District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Assessment and Accountability Manual

Office of the
State Superintendent of Education

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District of Columbia
Assessment and Accountability Manual

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The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) issues this manual to local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, parents, and the public to provide information regarding the statewide assessment and accountability system in the District of Columbia.

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I. Introduction

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, Public law 107-100), requires the District of Columbia to annually determine whether schools, districts, and the state have made adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goal of having all students meet rigorous state academic standards by the 2013-2014 school year. Each year, the performance of all students in the school, local education agency (LEA), and state is measured using the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS). The results are compared against annual performance targets to determine whether the school, LEA, or state is making AYP.

A requirement of the federal law is that all schools and LEAs, whether they receive Title I funding or not, receive an annual AYP determination. In addition, prescribed sanctions are applied to schools and LEAs receiving Title I funds if they do not meet AYP. Non-Title I schools are accountable for meeting AYP, although they are not subject to the sanctions outlined in NCLB.

Is AYP something new?

AYP is not a new concept. NCLB built on requirements that have been in place in federal law since 1994, requiring districts to determine the adequate yearly progress of their Title I schools through the use of a prescribed formula.

What does it mean to say a school or LEA does not meet AYP this year?

A school or LEA that does not meet AYP should not be labeled as failing. The designation of not meeting AYP signals that, based on a number of indicators, the school or LEA is not on track for all students meeting the state standards for student achievement by the target year of 2014. The school or LEA as a whole may have strong academic performance, but the designation may be based on a single factor or a single subgroup.

Guiding Principles of Accountability

The federal government established principles to be used in guiding the individual states in the development of their accountability systems. The guiding principles include the methods and means for determining AYP, and are summarized below.

- **The accountability system includes all schools and districts in the state, and holds them to the same criteria.** All schools and LEAs receive timely information on AYP reports, and the system includes rewards and sanctions based on school or district performance.
- **The accountability system includes all students.** All students are expected to participate in the statewide assessment system, and schools and LEAs are accountable for students who have been served for the majority of the school year.
- **Every student is expected to make continuous and substantial growth so that all students are proficient on the state's academic standards by 2013-2014.** Schools, LEAs, and the state are accountable for having students meet the annual targets, including the students who are English language learners, students in poverty, and students with disabilities.
- **Accountability is based primarily on academic assessments in reading and mathematics** and also identifies additional measures, all of which are to be assessed annually. In the accountability system, assessments measure student achievement of state content standards in

reading and mathematics. Additional factors of attendance or graduation rates will be included in the determination of AYP.

- **The accountability system produces reliable and valid decisions** about whether a group of students, a school, or an LEA meets AYP. These decisions include provisions for allowing for changes in a school's population and also protection of student confidentiality.

These principles are among the ten used by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) in developing the Consolidated State Application Accountability workbook used by each of the states in applying for federal approval of accountability plans. All ten can be found in the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook.

II. DC Comprehensive Assessment System

Since 2006, the annual assessment system for the District of Columbia has been the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS), which is given in the spring of each year. The assessments are aligned to the District of Columbia Learning Standards. These academic content standards, which have been approved by the State Board of Education, define the knowledge, concept, and skills that students should know at each grade level. It is expected that schools teach students every content standard, but it's not feasible for the DC CAS to fully assess every standard every year – the test would simply be too long. For that reason, OSSE cycles through its standards to ensure that all standards are periodically assessed and that the assessment system fully measures the DC Learning Standards.

Reading and mathematics assessments are required for all students in grades 3 through 8 and 10. Students in grades 5 and 8 also participate in a science assessment; high school students taking biology participate in a biology assessment; and students in grades 4, 7, and 10 take a composition assessment. The composition and science assessments are not used in the calculation of AYP. The DC CAS includes both multiple choice and short answer questions (commonly referred to as "constructed response"). Assessments at each grade consist of approximately 65 items. Approximately fifty items are "operational" items that are included in the student's score and approximately 15 items are "field-test" items to determine whether they are appropriate to use in future assessments. The specific field-test items will vary across students' assessments in each grade each year; they do not contribute to a student's score.

Each year OSSE releases the DC CAS Resource Guide that provides more information about which standards will be addressed in that year's assessment.

The DC Learning Standards are available online:

Mathematics: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/standards/math_guide_to_standards.pdf

Reading: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/standards/reading_guide_to_standards.pdf

Other subjects: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/cwp/view,a,1274,q,561249.asp

III. Scoring of Assessments

The District of Columbia has defined four levels of academic achievement – Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. Within each grade, OSSE has defined performance level descriptors (PLDs). These PLDs provide information about what a student's performance level means in terms of mastery of the DC Learning Standards. The performance level descriptors are available online.

Each test is scored by the test vendor and receives a raw score of the number of operational items answered correctly, including the number of points received for constructed response items. Raw scores are then converted into scale scores in order to have comparable results from year to year. The conversion from raw to scale scores changes slightly each year based on statistical modeling to equate the results from year to year. Certain points along the scale have been set as the cut-points to distinguish between the academic achievement levels (i.e., Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic). These cut scores do not change; they were established in 2006 by the then DC Board of Education. Cut scores are available in Appendix B.

Examples of Score Conversion

1. In 2009, Sam received 42 out of 60 possible points on the grade 5 mathematics assessment. In 2009, a score of 42 points on the grade 5 mathematics assessment converted to a scale score of 561. Based on the cut scores established by the State Board of Education, 561 is above the proficiency cut score of 560 and below the advanced cut score of 574 for grade 5. Thus, Sam scored proficient on the mathematics assessment.

2. In 2009, James received 22 points out of 60 possible points on the grade 5 mathematics assessment. In 2009, a score of 22 points converted to a scale score of 541. The below basic achievement level ranges from 500 to 542 scale score points. Thus, James scored below basic on the mathematics assessment.

3. In 2009, Sandy received 53 out of 60 possible points on the grade 5 mathematics assessment, which converts to a scale score of 576. The advanced achievement level ranges from 575 to 599. Thus, Sandy scored advanced on the mathematics assessment.

Example	Student	Raw score	Scale score	Achievement level
1.	Sam	42	561	Proficient
2.	James	22	541	Below basic
3.	Sandy	53	576	Advanced

IV. DC CAS Alternate Assessment

All students, including students with disabilities, must participate in the state assessment system. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may participate in the DC CAS Alternate Assessment (DC CAS-Alt) rather than participate in the general assessment, DC CAS.

In order to participate in the DC CAS-Alt, a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must first determine that the DC CAS-Alt is the appropriate assessment. In evaluating the appropriateness of the assessment, the IEP team must consider the following:

- Does the student have a current IEP?
- Does the student have a documented significant cognitive disability that specifies goals and objectives in the IEP?
- Does the student's curriculum differ significantly from that of their non-disabled peers?
- Does the student require explicit and ongoing instruction in functional skills? Functional skills include communication, self care, home living, social and interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, and health and safety. The student's IEP and course of study must reflect such need and curriculum.
- Does the student require extensive and substantial modifications of general education curriculum?
- Does the student require extensive support to perform and participate meaningfully and productively in daily activities in school, home, community, and work environments?
- Is the student unable to participate in the DC CAS (e.g. demonstrate knowledge and skills), even with accommodations?

