout rate | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **High school completion total** | - | - | - | - | - | - | **10** | 12 | 20% | **-** | - | - |
| **EL progress** | **2** | 4 | 10% | **-** | - | - | **2** | 4 | 10% | **-** | - | - |
| Chronic absenteeism | 3 | 4 | - | 4 | 4 | - | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| Advanced coursework completion | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 4 | - | - | - | - |
| **Additional indicators total** | **3** | 4 | 10% | **4** | 4 | 10% | **6** | 8 | 10% | **-** | - | - |
| Weighted total | **6.1** | 9.6 | - | **4.9** | 7.6 | - | **7.0** | 10.0 | - | **-** | - | - |
| Percentage of possible points | **63.5%** | | - | **64.5%** | | - | **70.0%** | | - | **-** | | - |
| Percentage of possible points by gradespan | **64%** | | | | | | **70%** | | | | | |
| Weight of non-high school results: 70% | | | | | | Weight of high school results: 30% | | | | | |
| **Criterion-referenced target percentage** | **66%** | | | | | | | | | | | |

To receive a criterion-referenced target percentage, a middle/high or K-12 school must have sufficient data in both the non-high school and high school gradespans.

# Student Group Reporting

While a district’s or school’s accountability determination is primarily based on the performance of the district or school as a whole, DESE also reports accountability results at the student group level.

## Progress Toward Improvement Targets

For each student group in a district or school, progress toward improvement targets is reported using the criterion-referenced component described above. The overall accountability determination for a student group is reported as the degree to which targets have been met using results for all students in the student group; DESE does not identify the lowest performing students within a student group.

## Student Group Percentiles

In addition to the criterion-referenced component, each student group with sufficient achievement and growth results also receives a student group percentile. The student group percentile measures the group’s relative standing compared to like groups statewide (e.g., by comparing results from the students with disabilities group in one high school to all other students with disabilities groups in high schools statewide). The student group percentile is calculated using two years of data, using the same process as the normative accountability percentile described above: by ranking 2022 and 2023 data from all available accountability indicators (including, at a minimum, achievement and growth in both ELA and mathematics), for each student group and combining them into a single, final percentile value, from 1 to 99. This allows DESE to identify schools in which the overall performance of the school may be masking the performance of one or more low performing groups.

# Assessment Participation

State and federal laws require high levels of student participation in statewide assessments. Assessment participation rates are calculated separately for ELA, mathematics, and science, for each district and school with at least 20 students enrolled in tested grades. Each district and school as a whole is expected to maintain a participation rate of 95 percent or higher for each subject-area test. A sample participation rate calculation for allstudents in a district or school is shown in the table below.

Table : Sample Participation Rate Calculation – All Students

| **Group** | **English language arts** | | | **Mathematics** | | | **Science** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Enrolled** | **Assessed** | **%** | **Enrolled** | **Assessed** | **%** | **Enrolled** | **Assessed** | **%** |
| All Students | 1,030 | 1,010 | 98 | 1,033 | 1,021 | 99 | 424 | 416 | 98 |

At the student group level, assessment participation is calculated for the group as a whole, with all subjects combined (e.g., measuring the percentage of ELA, mathematics, and science tests combined that were taken by the group). Rates are calculated for each student group that has 20 or more students enrolled in at least one subject. Each district and school is expected to maintain a combined-subject participation rate of 95 percent or higher for each student group. This approach minimizes the effect of a small number of non-participants in small student groups. A sample student group-level participation rate calculation is shown in the table below.

