
Arizona's School Accountability System 2005 *Technical Manual*



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1. Introduction

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires states to establish an accountability system to evaluate the performance of local public schools and school districts, including charter schools. Specifically, states are required to:

- Institute performance standards for reading/language arts, mathematics, and science.
- Develop and administer tests to measure whether students meet these standards. By the 2005-06 academic year, states must give tests in reading/language arts and math for grades three through eight. By the 2007-08 academic year, states must also administer a test to evaluate student performance in science in elementary (grades 3-5), middle (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 10-12).
- Establish a timeline to ensure that all students are proficient according to state standards by 2013-2014.
- Create a statewide accountability system to evaluate school progress in meeting the goals of the timeline, and issue report cards informing parents of school performance.

In 2001 Arizona voters also approved Proposition 301 that among other things called for a state accountability system for public schools. In 2001, Arizona also had in place state standards and a test to measure whether students met them: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS).

Since the passage of NCLB and Proposition 301 the staff of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has worked with scholars, school officials ranging from superintendents to teachers, and members of the public to develop an accountability system that fulfills the requirements of both laws. The result is a system that consists of two linked components. Arizona LEARNS was created to comply with Proposition 301. Its primary focus is on longitudinal change through time of student performance as measured by AIMS and the TerraNova tests. The system created to comply with NCLB, commonly referred to as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), provides a single-year snapshot of school performance as measured by AIMS. Table 1.1 provides a brief comparison of the two accountability systems.

The State of Arizona's complete plan to meet the requirements of NCLB is contained in the workbook submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. The workbook is available at <http://www.ade.az.gov/azlearns/workbook.asp>.

Table 1.1 Comparison of Arizona’s Accountability Systems

NCLB	Arizona LEARNS
Required by federal law	Required by state law
One-year snapshot of student performance	Longitudinal examination of student performance
Components of evaluation • AIMS scores • Percent students assessed • Attendance/Graduation rates	Components of evaluation • AIMS scores • Measure of Academic Progress • Graduation/dropout rates • AYP
Labels schools on a yes/no system	Labels schools on a graded scale: • Failing to meet academic standards • Underperforming • Performing • Highly performing • Excelling

2. Overview of the NCLB Evaluation System

This section provides an overview of the determination of adequate yearly progress (AYP). More detailed discussions of the methodology used to determine AYP, including descriptions of equations, algorithms, and data used are given in subsequent chapters.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that every public school and district in a state—as well as the state itself—be evaluated on three measures:

1. Progress toward meeting the goal of 100 percent proficiency in state standards;
2. Percentage of students assessed; and
3. An additional measure of school performance. NCLB mandates that for high schools this indicator be the graduation rate. States may select an alternative indicator for elementary schools. Arizona, along with many other states, has chosen attendance rate for the other indicator for elementary schools.

If an entity—school, district, or state—passes on all three measures, then it is deemed to have made adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Schools to Be Evaluated

All schools—including extremely small schools, new schools, and schools that only offer grades K-2—must receive an AYP determination. Similarly, although the state’s system for school accountability, Arizona LEARNS, allows alternative schools to be evaluated under different criteria, NCLB requires *all* public schools in the state to be given an AYP designation based on the same criteria.

Proficiency Standards

NCLB requires that every student in Arizona meet state standards in reading/language arts and mathematics—that is, pass AIMS—by the year 2013-2014. To further this goal, the state must set annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for each grade and subject evaluated. The annual measurable objectives describe the yearly growth in the fraction of students passing AIMS that is necessary for Arizona to reach the 100 percent requirement by 2013-2014. The AMOs are then used to set intermediate goals. To make AYP an entity must reach the intermediate goals for every subject in each grade it offers. If an entity fails to reach an intermediate goal, it still may be deemed to have made adequate yearly progress if it satisfies the safe harbor provisions that will be described later.