If the DC CAS-Alt is determined to be the appropriate assessment, the parent or guardian must be specifically informed that their child will be tested on alternate achievement standards and any possible outcomes that may result.

After the registration period, OSSE reviews registration data to ensure that students are appropriately assigned to the DC CAS-Alt. For example, OSSE verifies that appropriate documentation has been completed and attached to a student's IEP.

The DC CAS-Alt is a portfolio assessment; teachers assemble work by the student over the course of the year. OSSE provides training on the administration of the DC CAS-Alt every fall to teachers of students taking the DC CAS-Alt. Teachers compile 3-5 pieces of evidence for each of three entries in reading, three entries in math, and three entries in science (grades 5,8, or 10).

The DC CAS-Alt is linked to grade-level content and based on alternate achievement standards. The District of Columbia defined the same four levels of achievement on the DC CAS-Alt as exist for the DC CAS (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic). Alternate achievement standards set an expectation of performance that differs in complexity from the grade-level achievement standards used in the DC

CAS. They are designed to be appropriately challenging for the population of students taking the DC CAS-Alt. The U.S. Department of Education requires that the alternate academic achievement standards are aligned with a state's academic content standards and promote access to the general curriculum. For more information, please see the U.S. Department of Education's Alternate Achievement Standards for Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Non-Regulatory Guidance.

NCLB requires that OSSE include no more than 1.0 percent of all tested students in the District who score proficient or above on the DC CAS-Alt in AYP determinations. Further information about this requirement is provided in section VI (page 18).

Each portfolio is scored by a team of trained educators. Each portfolio is scored by at least two educators. Students receive a raw score between 0 and 150, which is then translated into the four performance levels (Advanced, Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic).

V. Accountability Overview

OSSE uses the annual DC CAS and DC CAS-Alt results in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and 10 to determine whether every school and LEA has made AYP. Particular details of OSSE's accountability system are included in the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook that has been reviewed and approved by the State Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. The Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook can be found online.

In order to make an annual accountability determination, OSSE has defined several key features:

Defining elementary and secondary schools

For the purposes of setting academic targets for AYP, all public and public charter schools in the District of Columbia are classified as either elementary or secondary schools. Elementary and secondary schools have separate proficiency targets.

- Elementary schools include schools with a grade of 3, 4, and/or 5 that do not meet the criteria for secondary schools.
- Secondary schools are schools without grade 3 or 4 and with a grade above 6.

Under this definition, a school with grades K-7, K-8, or K-12 would be considered an elementary school. A school with grades 6-12 is considered a secondary school.

Full academic year

Every state is required to define what constitutes a full academic year (FAY) and only those students who meet that definition are included in the school's or LEA's proficiency calculation. A full academic year definition holds LEAs and schools accountable for the performance of only those students they have had the opportunity to educate for an entire school year.

In the District of Columbia, FAY is defined as being enrolled on the official enrollment day in October (October 5, or the first business day after October 5) AND being enrolled on the first day of the assessment window (generally late April) AND remaining enrolled for 85 percent of instructional days between the October date and the April date.

Only students who meet the FAY definition for their school will be included in AYP proficiency calculations for the school, the LEA, and the state. Students who do not meet the FAY definition for the school but do meet FAY for the LEA will be included in AYP proficiency calculations for the LEA and the state. Students who do not meet the FAY definition for the school or LEA but do meet it for the state will be included in AYP proficiency calculations for the state. Students who meet the FAY definition for the school, LEA, or the state will not be included in AYP calculations. All students, regardless of whether they meet the FAY definition, are included in report card data that are publicly reported.

LEAs submit enrollment information from October and April to OSSE, and OSSE uses those data to determine which students should be attributed to AYP calculations. OSSE produces two reports annually for each school and LEA – an AYP Report that includes only FAY students for the school or LEA, and the Report Card, which includes all students enrolled in the school or LEA.

Examples of Full Academic Year

1. Mark was enrolled in Washington Elementary School for the entire school year from August to June. Mark will count for AYP calculations for the school, the LEA, and the state.

2. Sarah started the year at Washington Elementary School but transferred in January to Lincoln Elementary School, another school in the same LEA. Sarah will count for AYP proficiency calculations for the LEA and the state, but not for Washington School or Lincoln School.

3. Robert started the year at Jefferson Public Charter School but transferred to Washington Elementary School in February, a school in a different LEA. Robert will count for AYP proficiency calculations for the state, but not at Jefferson School, Washington School, or the LEA.

4. Cynthia started the year at Washington Elementary School, but in November transferred to Jefferson Public Charter School. Two weeks later, Cynthia decided to return to Washington Elementary School and finished the year there. Because Cynthia was enrolled in October AND in April AND was enrolled for at least 85 percent of instructional days, Cynthia will count for AYP calculations for the school, the LEA, and the state.

5. James moved to the District of Columbia from Maryland in December and enrolled at Washington Elementary School. James will not count for AYP proficiency calculations, but his proficiency scores will be included in report card data.

Example	**October 5**	**First day of testing**	**85% of days**	**FAY**
1.	Washington Elementary	Washington Elementary	Washington Elementary	Washington Elementary, LEA, & State
2.	Washington Elementary	Lincoln Elementary	LEA	LEA & State
3.	Jefferson Public Charter	Washington Elementary	State	State
4.	Washington Elementary	Washington Elementary	Washington Elementary	Washington Elementary, LEA & State
5.	Not enrolled	Washington Elementary	No	No

Subgroups

A key component of NCLB is subgroup accountability. Not only must the school and LEA overall be making adequate yearly progress, but every subgroup within every school and LEA must make AYP. Every state is required to identify the major racial and ethnic groups for which it will hold its schools and LEAs responsible. In addition, the U.S. Department requires that certain disadvantaged groups are included. The following list contains all possible subgroups for which a school, LEA, or the state may be held accountable in the District of Columbia:

- All students in the school
- African-American students
- American Indian/Native American students
- Asian/Pacific Islander students
- Hispanic students
- White students
- Students with disabilities
- English language learners (ELL)
- Economically disadvantaged students

Minimum group size

Every state is required to identify the minimum number of students necessary for the group to be included in proficiency, participation, and reporting calculations at the school, LEA, and state levels. This is done to ensure that the data are valid and reliable and that schools and LEAs are not held responsible for minor fluctuations that naturally occur with very small populations. OSSE has defined the minimum group size (commonly referred to as the "n size") as the following:

- Proficiency: 25 students
- Participation: 40 students
- Reporting[1]: 10 students

A school with at least 25 students who meet the full academic year definition in any of the subgroups listed above will be held responsible for that subgroup in its AYP determinations.

All students who meet the full academic year definition are included in AYP determinations. All students are included in the "all students" group and in any applicable subgroups that have at least 24 other students. If the student's subgroup is not greater than 25 students at the school, the subgroup's performance may be included in the LEA's AYP determination if the LEA has at least 25 students in that subgroup. If the LEA does not include 25 students for that subgroup, the performance is included in the state's AYP determination.