Table : Sample Participation Rate Calculation – Student Groups

| **Group** | **English language arts** | | **Mathematics** | | **Science** | | **Overall** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Enrolled** | **Assessed** | **Enrolled** | **Assessed** | **Enrolled** | **Assessed** | **Total Enrolled** | **Total Assessed** | **%** |
| Asian | 118 | 105 | 119 | 119 | 49 | 48 | 286 | 272 | 95 |

Regardless of the reporting level (e.g., overall district or school rates or student group rates), participation is calculated two ways for use in accountability determinations. First, the 2023 participation rate is calculated. If the actual 2023 participation rate is lower than 95 percent, that rate will be compared to the most recent two-year assessment participation rate for the group or subject (e.g., the sum of the 2022 and 2023 tested students, divided by the sum of the 2022 and 2023 enrolled students). The higher of the two resulting rates will be factored into the district’s or school’s overall accountability determination. This two-step approach further minimizes the impact of a small number of non-participants in small student groups.

Participation requirements for each of the assessments are as follows:

* *MCAS:* State law requires that all students in the tested grades who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in grade-level MCAS tests that correspond with the grade in which they are reported in SIMS. This includes students with disabilities, ELs, and students who are educated in outplacement settings. Any student who is absent for one or more test sessions is reported as a nonparticipant and counts against the participation rate calculation for the district or school as a whole and for any student group of which the student is a member, with two exceptions:
  + *First-year ELs:* For students who are in their first year of U.S. schooling, schools have the option of administering ELA MCAS tests to first year ELs. However, first year ELs mustparticipate in mathematics and science MCAS tests for diagnostic purposes. Their achievement results are not included in accountability calculations.
  + *Students absent from testing with medical documentation*: Students reported as Not Tested Medically Documented Absent (NTM) are excluded from the participation rate calculation for each MCAS subject-area test for which they were absent (with medical documentation). This applies only to the participation rates calculated for the purposes of accountability reporting, and only to those students correctly reported as NTM during the MCAS test administration or discrepancy reporting windows.
* *ACCESS:* To comply with federal and state laws, all ELs are required to participate in the ACCESS for ELLs English language acquisition assessment. ACCESS participation is required for all ELs in addition to each of the MCAS tests scheduled for their grade, regardless of the program and services they are receiving. This includes first-year ELs, who may be exempt from ELA MCAS testing in their first year of U.S. schooling. Any student designated in SIMS as an EL or first-year EL that does not take ACCESS is reported as a nonparticipant and counts against the ELA participation rate calculation in the aggregate and in any student group of which the student is a member.

Detailed guidance related to student participation in statewide assessments is available on DESE’s [assessment website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.html).

# Graduation Rates

Federal law requires states to identify any school that does not graduate two-thirds of its students as requiring support. Therefore, any district or school in which the most recent four-year cohort graduation rate for all students is below 66.7 percent is identified as requiring assistance or intervention, regardless of the district’s or school’s performance on other accountability measures.

# Classification of Schools

School results are reported in two categories: schools requiring assistance or intervention and schools not requiring assistance or intervention.

## Schools Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A school *requiring assistance or intervention* is identified as:

* In need of *broad/comprehensive support*, if it is designated *underperforming* or *chronically underperforming* at the discretion of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education; or
* In need of *focused/targeted support*, if it has not been identified as in need of *broad/comprehensive support*, and:
  + Is among the lowest 10 percent of schools statewide, as measured by the accountability percentile;
  + Has one or more student groups among the lowest performing 5 percent of student groups statewide, as measured by the student group percentile;
  + Has a low graduation rate for all students (below 66.7 percent for the most recent four-year rate); and/or
  + Has low assessment participation (below 95 percent) for the school as a whole or for one or more student groups.

## Schools Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A school that does not meet the criteria listed above is identified as *not requiring assistance or intervention*. The Department reports results for these schools based on their overall progress toward improvement targets, as measured by the criterion-referenced component of the system. In 2023, schools are reported as: *meeting or exceeding targets*, if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage of 75 percent or higher; *substantial progress toward targets* if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage from 50 to 74 percent; *moderate progress toward targets* if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage from 25 to 49 percent; or *limited or no progress toward targets* if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage below 25 percent.

## Schools of Recognition

A subset of schools classified as *not requiring assistance or intervention* are recognized for their academic accomplishments. Schools of Recognition demonstrate high achievement and high growth, and meet or exceed targets. Schools of Recognition are identified each fall when official district and school accountability results are released to the public.

