



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Answers to Common Questions about Kansas State Assessments and No Child Left Behind

What is No Child Left Behind, and how does it relate to Kansas State Assessments?

No Child Left Behind is a federal law that applies to all states. It requires students in each school and school district to reach certain standards in math and reading. These standards rise each year until 2014, when all students will be expected to perform at their grade level. Kansas state assessments are the tool used to determine whether or not students are reaching the goals set by states under No Child Left Behind.

What is AYP?

AYP, or Adequate Yearly Progress, is what every school must reach in order to comply with No Child Left Behind. Each year, a certain percentage of students must score at least “Meets Standard” on the state assessments in math and reading in order to make AYP.

What happens when a school doesn’t make AYP?

The first year a school does not meet AYP, it is “on watch” and must improve its scores the next year.

The second year a school does not meet AYP, it is placed “on improvement.”

- First year on improvement: The school and/or district must develop and implement an improvement plan and allow students to go to other schools within the district, if there is more than one option.
- Second year on improvement: The school and/or district must offer “Supplemental Education Services” (SES), which could include paying for tutors and other services.
- Third year on improvement: The school and/or district must begin corrective action, which could include changes in staffing and/or the school’s curriculum.
- Fourth year on improvement: The school and/or district must begin restructuring, which could include changes in school leadership and/or changes to school schedules.

To come off of improvement, the school and/or district must meet AYP targets for two years in a row.

Can a school or district make AYP if it does not meet the annual targets?

Yes. A calculation called a Confidence Interval can be applied in certain situations. Another way for a school to make AYP without hitting its performance goals is through Safe Harbor. A subgroup, school or district makes Safe Harbor if the



percent of students who are not proficient (meaning they score lower than “Meets Standard”) decreases by at least 10 percent between consecutive years.

How can all the schools in a district make AYP, but the district is on improvement?

AYP applies to not only schools and districts, but also to subgroups. A subgroup exists when 30 or more students who share a common demographic are enrolled in the same school or district. Every subgroup within a school or district must also meet AYP. For example, one subgroup within a district might be Pacific Islanders. There could be 18 Pacific Islanders in one school and 12 Pacific Islanders in another. Since there are fewer than 30 in each school, neither school would have to count the Pacific Islanders as a subgroup. However, since there would be 30 Pacific Islanders in the district, the district must count them as a subgroup. If that subgroup fails to make AYP, then the district would fail to meet AYP. The goal is to ensure that the performance of each subgroup is just as important as the performance of the other student groups in the school and the district as a whole.

My child has special needs. Is he/she tested differently?

The State of Kansas allows for a variety of accommodations for children with special needs, which could include a read-aloud of the assessment by trained staff or even the use of a different test format known as the Kansas Assessment of Modified Measures (KAMM). A guide to these accommodations is available at the following website:

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2365>

How do participation, graduation and attendance rates affect AYP?

All three of these are factored in along with the test scores when determining whether or not a school or district has made AYP. At least 95 percent of students must participate in the reading and math assessments. The attendance rates for schools, districts, and even the state must be above 90 percent or show improvement over the previous year. Finally, high school graduation rates must be above 75 percent or show improvement over the previous year.

Will my child’s school be shut down if it keeps failing to meet AYP?

The goal of No Child Left Behind is not to shut down underperforming schools. Rather, the goal is to help schools succeed. To that end, schools that have not made AYP for two years in a row are placed on improvement.

Where can I see how specific schools have performed in recent years?

Public access to previous assessment performance can be found on the following website:

<http://online.ksde.org/rcard/>

What can I do to help my child excel on state assessments?

There are a number of ways to help your child do their best on state assessments. Parents can help their kids focus by giving them healthy foods, ensuring they get plenty of rest, and by monitoring their time watching TV as opposed to doing homework. Parents can also take a more proactive role by visiting with teachers to find out more about what their child is learning.