[1] Reporting refers to the minimum group size required to include on the school or LEA Report Card.

Example of Minimum Group Size

Sam is an African-American student who has an IEP and receives free lunch, and Sam is a full academic year student at his school. At Sam's school, there are 52 other African-American students, 23 other students with disabilities, and 40 other students who receive free lunch. Sam's score will be included in the AYP calculation for the all students group, the African-American subgroup, and the economically disadvantaged subgroup. Because there are fewer than 25 students with disabilities, the school will not be held accountable for the students with disabilities subgroup. However, at the LEA level, there are 320 other African-American students, 89 other students with disabilities, and 210 students who receive free or reduced lunch. Sam's score will be included in the LEA's AYP calculation for the all students group, the African-American subgroup, the students with disabilities subgroup, and the economically disadvantaged subgroup. In addition, Sam's score will be included in the AYP calculation for the state in all of these groups as well.

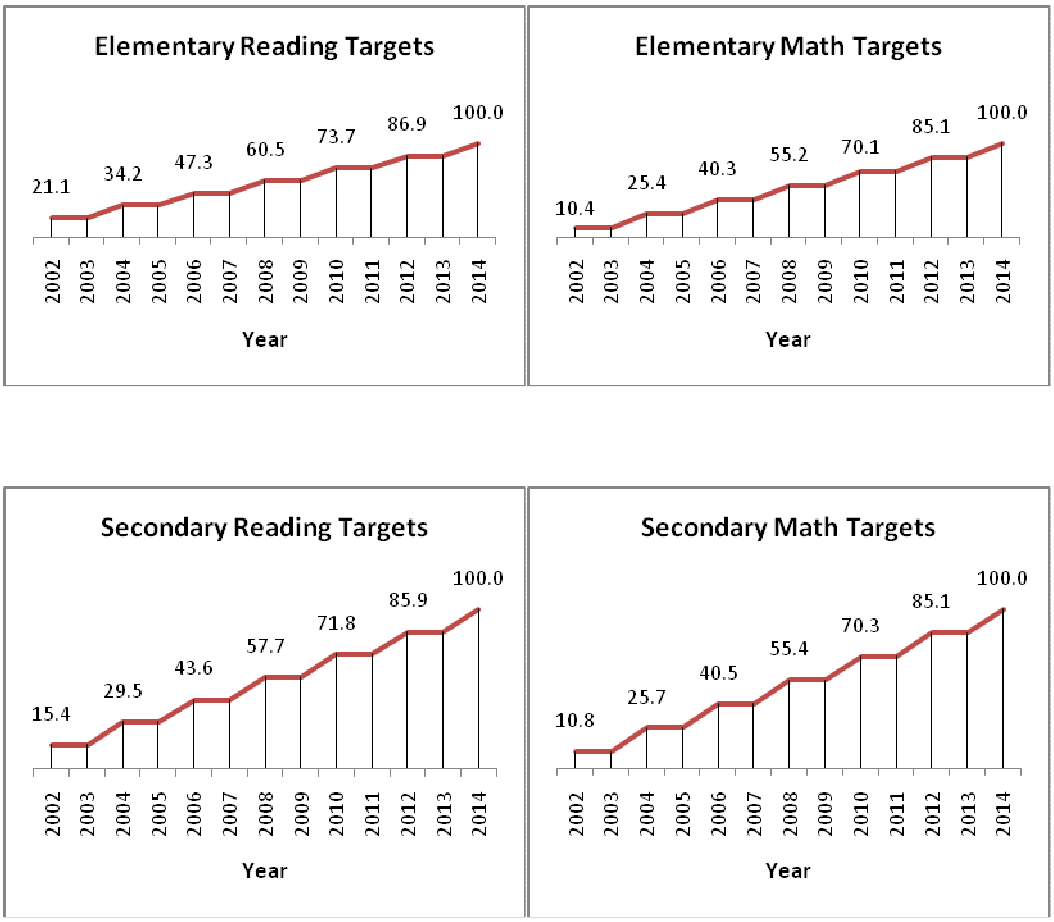
Bonnie is an Hispanic student, an English language learner, receives free lunch, and is a full academic year student at her school. At Bonnie's school, there are 74 other Hispanic students, 24 other English language learners, and 5 other students who receive free or reduced lunch. Bonnie's score will be included in the AYP calculation for the all students group, the Hispanic subgroup, and the English language learners subgroup for her school. In the LEA, there are 124 other Hispanic students, 42 English language learners, and 18 other students who receive free or reduced lunch. At the LEA level, Bonnie's score will be included in the AYP calculation for the all students group, the Hispanic subgroup, and the English language learners subgroup. In the state, there are 920 Hispanic students, 231 English language learners, and 109 students who receive free or reduced lunch. At the state level, Bonnie's score will be included in the AYP calculation for the all students group, the Hispanic subgroup, the English language learners subgroup, and the economically disadvantaged subgroup.

Proficiency

NCLB requires that each state set annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for the percentage of students who score proficient or above on the statewide reading and mathematics assessments in order for the school or LEA to make AYP. The starting points are set according to a prescribed method in federal statute and must increase over time and at equal intervals, but not necessarily to increase annually, with an AMO of 100 percent (all students scoring proficient or above) by 2013-2014.

The academic targets in the District of Columbia increase every two years. There are different targets for reading and for mathematics and for elementary and secondary schools.

Figure 1. Annual measurable objectives

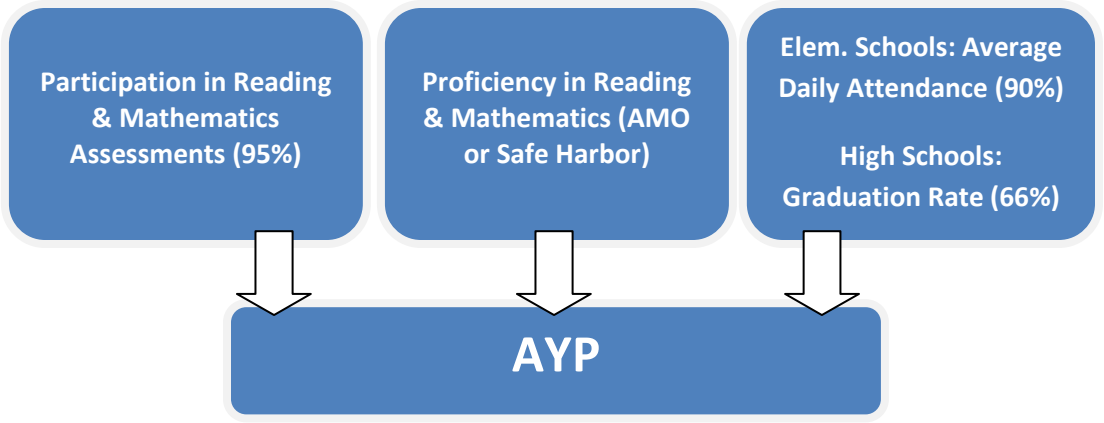


<u>2010-2011 targets for elementary schools</u>
Reading: 73.69%
Math: 70.14%

<u>2010-2011 targets for secondary schools</u>
Reading: 71.79%
Math: 70.27%

VI. Adequate Yearly Progress

Figure 2. AYP components



AYP includes three principal academic indicators:

- Academic achievement on the DC CAS in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and 10
- Participation in the assessment system
- Other academic indicator: Under NCLB, states are required to define at least one other academic indicator for determining AYP. For LEAs and schools with grade 12, states are required to use the graduation rate. For all other schools and LEAs, the District of Columbia selected attendance as the other indicator.