The figure below illustrates the accountability categories for schools.

Figure 1: 2023 Accountability Categories for Schools

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Schools not requiring assistance or**  **intervention (approximately 85%)** | | | | | **Schools requiring assistance or intervention (approximately 15%)** | |
| **Schools of recognition**  Recognized for high achievement, high growth, meeting/  exceeding targets | **Meeting or exceeding**  **targets**  Criterion-referenced  target percentage  75-100 | **Substantial progress toward**  **targets**  Criterion-referenced  target percentage  50-74 | **Moderate progress**  **toward**  **targets**  Criterion-referenced target percentage  25-49 | **Limited or no progress**  **toward**  **targets**  Criterion-referenced  target percentage  0-24 | **Focused/**  **targeted**  **support**   * Percentiles 1-10 (not already identified for broad/ comprehensive support) * Low graduation rate * Low performing student group(s) * Low participation | **Broad/**  **comprehensive support**   * Underperforming schools * Chronically underperforming schools |

## Insufficient Data

Each year, a small number of schools are assigned an accountability classification of *Insufficient data*. Schools with this classification generally do not serve tested grades or are too new or too small to calculate the results needed to produce an accountability determination.

# Classification of Districts

Each district is classified based on the results of all students in the district and its lowest performing students. District results are reported in two categories: districts *requiring assistance or intervention* and districts *not requiring assistance or intervention*.

## Districts Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A district *requiring assistance or intervention* is identified as:

* In need of *broad/comprehensive support*, if, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner, it is designated *underperforming* or *chronically underperforming* by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; or
* In need of *focused/targeted support*, if it has not been identified as in need of *broad/comprehensive support*, and has:
  + A low graduation rate for all students (below 66.7 percent for the most recent four-year rate), and/or
  + Low assessment participation (below 95 percent) for the district as a whole or for one or more student groups.

## Districts Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention

A district that does not meet the criteria listed above is identified as *not requiring assistance or intervention*. The Department reports results for these districts based on their overall progress toward improvement targets, as measured by the criterion-referenced component of the system. In 2023, districts are reported as: *meeting or exceeding targets*, if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage of 75 percent or higher; *substantial progress toward targets* if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage from 50 to 74 percent; *moderate progress toward targets* if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage from 25 to 49 percent; or *limited or no progress toward targets* if they have a criterion-referenced target percentage below 25 percent.

The figure below illustrates the accountability categories for districts.

Figure 2: 2023 Accountability Categories for Districts

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Districts not requiring**  **assistance or intervention** | | | | **Districts requiring**  **assistance or intervention** | |
| **Meeting or exceeding**  **targets**  Criterion-referenced  target  percentage  75-100 | **Substantial progress**  **toward**  **targets**  Criterion-referenced  target  percentage  50-74 | **Moderate**  **progress**  **toward**  **targets**  Criterion-  referenced  target  percentage  25-49 | **Limited or no progress**  **toward**  **targets**  Criterion-  referenced  target  percentage  0-24 | **Focused/**  **targeted**  **support**   * Low graduation rate * Low participation | **Broad/**  **comprehensive support**   * Underperforming districts * Chronically underperforming districts |

## Insufficient Data

Each year, a small number of districts are assigned an accountability classification of *Insufficient data*. Districts with this classification generally do not serve tested grades or are too new or too small to calculate the results needed to produce an accountability determination.

## Single School Districts

Public school districts in Massachusetts that consist of only one school are referred to as single school districts. For 2023 accountability reporting, single school districts receive two accountability reports: one for the school and one for the district. The difference between district and school results for single school districts are likely small and are related to the data used in the calculations.

At the school level, the accountability percentile and criterion-referenced measures include only those students who are enrolled and educated in the school as of October 1, while district-level criterion-referenced data include results for all students enrolled in the district, including students who enrolled after October 1 and students who are educated in outplacement settings. As a result, baselines, indicator-level results, targets, and assigned points may vary. Additionally, accountability percentiles are only calculated for the school, using school-level data.