The Arizona Department of Education established the starting points, annual measurable objectives, and intermediate goals in the manner specified by the No Child Left Behind Act. To determine the baselines for each subject/grade combination, all schools in Arizona were ranked in descending order according to the percentage of students passing AIMS for that subject and grade. Then, cumulative enrollment was calculated adding upward from the bottom of the list of schools. The baseline was then set to be equal to the fraction of students passing AIMS for that

grade and subject in the school where the cumulative enrollment was equal to 20 percent of state enrollment for that grade. The data used for this calculation were AIMS results for the spring of 2002. As required by NCLB, students with invalid scores such as English language learners and special education students who received nonstandard accommodations were included in the setting of the baselines.

Table 2.1 provides a hypothetical example of how the baselines were established. In this case, we assume there are only eight schools in the state that offer third grade.

Table 2.1. Calculation of Performance Starting Points

Grade	Subject	School	Percent pass	Enrollment	Cumulative percent of total state enrollment
3	Math	1	100	10	100
		2	75	40	95
		3	70	30	75
		4	61	30	60
		5	55	20	45
		6	48	30	35
		7	32	20	20
		8	15	20	10

These eight schools are ranked in descending order by the percentage of their students who passed the AIMS for third grade math (fourth column). The third grade enrollment for each school is given in the fifth column. Starting from the bottom of the list, enrollment is summed until the total equals 20 percent of the state's total enrollment for that grade. In table 2.1 this point is reached at School Seven, where the cumulative sum equals forty students ($40/200 = 0.20$). The percent of students passing for School 7 (32 percent) is then taken as the starting point for the state for third grade math.

Table 2.2 provides the starting points for each of the subjects and grades evaluated in 2003. These served as the AMOs for the 2004 AYP determinations.

Table 2.2 Starting Points for State Performance Standards

Subject/Grade	Reading	Mathematics
Grade 3	44	32
Grade 5	32	20
Grade 8	31	7
High School	23	10

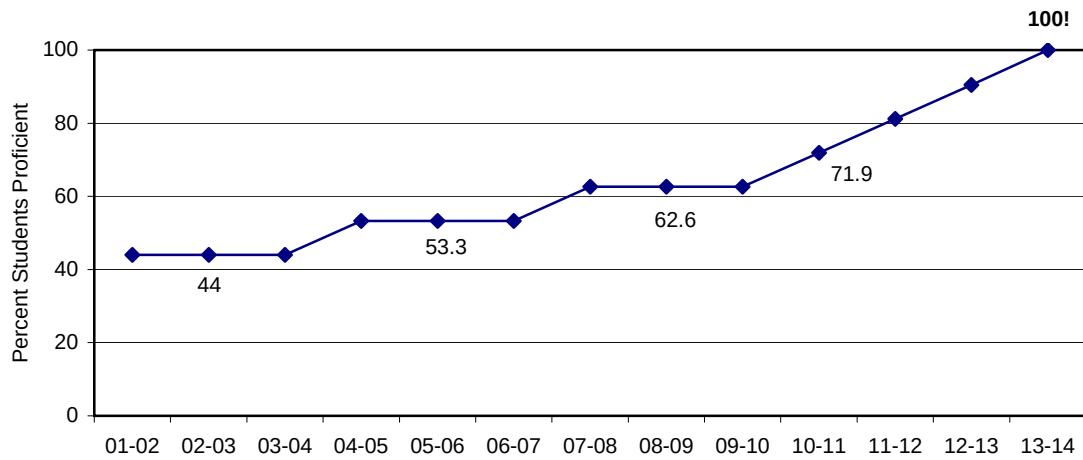
The annual measurable objectives were calculated as six equal percentage-point increments from the 2002 starting point to the 2014 goal of 100 percent. The AMO for third grade reading, for example, is 9.3 percentage points ($[100-44]/6$). The AMOs cover three-year increments through

2010 and one-year increments thereafter. This leads to a stepwise increase in the intermediate goals until 2010, followed by a linear increase until 2014 (see table 2.3). Figure 2.1 shows an example using third grade reading for the increase in the intermediate goals.