As shown in figure 4 (page 23), for a school or LEA as a whole and all subgroups to meet AYP, it must meet the statewide participation and annual measurable objectives in reading and mathematics, and the school or LEA must meet the statewide target for either attendance (in elementary and middle schools) or graduation rates (for high schools).

If any subgroup of students or the whole student body in a school does not meet the targets, or does not make sufficient progress toward the targets, the school is designated as not meeting AYP. The same requirements apply to each LEA and to the state.

Participation

A hallmark of NCLB and accountability in general is full participation in the statewide assessment system. As the U.S. Department of Education noted, "participation in assessments makes our schools more inclusive, responsive, and fair in meeting the needs of struggling students. Every student should count, but if they don't take the tests, they can't be counted."[2]

All students in grades 3-8, and 10 must participate in the annual assessments each year in reading and mathematics (grades 5 and 8 must also participate in science; grades 4 and 7 must also participate in

[2] http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2004/03/03292004.html

composition; high school biology students must participate in biology). Students repeating grade 10 must participate in the DC CAS and will be included in both participation and proficiency calculations.

Schools and LEAs are required to have at least 95 percent of all enrolled students (not simply students meeting the full academic year definition) participate in the reading and mathematics assessments in order to make AYP, both for the "all students" group and any subgroup with at least 40 students enrolled on the first day of testing.

Student participation on statewide assessments is calculated as the number of valid test scores from all students enrolled in the school on the first day of testing in April divided by the number of students enrolled on the first day of testing in April minus the number of students who had a medical emergency during the testing window for the assessment. Each LEA is required to submit to OSSE by June 1 of each year a full roster of every student enrolled in the LEA on the first day of testing.

Exception for recently arrived students

OSSE and USDE recognize that ELL students who have recently arrived in the United States need some time to adjust to their new surroundings. Recently arrived English language learner (ELL) students, who are ELL students in their first 12 months of schooling in the United States, are exempted from one administration of the reading test. USDE limited the number of times recently arrived ELL students may be exempted from state assessments in reading or language arts to one test administration.[3] OSSE strongly believes that all ELL students – including recently arrived ELL students – need to be included in assessments, with necessary accommodations, and visible in accountability systems in order to improve both instruction and achievement of this population.

Recently arrived ELL students must take the mathematics and science assessments. They may be exempt from one administration of the reading test, provided they take the English language proficiency assessment (ACCESS for ELLs) provided by the state and, in doing so, will meet the participation requirement for the reading test. Recently arrived ELL students will be excluded from the proficiency calculations for that school and LEA for mathematics and reading. If a student has not taken the ACCESS for ELLs test, the student will be considered a non-participant if the student did not take the DC CAS reading test. See section IX (page 22) for more information.

[3] http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/lepguidance.doc

Example of mathematics participation calculation

A school has 74 valid scores for students enrolled on the first day of testing. The school reports 80 total students enrolled on the first day of testing. Of those 80 students, one had a medical emergency.

$$\frac{\text{74 scores}}{\text{80 students} - \text{1 medical emergency}} = 93.6\%$$

Example of reading participation calculation

A school has 74 valid scores for students enrolled on the first day of testing. The school reports 80 total students enrolled on the first day of testing. Of those 80 students, 4 were recently arrived first-year ELL students without a reading test; 3 of those had taken the ACCESS for ELLs. One additional student had a medical emergency during the testing window.

$$\frac{\text{74 valid scores + 3 ELL students with ACCESS test}}{\text{80 students} - \text{1 medical emergency}} = 97.5\%$$

Students who do not answer enough questions to arrive at a valid score will be counted as non-participants. Students must answer at least five questions to arrive at a valid score. Students submitting tests with at least five answered questions will be included as participants. Those with fewer than five answers will be counted as non-participants.

Multi-year averaging

There are some cases in which a school falls short of the 95 percent participation rate despite the school's efforts to have all students participate. In that case, OSSE averages the current year participation rate with the previous two years' participation rates. If that average is more than 95 percent, then the school, LEA, or subgroup is considered to have met the participation rate requirement for the current year.

Example of averaging

Washington Elementary School had 97 percent of students participate in the assessment. However, the white students' subgroup only had 94 percent participation. In the previous year, the white students' subgroup had 96 percent participation. Averaging these two rates gives a participation rate of 95 percent, so Washington Elementary School's white students' subgroup met the participation target for the current year.

Proficiency

As noted above, the entire school or LEA, including every subgroup with more than 25 students meeting the full academic year definition, must meet the AMO proficiency target. Any school, LEA, or subgroup

that does not meet the AMO target may still make AYP through a federally permitted mechanism called "Safe Harbor."

Safe Harbor

Schools and districts that do not meet the AMO may qualify as meeting AYP under another provision of the NCLB law called safe harbor. Using safe harbor, a school, LEA, or subgroup may make AYP provided it reduces the percentage of students scoring below proficient by at least 10 percent, compared to the prior year, as long as that school, LEA, or subgroup also meets the target for the other academic indicator (graduation or attendance rate) and meets the 95 percent participation rate.

Schools and LEAs can determine safe harbor targets using their previous year test scores. Safe harbor targets will be different for each subgroup within a school or LEA if the proficiency rate was different for those subgroups in the previous year.

Example of Safe Harbor

In 2009, Washington Elementary School scored 40 percent proficient or above on reading. This year's academic target is 72 percent. Washington Elementary is concerned they won't reach the target, so they want to determine their safe harbor target. To meet safe harbor, Washington Elementary must decrease by 10 percent the number of students coring basic or below basic from the previous year.

If 40 percent of students scored proficient or above in the previous year, then 60 percent of students scored non-proficient. Ten percent of 60 percent is 6 percent. Thus, Washington Elementary must increase its overall percentage of full academic year students scoring proficient or above from 40 to 46 percent of students, as well as having 95 percent of all students participate in the reading assessment and meet the other academic indicator (attendance rate) in order to make AYP by safe harbor for that subject.

In addition, Washington Elementary School's economically disadvantaged subgroup scored 35 percent proficient or above on reading last year. That means 65 percent of students were non-proficient. Reducing that number by 10 percent means reducing it by 6.5 percentage points. Thus, at least 41.5 percent of economically disadvantaged students meeting the full academic year definition must score proficient or above on the reading test, 95 percent of all economically disadvantaged students must participate in the reading assessments, and this subgroup must meet the other academic indicator (attendance rate) in order to make AYP by safe harbor in the economically disadvantaged subgroup.