# Movement Between Categories

In general, districts and schools can move between categories from year to year based on their progress toward targets and, at the school level, their accountability percentile. An *underperforming* or *chronically underperforming* school is designated as such by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and can only be removed from that status by the Commissioner. Similarly, an *underperforming* or *chronically underperforming* district is designated as such by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and can only be removed from that status by the Board.[[10]](#footnote-11)

# Understanding Accountability Reports

Accountability reports for the state and its districts and schools are updated annually. Once official results are released to the public, they can be found on DESE’s [District and School Profiles](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/) website.

## School Accountability Reports

Accountability results for schools contain four parts:

* Summary information about the school, including grades served and Title I status; the school’s accountability determination and the reason(s) for the classification; a percentile from 1 to 99 indicating the school’s overall performance relative to other schools that serve similar grades; the criterion-referenced target percentage for the school; and a notation indicating whether the school met its targets.
* Information about how criterion-referenced target percentages for the school are calculated. This information can be viewed by clicking the *Overall Results* tab.
* Student group-level information, including student group percentiles and criterion-referenced target percentages for each group for which there is sufficient data. This information can be accessed by clicking the *Student Group Results* tab and selecting a group from the dropdown menu.
* Detailed data for each accountability indicator used in the criterion-referenced component of the system. This section of the report also shows detailed assessment participation rates for all groups in the school. To view this part of the report, click the tab titled *Detailed Data for Each Indicator*.

In addition to the information described above, school accountability reports include an indication of whether the school has been assigned a federal accountability designation. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to identify schools as: in need of *comprehensive support and improvement (CSI)* if they have a graduation rate below 66.7 percent or if they are among the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools statewide; or in need of *targeted support and improvement (TSI)* if they have one or more consistently low performing student groups. A consistently low performing student group is defined as a group with a student group percentile of 5 or below in both 2022 and 2023. A subset of TSI schools may be identified as requiring *additional* *targeted support and improvement (ATSI)* if one or more of their consistently low performing student groups demonstrates performance below that of the 5th percentile Title I school. If a school is assigned a federal designation, it is displayed in the *Organization Information* section at the top of the accountability report. Schools with any of these federal designations may have additional planning requirements.

## District Accountability Reports

Accountability results for districts are reported the same way as for schools, with a few important differences:

* An accountability percentile is not displayed. The Department does not calculate accountability percentiles for districts.
* Summary information for each school in the district is available from the district report, on the tab titled *Schools in this District*. The inclusion of this information allows interested parties to quickly access individual school reports.

In addition, there may also be a difference in some of the figures displayed in the district accountability report from those in the school accountability report(s). District accountability reports typically include data for more students than school reports:

* District reports include the assessment results of all students in the district, including those who are educated in private settings and educational collaboratives for the purpose of receiving special education or other services, while school reports only include students enrolled in the school.
* In some cases, a student group in a school may not qualify for an accountability determination because fewer than 20 students in the group were assessed on ELA, mathematics, or science tests, but when the assessment results for all the students in the group across the district are combined, the group is large enough to be included on the district’s report.
* District reports include all students enrolled in the district during the testing window,[[11]](#footnote-12) while calculations for an individual school only include students enrolled in the school as of October 1 and tested in the same school during the testing window (the period between the March and June SIMS submissions).

# District and School Reconfigurations and Accountability Determinations

Each year a number of Massachusetts schools open, close, merge, split, and otherwise change the grades they serve. With less frequency, districts may merge or be newly created. The Department has established business rules that govern how districts and schools that are new or have reconfigured grades are included in the state’s accountability system. In general, DESE aims to ensure that accountability data accurately represent the past and present performance of an organization, and to report accountability data for as many districts and schools as possible each year.

