



Tennessee Diploma Project

P is for Progress

July 2009

The Purpose of Adequate Yearly Progress

Labels can be dangerous if their meaning is not perfectly clear. It is particularly important to schools for parents to understand the meaning of Adequate Yearly Progress.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) gauges whether a school is making progress in student achievement based on one year's test results. Are students scoring proficient in reading and math? Are more students scoring proficient than in years past? These are some of the questions answered by AYP.

Recognizing Progress

No Child Left Behind emphasizes progress because not all schools started on an equal playing field when the law took effect. Some schools have a high percentage of students scoring proficient; other schools have more ground to gain to reach the ultimate goal — 100 percent of students scoring proficient in reading and math. The bottom line is whether the school, or system, is moving in the right direction.

Therein is the rationale for a provision of the law called Safe Harbor. Schools and districts may achieve AYP by reducing the percentage of students not scor-

ing proficient by 10 percent **and** meeting the standard for attendance or graduation rate. This is a significant reduction that demonstrates a school or district is moving in the right direction, even if they have not yet met the proficiency benchmark. This provision protects schools and systems from being punished for having more ground to gain.

Moving Targets

The 2009-10 school year marks the beginning of higher standards in Tennessee schools and more rigorous graduation requirements. The bar is being raised mid-race. Schools and students will have to work harder to achieve the same performance results, much less reach the higher standards set before them.

The Rest of the Story

The best way to know how your school is doing is to know the school's data. Which student groups are meeting AYP benchmarks? Is there a pervasive problem in one subject or grade level, or is improvement needed across the board?

AYP status is announced before school starts so schools can take the appropriate measures to prepare for the coming



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year. In some cases, that means offering students the choice of another school. In all schools, instructional practices are influenced by what the test results indicate.

The details behind each school's status are more important than the label itself. Later this fall, parents will be able to view the details behind any school's or system's AYP status on the state report card at www.tennessee.gov/education.

The intent of AYP is not to stigmatize schools but to help all schools improve for the sake of students. If everyone can focus on aiding progress, Tennessee schools and students can be more than adequate — we can be excellent.

School Improvement 1

(1st Year Improvement Status)

After 2nd Year
Not Making AYP
(Beginning of Year 3)

TCA-49-1-602

The commissioner of education shall:

- ◆ Publicly identify all schools that are placed in improvement status; and
- ◆ Study all schools placed in improvement status.

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NCLB

- ◆ Public Notification and Dissemination
- ◆ Public School Choice
- ◆ Revise SIP (including 10% of funding used for professional development each year school identified)
- ◆ Plan with Outside Expert

School Improvement 2

(2nd Year Improvement Status)

After 3rd Year
Not Making AYP
(Beginning of Year 4)

TCA-49-1-602

The commissioner of education shall have the authority to:

- ◆ Approve the allocation of state discretionary grants to the school; and/or
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to the school through an outside expert.

The director of each LEA shall have responsibility for the following actions:

- ◆ Prompt Parent Notification; and
- ◆ Revision of SIP

NCLB

- ◆ Public Notification and Dissemination
- ◆ Public School Choice
- ◆ Supplemental Services
- ◆ Technical Assistance

Room for Improvement

All systems and schools, regardless of their performance status, maintain an improvement plan. This plan details specific goals and the steps they will take to accomplish each one.

State law prescribes changes for schools identified as high priority. NCLB requires different actions for Title I schools - schools where 40 percent or more of the students are economically disadvantaged. Actions for all high priority schools are detailed in Tennessee's accountability chart (excerpt left). View the complete chart at www.tennessee.gov/education/nclb/ayp/doc/tnacctabilitychart2009.pdf.