Figure 3. Calculating Safe Harbor Target	
(1) Percentage proficient, 2009	35%
(2) Percentage not proficient (100 - percent proficient)	65%
(3) 10 percent of value in row 2	6.5%
(4) Add row 1 and 3	35% + 6.5%
2010 Safe Harbor Target	41.5%

Cap on students scoring proficient or above on the DC CAS-Alt

Federal regulations stipulate that no more than 1.0 percent of all students in tested grades in a state may count as proficient or advanced on an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for the purposes of calculating AYP. If the cap is exceeded, OSSE must adjust the scores of some students from proficient to non-proficient to comply with the 1 percent cap. These changes only impact the school and LEA proficiency rates; student reports reflecting each student's earned score will be produced and sent to schools to be distributed to parents and used by educators.

The reclassified scores will be factored into the school's and LEA's AYP determination for the all students group, the students with disabilities subgroup, and any other subgroup in which the student belongs.

Please note that while the state may not exceed the 1 percent cap, an LEA may request an exemption form the state to exceed the cap (provided the state does not therefore exceed the cap).

If the state exceeds the 1 percent cap, OSSE will work with LEAs to determine the scores that must be reclassified from proficient to non-proficient. The goal will be to preserve a school or LEA's AYP status prior to reclassification. That is, if a school made AYP before reclassification is necessary, OSSE will attempt to ensure that the reclassification does not result in the school or LEA no longer making AYP. In 2009, because of this strategy, no school did not make AYP as a result of the 1 percent cap.

Small schools

NCLB requires that all schools be included in the accountability system. Some schools are so small, however, that they do not have even 25 students in the tested grades. In order to hold these schools accountable, OSSE uses a method called multi-year averaging. This method involves combining two years worth of data to get a minimum group size of at least 25 students.

Example of multi-year averaging for small schools

Monroe Academy is a K-3 school. This year there were 20 students in grade 3. In order to determine whether Monroe Academy made AYP, OSSE combines the scores of those 20 students in 2009 with the scores of the 18 grade 3 students from 2008. If this combined proficiency rate is above the elementary target for 2009, the school makes AYP. If not, this combined proficiency rate is then compared with the combined proficiency for the 2007 and 2006 assessments in order to determine whether safe harbor has been met.

VII. Other Academic Indicators

States are required to establish targets for the other academic indicators used to determine whether a school has met adequate yearly progress. NCLB requires states to include graduation in determining AYP for high schools. This is also the other academic indicator used to determine AYP. The District of Columbia selected attendance as the other required indicator for elementary and middle schools.

Attendance

Average daily attendance is calculated by using the attendance rate for the entire school year – from the first day of school to the last day of school – and using all students in compulsory grades (K-12) in the school (not only the tested grades). If a school's average daily attendance rate is at least 90 percent, it makes AYP for the additional indicator. If a school's average daily attendance is less than 90 percent, but the school demonstrates a one percentage point increase from the previous year, then the school makes AYP for the additional indicator.

Graduation

For any school with a grade 12 and diploma-granting capabilities, the additional indicator is graduation rate. The graduation rate goal starting with the class of 2009-2010 is 85.0 percent. If a school or LEA does not meet or exceed the goal but demonstrates a one percentage point increase from the previous year, then the school makes AYP for the additional indicator.

Graduation rate is considered a "lagged" indicator in order to include students who receive diplomas in the summer after the school year ends and so that AYP determinations may be made prior to the start of the subsequent school year. This means that data from the previous year are used for determining AYP for the current year. In other words, it is a high school's 2008 graduation rate that is used for determining 2009 AYP.

OSSE uses the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics' "leaver" rate for determining graduation rate, which is shown below.

Note: All states, including the District of Columbia, are moving to a new method for calculating graduation rates, called the "four-year adjusted cohort" rate. The District of Columbia will first use this new method for the graduating class of 2011 and AYP calculations for the 2011-2012 school year. Further details about this rate are provided on the OSSE website.

The "leaver" method, which is currently implemented, uses the following calculation:

Example for Class of 2008

$$\frac{\text{Total Graduates in 2008}}{\text{(Total Graduates in 2008 + 12th grade dropouts in 07-08 + 11th grade dropouts in 06-07 + 10th grade dropouts in 05-06 + 9th grade dropouts in 04-05)}}$$

VIII. Students with Disabilities

Both NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require that students with disabilities participate in all statewide assessments and that they be included in AYP determinations. Students with disabilities benefit instructionally from participation in the assessment system. In order to guarantee that appropriate resources are dedicated to helping these students succeed, appropriate measurement of their achievement must be part of the accountability system.[4]

All students with disabilities must participate in the assessment system. A small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the DC-Alt (see page 7). Most students with disabilities should participate in the general DC CAS, with or without accommodations. Information on accommodations for students with disabilities is available in the District of Columbia Test Accommodations Manual. Only accommodations that do not alter the construct that is being assessed are permitted. For example, reading the reading test would undermine the very skills the test is designed to measure and is, therefore, not permitted. Students who receive accommodations that are considered modifications will be counted as non-participants when determining AYP.

Students with 504 plans are not counted as part of the students with disabilities subgroup. Some students with disabilities are considered "ungraded" students. These students must also participate in the annual statewide assessment, and are assigned to a testing grade level based on their year of birth. For accountability purposes, students are attributed for accountability to the school and LEA at which they receive instruction.

In accordance with Section 300.401(b) of the IDEA regulations, some students with disabilities may be placed as a result of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process in a private school (Non-Public Placement). The assessment scores for a student in a Non-Public Placement are used in determining AYP for the LEAs out of which the IEP Team placed the student into the private school or facility.

Students who exit special education

OSSE includes the scores of students who are no longer receiving special education services in the students with disabilities subgroup in the proficiency (but not participation or the other academic indicator) rate for school, LEA, and state AYP determinations for two years after they stop receiving services. These students will not be included in the n size for the subgroup to determine whether the students with disabilities subgroup met the proficiency n size of 25 students. Public reports will not include these students in the students with disabilities subgroup.

[4] For more information, please see http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/altguidance.pdf.

IX. English Language Learners

ELL students must participate in all statewide assessments, regardless of their English language proficiency. An ELL student may receive accommodations on the DC CAS based on that student's performance on the annual English language proficiency test (ACCESS for ELLs). More information on accommodations for ELL students is available in the District of Columbia Test Accommodations Manual. All statewide assessments are administered solely in English. Only accommodations that do not alter the construct that is being assessed are permitted. For example, reading the reading test would undermine the very skills the test is designed to measure and is, therefore, not permitted. Students who receive accommodations that are considered modifications will be counted as non-participants when determining AYP.

All ELL students are required to participate in the annual ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency assessment. Once an ELL student achieves a score of 5 or higher on ACCESS, the student will exit ELL status.