The Department uses data from pre-existing districts and schools wherever possible to establish baselines upon which to measure performance and issue accountability determinations. When there is no valid and reliable way to establish baseline data, as in the case of a new Commonwealth charter school, a school may be classified as having *Insufficient data* until sufficient data exists.

# Discrepancies and Appeals

The Department has a discrepancy reporting system in place which allows districts the opportunity to review their preliminary assessment data for accuracy before it is included in official accountability reports and released to the public. In certain circumstances, DESE will also consider a district’s or school’s appeal of their accountability determination.

## Discrepancies

Accountability calculations are performed using MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs data provided by DESE’s Student Assessment office. District and school leaders were asked to review their preliminary ACCESS, MCAS, and MCAS-Alt data and report potential discrepancies to DESE. The deadline for reporting ACCESS discrepancies was July 12, 2023, and the deadline for reporting MCAS discrepancies was August 11, 2023. There is no separate discrepancy reporting process for accountability.

For the non-assessment accountability indicators, DESE uses SIMS and SCS data that were [previously reviewed, submitted, and certified](http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/schedule.html) by districts. Certified data are considered final, cannot be changed, are publicly reported, and are incorporated into accountability calculations. As such, it is imperative that districts ensure that their data submissions are accurate and on time.

## Accountability Appeals

Beyond the correction of discrepancies, DESE has established a process for appealing a district’s or school’s accountability determination. An appeal is a formal request to change an accountability determination that is based on factually correct data.

An accountability appeal request is considered only if the acceptance of the appeal will improve the district’s or school’s accountability determination. If an appeal is accepted, DESE may adjust the accountability determination of the appealing district or school; related accountability data such as indicator-level results, percentiles, criterion-referenced target percentages, participation rates, and other measures are not recalculated. The most common appeal requests are related to assessment participation rates and their impact on district and school accountability results.

The accountability appeal window opens once district and school leaders have embargoed access to their preliminary accountability results. Appeals must be filed via an electronic form, which the superintendent or a designee can request by emailing the Office of District and School Accountability Reporting at [ElementarySecondaryEd.Act@mass.gov](mailto:ElementarySecondaryEd.Act@mass.gov). *To ensure privacy, appeals should not include student names or other personally identifiable information.* Appeals submitted by Wednesday, September 13, 2023 will likely be addressed prior to the public release of accountability data; appeals filed after September 13 will be addressed when DESE updates official accountability reports in late fall. The final deadline for filing an accountability appeal is Friday, October 6, 2023.

# Resources

| Accountability guidance, lists, & tools | <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/> |
| --- | --- |
| Accountability reports | [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state\_report/accountability.aspx](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/accountability.aspx) |
| DESE Security Portal | <https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us/> |
| School/District Profiles | <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/> |