Recently arrived students

OSSE and USDE recognize that LEP students who have recently arrived in the United States need some time to adjust to their new surroundings. As noted above on page 15, ELL students who are in their first 12 months being enrolled in schools in the United States (recently arrived) are exempt from participation in one administration of the DC CAS reading assessment. The exemption is limited to one time because the ability to analyze student performance data is an important vehicle for improving instruction and closing the achievement gap for English language learners and it is a basic principle of NCLB that assessment is central to identifying needs and driving educational change. All ELL students must participate annually in the English language proficiency test (ACCESS for ELLs). ELL students who are exempt from the reading assessment under this rule will be counted as participants for the purposes of AYP if they participate in ACCESS for ELLs.

All ELL students must participate in the mathematics assessment; no exemption exists for these students. Scores earned on one administration of the mathematics assessment for recently arrived students will not be counted as part of proficiency rates for AYP. USDE based its decision not to extend exemptions on participation in mathematics assessments during students' first year in U.S. schools on findings from rigorous research on math accommodations. For example, research has shown that the performance-gap for ELL students decreases or even disappears on math items of the same rigor when those items have relatively lower language demands, such as math computation (Abedi, Hofstetter & Baker, 2001). These regulations recognize that valuable data to inform instruction can be obtained when recently arrived ELL students take the mathematics assessment.

Students who exit ELL status

ELL students who demonstrate English proficiency on the ACCESS for ELLs are exited from ELL services. The District of Columbia counts the scores of those students as part of the ELL subgroup for school, LEA, and state AYP determinations for two years after exit. These students will not be included in the n size for the subgroup to determine whether the ELL subgroup met the proficiency n size of 25 students. Public reports will not include these students in the ELL subgroup.

X. Exemptions from Testing

All students in grades 3-8 and 10 are required to participate in the annual statewide assessments, with two exceptions:

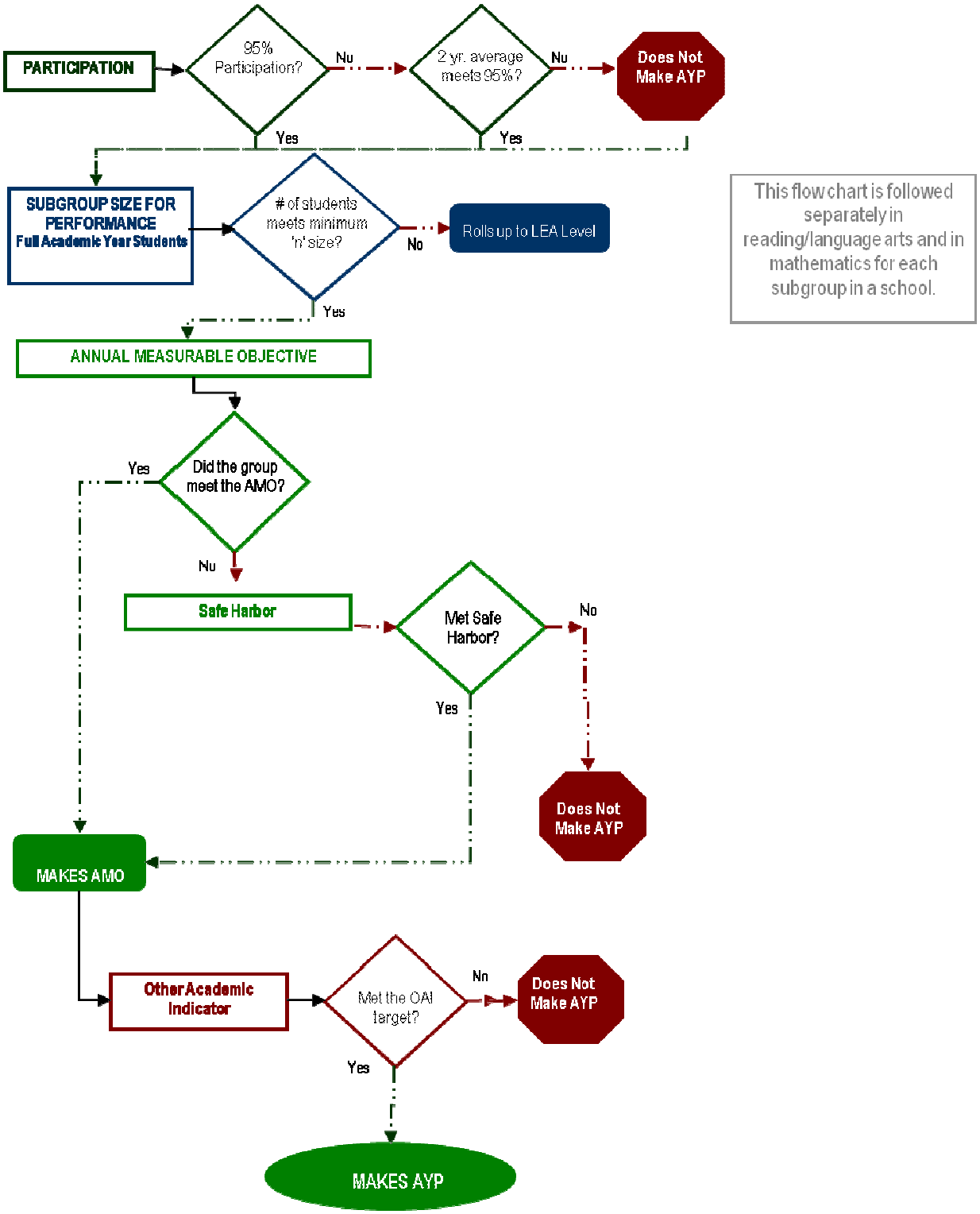
- Recently arrived students: As described above, recently arrived ELL students for whom it is their first time participating in the reading assessment may be exempted and counted as a participant provided they take the ACCESS for ELLs.
- Medical emergencies: OSSE may grant a medical emergency exemption for students who, due to a medical emergency, are unable to participate in the assessment. Medical emergency exemption forms must be submitted by the school to the LEA, and the LEA will then submit the form to OSSE for approval. Medical emergency forms are available through OSSE's Office of Assessment and Accountability and in the District of Columbia State Test Security Guidelines. Such students are excluded from participation and proficiency calculations for the school and LEA AYP determinations.

XI. AYP and School Improvement Status

Once all proficiency, participation, and attendance or graduation determinations are complete, OSSE determines whether the school or LEA has met AYP for the year. Figure 4 provides a detailed explanation of the steps for AYP calculations. A school must meet all indicators for all applicable subgroups for both proficiency and participation in reading and mathematics and must meet the third indicator.

All schools and LEAs receive an annual AYP determination. Schools and LEAs receiving Title I funds that do not make AYP for two or more consecutive years are identified for improvement and are required to undertake specific actions detailed by law.