# Appendix A: Criteria for Awarding Points for Progress Toward Improvement Targets

Table A-1: Point Assignments for Non-High School Grades

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MCAS Achievement**  **(ELA, Math, Science)**  **(Grades 3-8)** | **Student**  **Growth**  **(ELA, Math)** | **Progress Toward English Language Proficiency**  **(Grades 1-8)** | **Chronic Absenteeism**  **Rate**  **(Grades 1-8)** |
| *Exceeded Target*  *(4 Points)* | * Met scaled score of 90th percentile for all students in grades 3-8 statewide; or * Exceeded target by more than 0.5 scaled score points | Mean SGP of 60.0 or higher (reported as *Exceeded Typical Growth*) | * Met the 90th percentile making progress rate within difficulty index quartile; or * Exceeded making progress rate target by more than 3.0 percentage points | * Exceeded target by more than 0.5 percentage points; or * Met the chronic absenteeism rate of 90th percentile for all students statewide |
| *Met Target*  *(3 Points)* | * Within +/- 0.5 scaled score points of target; or * Met scaled score of 90th percentile for the group in grades 3-8 statewide; or * Met scaled score of 80th percentile for all students in grades 3-8 statewide | Mean SGP of 50.0 to 59.9 (reported as *Typical Growth – High*) | * Met the 80th percentile making progress rate within difficulty index quartile; or * Within +/-3.0 percentage points of making progress rate target | * Within +/- 0.5 percentage points of the target; or * Met the chronic absenteeism rate of 80th percentile for all students statewide |
| *Improved Below Target*  *(2 Points)* | Improved from prior year up to 0.5 scaled score points below the target | Mean SGP of 40.0 to 49.9 (reported as *Typical Growth – Low*) | * Improved from prior year up to 3.0 percentage points below the target | Improved from prior year up to 0.5 percentage points below the target |
| *No Change*  *(1 Points)* | * No change from prior year; or * Up to 0.5 scaled score points decline from prior year | Mean SGP of 30.0 to 39.9 (reported as *Low Growth*) | * No change from prior year; or * Up to 3.0 percentage point decline from prior year’s making progress rate | Up to 0.5 percentage points above prior year’s rate |
| *Declined*  *(0 Points)* | Decline of more than 0.5 scaled score points from prior year | Mean SGP of 1.0 to 29.9 (reported as *Very Low Growth*) | * Decline of more than 3.0 percentage points from 2022 making progress rate | Increase of more than 0.5 percentage points from prior year |

Table A-2: Point Assignments for High School Grades

|  | **MCAS**  **Achievement**  **(ELA, Math, Science)**  **(Grade 10)** | **Student**  **Growth**  **(ELA, Math)**  **(Grade 10)** | **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate** | **Extended Engagement Rate** | **Annual Dropout Rate** | **Progress Toward English Language Proficiency (Grades 9-12)** | **Chronic Absenteeism Rate**  **(Grades 9-12)** | **Advanced Coursework Completion Rate**  **(Grades 11-12)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Exceeded Target*  *(4 Points)* | * Met scaled score of 90th percentile for all students in grade 10 category statewide; or * Exceeded target by more than 0.5 scaled score points | Mean SGP of 60.0 or higher (reported as *Exceeded Typical Growth*) | * Exceeded target by more than 0.5 percentage points; or * Met the four-year cohort graduation rate of 90th percentile for all students statewide | * Exceeded target by more than 0.5 percentage points; or * Met the extended engagement rate of 90th percentile for all students statewide | * Dropout rate of 0.0 percent; or * Reduced dropout rate by 20 percent or more from prior year | * Met the 90th percentile making progress rate within difficulty index quartile; or * Exceeded making progress rate target by more than 3.0 percentage points | * Exceeded target by more than 0.5 percentage points; or * Met the chronic absenteeism rate of 90th percentile for all students statewide | * Exceeded target by more than 1.0 percentage points; or * Met the advanced coursework completion rate of 90th percentile for all students statewide |
| *Met Target*  *(3 Points)* | * Within +/- 0.5 scaled score points of target; or * Met scaled score of 90th percentile for the group in grade 10 statewide; or * Met scaled score of 80th percentile for all students in grade 10 statewide | Mean SGP of 50.0 to 59.9 (reported as *Typical Growth – High*) | Within +/- 0.5 percentage points of the target | Within +/- 0.5 percentage points of the target | * Dropout rate equal to the target; or * Dropout rate of 1.0 percent or less (but greater than 0.0 percent); or * Reduced dropout rate by 10.0 percent or more (up to 20.0 percent) from prior year | * Met the 80th percentile making progress rate within difficulty index quartile; or * Within +/-3.0 percentage points of making progress rate target | * Within +/- 0.5 percentage points of the target; or * Met the chronic absenteeism rate of 80th percentile for all students statewide | * Within +/- 1.0 percentage points of the target; or * Met the advanced coursework completion rate of 80th percentile for all students statewide |