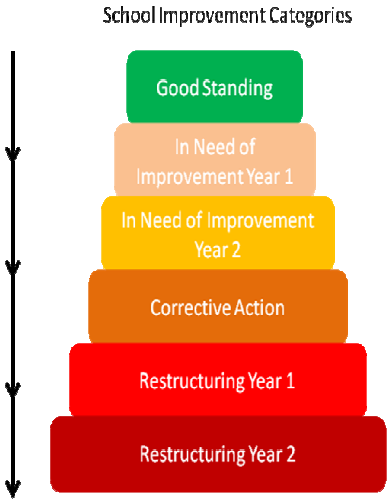
Figure 4: AYP Flow Chart



School Improvement

There are five levels of School Improvement Status: In Need of Improvement Year 1; In Need of Improvement Year 2; Corrective Action; Restructuring Year 1; and Restructuring Year 2.

Figure 5. School improvement categories



The first year a school does not make AYP in any category it does not enter any school improvement status but remains in good standing. The second year in which a school does not make AYP in the same category (i.e., reading, mathematics, participation, or the other academic indicator), it is identified as "In Need of Improvement Year 1." Within a category, the reason for not making AYP does not need to be for the same reason.

For example, a school could miss AYP for the White and Hispanic subgroups in reading in year 1 and miss AYP for the economically disadvantaged subgroup in reading in year 2. Because the school missed AYP in reading for two consecutive years, it is identified for improvement.

Exiting or Advancing in School Improvement Status

Once identified for improvement, a school or LEA must make AYP for that category (in all relevant subgroups) for two consecutive years to no longer be identified for improvement. If the inability to make AYP is not in consecutive years, the school still advances to the next improvement level. If a school identified for improvement makes AYP one time, it remains in the same improvement level as the previous year. If the school makes AYP again the following year, the school exits improvement status. If it does not make AYP in that category, the school advances to the next improvement level.

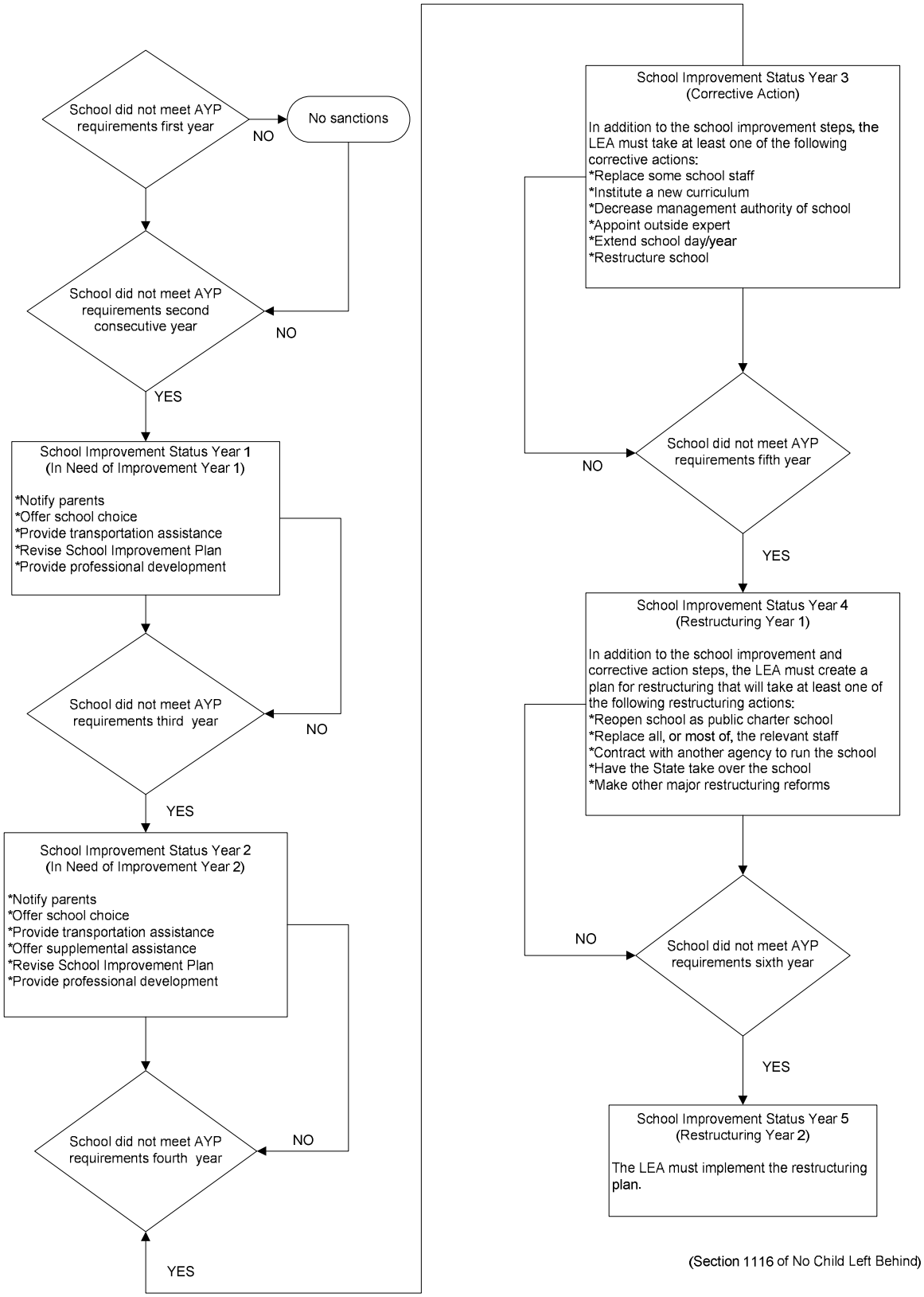
<u>Examples of School Improvement Status</u>

Lincoln Elementary did not make AYP in reading in 2004 because it missed the proficiency target for the "all students" group. In 2005, Lincoln Elementary did not make AYP in reading because it did not test 95 percent of its students, even though the school met the proficiency target. Lincoln Elementary was identified as In Need of Improvement Year 1.

Washington Elementary did not make AYP in mathematics due to the Hispanic subgroup in 2004. Washington Elementary did not make AYP in mathematics again in 2005, due to the students with disabilities subgroup, so Washington Elementary was identified as In Need of Improvement Year 1. In 2006, Washington Elementary made AYP in mathematics for all subgroups, so it remained In Need of Improvement Year 1. In 2007, Washington Elementary did not make AYP in mathematics for the economically disadvantaged subgroup and moved to "In Need of Improvement Year 2."

Figure 6 provides additional detail regarding the process for schools moving through the improvement timeline and the possible activities that are required for schools receiving Title I funds at each improvement category.

Figure 6. School improvement flow chart



LEA Improvement

OSSE is required to identify for improvement any LEA receiving Title I funds that does not make AYP for two consecutive years, using the same process described above for schools. There are three levels of LEA Improvement Status: In Need of Improvement Year 1; In Need of Improvement Year 2; and Corrective Action. If an LEA does not make AYP for two consecutive years, the LEA will enter improvement status.

OSSE determines LEA Improvement Status for DCPS and all multi-campus charters. Single campus charters receive a School Improvement Status rather than an LEA Improvement Status.