Table A-2: Point Assignments for High School Grades (continued)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MCAS**  **Achievement**  **(ELA, Math, & Science)**  **(Grade 10)** | **Student**  **Growth**  **(ELA & Math)**  **(Grade 10)** | **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate** | **Extended Engagement Rate** | **Annual Dropout Rate** | **Progress Toward English Language Proficiency (Grades 9-12)** | **Chronic Absenteeism Rate**  **(Grades 9-12)** | **Advanced Coursework Completion Rate**  **(Grades 11-12)** |
| *Improved Below Target*  *(2 Points)* | Improved from prior year up to 0.5 scaled score points below the target | Mean SGP of 40.0 to 49.9 (reported as *Typical Growth – Low*) | Improved from prior year up to 0.5 percentage points below the target | Improved from prior year up to 0.5 percentage points below the target | Dropout rate greater than 1.0 percent, & reduced rate by 5.0 percent or more (up to 10.0 percent) | Improved from prior year up to 3.0 percentage points below the target | Improved from prior year up to 0.5 percentage points below the target | Improved from prior year up to 1.0 percentage points below the target |
| *No Change*  *(1 Points)* | * No change from prior year; or * Up to 0.5 scaled score points decline from prior year | Mean SGP of 30.0 to 39.9 (reported as *Low Growth*) | Up to 0.5 percentage points below prior four-year rate | Up to 0.5 percentage points below prior year’s rate | * Dropout rate greater than 1.0 percent, & reduced rate by up to 5.0 percent from prior year; or * Dropout rate greater than 1.0 percent & no more than 5.0 percent increase from prior year | * No change from prior year; or * Up to 3.0 percentage point decline from prior year’s making progress rate | Up to 0.5 percentage points above prior year’s rate | Up to 1.0 percentage points below prior year’s rate |
| *Declined*  *(0 Points)* | Decline of more than 0.5 scaled score points from prior year | Mean SGP of 1.0 to 29.9 (reported as *Very Low Growth*) | Decline of more than 0.5 percentage points from prior year | Decline of more than 0.5 percentage points from prior year | Dropout rate greater than 1.0 percent, & more than 5.0 percent increase from prior year’s rate | Decline of more than 3.0 percentage points from prior year’s making progress rate | Increase of more than 0.5 percentage points from prior year | Decline of more than 1.0 percentage points from prior year |

1. A student is included in the low income student group if they participate in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and/or expanded MassHealth (up to 185% of the federal poverty level). Students reported by the district as homeless or low income are also included. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. A student is considered a former EL if they were reported as an EL student at least once in the last four years. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. English learners in their first year of U.S. schooling are not required to participate in the ELA MCAS assessments. They are required to participate in mathematics and science MCAS assessments for diagnostic purposes, as well as the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. For guidance on reporting student attendance in SIMS, please see DESE’s [Attendance and Dropout Reporting Guidance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/reporting-guidance.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. For each of the achievement, growth, and EL progress indicators, data for all non-high schools are compared to one another. For the chronic absenteeism indicator, data are compared within smaller school type categories: *elementary schools*, *elementary/middle schools*, and *middle schools*. These school types are assigned to each non-high school and to the non-high school grades in middle/high and K-12 schools, based on the grades they serve. Comparing chronic absenteeism rates within these smaller school type categories allows DESE to use a more equitable relative measure of chronic absenteeism rates within the percentile calculation. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The highest target any district, school, or group will receive for the EL progress indicator in 2023 is 95.0 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The highest target any district, school, or group will receive for the four-year cohort graduation rate, extended engagement rate, and advanced coursework completion rate indicators in 2023 is 95.0 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The lowest target any district, school, or group will receive for the annual dropout rate indicator in 2023 is 1.0 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. The lowest target any district, school, or group will receive for the chronic absenteeism rate indicator in 2023 is 1.0 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. M.G.L. c. 15, § 55A and c. 69, §§ 1J and 1K, and 603 CMR 2.00 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. At the district level, achievement results include all students enrolled in the district at the time of testing, regardless of whether they were enrolled in the district on October 1. District-level growth results, however, include only student who were enrolled in the district as of October 1 of the same school year. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)