XII. Consolidated or New Schools

New schools

If a school is determined to be a "new school," it will be considered in good standing. OSSE defines a new school as follows:

If the LEA can demonstrate via petition that 50 percent or more of the grade spans or population have changed, OSSE will consider the school a "new school" for school improvement purposes and restart the school improvement timeline. OSSE will review all appropriate evidence to ensure the change was not made so as to avoid accountability.

Consolidated schools

OSSE defines a "consolidated school" as a school or campus that receives students from one or more sending schools or campuses that have merged or closed.

OSSE has determined that the receiving school's accountability status (school improvement, corrective action or restructuring) is the default status when schools are consolidated. For example, if the receiving school is in the first year of school improvement, that designation becomes the default baseline status of the consolidated school. In addition, the consolidated school's safe harbor targets will be calculated based on the scores of the pre-consolidation population of the school or campus (e.g., safe harbor targets are based on receiving school population only).

If a consolidation results in a change of 40 percent of the receiving school's population, an LEA may petition to have the school's safe harbor targets that will be used in determining AYP for the next school year recalculated based on the school's new population. In such cases, in the first year of consolidation, the school would receive the AYP determination of the receiving school. However, for the purposes of determining AYP via safe harbor for the year following the consolidation, OSSE would recalculate the safe harbor targets based on the consolidated population (i.e., based on the previous year's assessment results for all students from the sending and receiving schools that constitute the population of the consolidated school).

XIII. Appeals

LEAs are provided with preliminary AYP determinations before those determinations are made public, and LEAs have a defined two week window to submit an appeal if the LEA believes an error was made in determining AYP for the LEA or for any school within the LEA. Appeals should be based on questions about the accuracy of the data and must be specific so that the accuracy can be determined.

Appeals are filed with and reviewed by the Office of Assessment and Accountability. Determination letters are made public on OSSE's NCLB website (http://www.nclb.osse.dc.gov).

XIV. Public Reporting

OSSE makes AYP determinations and DC CAS scores available at http://www.nclb.osse.dc.gov. OSSE produces two different reports for each school and LEA:

- AYP report. This report contains the proficiency and participation data used to make the AYP determination for the school. Thus, the AYP report only includes full academic year students.

- Report card. This report contains information for all students enrolled at the school at the time of testing, regardless of their Full Academic Year status. AYP reports give important information about how schools are teaching children. The Report Card gives important information about how all students in the District of Columbia are learning.

OSSE will annually produce report cards for the state, LEAs, and schools that contain DC CAS information as well as other important academic indicators like truancy, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), etc. LEAs and schools will be responsible for posting and making available copies of these report cards, which will also be available through the DC Public Library. In addition to the subgroups noted on page 11, OSSE is required to publicly report on the performance and participation of the following groups:

- Male students
- Female students
- Migrant students

OSSE also produces individual student reports for each student with information about how the student performed on different types of questions and subjects LEAs are required to send the students' report home to parents. The student reports are also used by teachers to identify areas where students may need additional support. If a parent has not received a copy of his or her child's test report, the parent should first contact the school or LEA. If a parent remains unable to obtain his or her child's test report, the parent may contact the Office of Assessment and Accountability at (202) 741-0470 which will work with the LEA to provide the parent with the test report.

XV. Related Documents

Academic content standards in tested subject areas:

Mathematics:
http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/standards/Mathematics_guide_to_standards.pdf

Reading:
http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/standards/reading_guide_to_standards.pdf

Science: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/DCPS-horiz-science.pdf

Common Core standards: http://www.corestandards.org/

Accountability Workbook, DC:
http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/Accountability_Workbook_final_6_24_09.pdf

Guidance involving cohort graduation rate:
http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/District_of_Columbia_Adjusted_Cohort_Graduation_Rate_Guidance_December_2010.pdf

OSSE NCLB website: http://www.nclb.osse.dc.gov

Performance level descriptors, DC CAS: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/cwp/view,a,1274,q,561249.asp

Testing Accommodations Manual:
http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/DC_Testing_Accommodations_Manual.pdf

Test Security Guidelines:
http://osse.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/DC_CAS_State_test_security_guidelines_2010_112009.pdf

All links are listed at: http://osse.dc.gov/seo/cwp/view,a,1274,q,561249.asp

Appendix A. Amendments to Accountability Manual

Amendments to the accountability manual in January 2011 include changes to how tenth grade repeaters and schools with "new subgroups" are included in the accountability system. The edits reflect compliance with U.S. Department of Education regulations. Specific revisions:

Tenth grade repeater

Page 15, previously read: "Students repeating grade 10 must participate in the DC CAS, and will count towards participation rates for AYP. Students repeating grade 10 will not have their scores count towards proficiency rates at the subgroup, school, LEA, or state."

Now reads: "Students repeating grade 10 must participate in the DC CAS and will be included in both participation and proficiency calculations."

New subgroups

The section titled "New Subgroups" has been removed to comply with U.S. Department of Education regulations. Schools with a new subgroup of 25 or more students must meet the annual measureable objective. The state will no longer use multi-year averaging to determine a baseline for safe harbor.

Appendix B: Cut Scores for Proficiency

SUBJECT	GRADE	SCORE_MIN	SCORE_MAX	PROFICIENCY
M	3	300	339	Below Basic
M	3	340	359	Basic
M	3	360	375	Proficient
M	3	376	399	Advanced
M	4	400	442	Below Basic
M	4	443	457	Basic
M	4	458	473	Proficient
M	4	474	499	Advanced
M	5	500	542	Below Basic
M	5	543	559	Basic
M	5	560	574	Proficient
M	5	575	599	Advanced
M	6	600	635	Below Basic
M	6	636	653	Basic
M	6	654	667	Proficient
M	6	668	699	Advanced
M	7	700	735	Below Basic
M	7	736	751	Basic
M	7	752	769	Proficient
M	7	770	799	Advanced
M	8	800	835	Below Basic
M	8	836	849	Basic
M	8	850	867	Proficient
M	8	868	899	Advanced
M	10	900	932	Below Basic
M	10	933	950	Basic
M	10	951	970	Proficient
M	10	971	999	Advanced
R	3	300	338	Below Basic
R	3	339	353	Basic
R	3	354	372	Proficient
R	3	373	438	Advanced
R	4	400	438	Below Basic
R	4	439	454	Basic
R	4	455	471	Proficient
R	4	472	499	Advanced
R	5	500	539	Below Basic

R	5	540	555	Basic
R	5	556	572	Proficient
R	5	573	599	Advanced
R	6	600	639	Below Basic
R	6	640	654	Basic
R	6	655	671	Proficient
R	6	672	699	Advanced
R	7	700	738	Below Basic
R	7	739	755	Basic
R	7	756	767	Proficient
R	7	768	799	Advanced
R	8	800	839	Below Basic
R	8	840	855	Basic
R	8	856	869	Proficient
R	8	870	899	Advanced
R	10	900	939	Below Basic
R	10	940	955	Basic
R	10	956	969	Proficient
R	10	970	999	Advanced