Table 2.3 Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and Intermediate Goals

Grade 3	Inter- mediate Goals	Reading AMO	Reading Proficiency (percent)	Math AMO	Math Proficiency (percent)
2004-05	1	9.3	53.3	11.3	43.3
2007-08	2	9.3	62.6	11.3	54.6
2010-11	3	9.3	71.9	11.3	65.9
2011-12	4	9.3	81.2	11.3	77.2
2012-13	5	9.3	90.5	11.3	88.5
2013-14	6	9.3	100	11.3	100
Grade 5	Inter- mediate Goals	Reading AMO	Reading Proficiency (percent)	Math AMO	Math Proficiency (percent)
2004-05	1	11.3	43.3	13.3	33.3
2007-08	2	11.3	54.6	13.3	46.6
2010-11	3	11.3	65.9	13.3	59.9
2011-12	4	11.3	77.2	13.3	73.2
2012-13	5	11.3	88.5	13.3	86.5
2013-14	6	11.3	100	13.3	100
Grade 8	Inter- mediate Goals	Reading AMO	Reading Proficiency (percent)	Math AMO	Math Proficiency (percent)
2004-05	1	11.5	42.5	15.5	22.5
2007-08	2	11.5	54.0	15.5	38.0
2010-11	3	11.5	65.5	15.5	53.5
2011-12	4	11.5	77.0	15.5	69.0
2012-13	5	11.5	88.5	15.5	84.5
2013-14	6	11.5	100	15.5	100
High School	Inter- mediate Goals	Reading AMO	Reading Proficiency (percent)	Math AMO	Math Proficiency (percent)
2004-05	1	12.8	35.8	15	25
2007-08	2	12.8	48.6	15	40
2010-11	3	12.8	61.4	15	55
2011-12	4	12.8	74.2	15	70
2012-13	5	12.8	87.0	15	85
2013-14	6	12.8	100	15	100

Figure 2.1 Intermediate Goals: Grade 3 Reading



The reasons for setting all annual measurable objectives (and corresponding intermediate goals) in this stepwise manner were:

- 1.) The ADE completed a grade-level articulation of Arizona's Academic Content Standards in 2003. The progressive setting of annual measurable objectives and corresponding intermediate goal allows schools the necessary time to align these grade-level standards with school curricula/resources and implement these standards via instruction.
- 2.) The ADE has developed new assessments for grades four, six, and seven for reading and mathematics and is developing a science assessment to be administered on an annual basis in grades three, five, eight, and high school as mandated by NCLB. The progressive setting of annual measurable objectives and intermediate goals allows schools the opportunity to effectively prepare students for these assessments.
- 3.) Currently, the academic performance of several disaggregated student subgroups is below (in some cases, far below) the state's starting points in reading and mathematics. Many schools and districts have initiated scientifically based research programs and other instructional practices to assist students in these groups. In addition, the ADE has implemented a comprehensive K-3 reading program designed to have all students proficient in the state's reading standards by the third grade. By setting the state's annual measurable objectives and corresponding intermediate goals in a progressive manner, schools, districts, and the state are given the necessary time to effectively implement these programs and initiatives, giving students in this circumstance an opportunity to catch up with the aggregated student population as represented by the state's starting points.

There are two additional steps taken when determining if a school has met the AMO for a specific subject and grade. First, rather than comparing the actual percentage of students who are proficient to the AMO, a 99 percent confidence interval is calculated to estimate the percent

proficient. If the upper bound of this confidence interval is above the AMO, the school is deemed to have met the objective.

Second, if a school fails to meet the objective after the confidence interval is applied, it may still be deemed to have met the AMO if it meets the safe harbor provision. Safe harbor is a two-part test that requires schools to demonstrate sufficient progress over the previous year in the percentage of students failing to meet the standard *and* meet a threshold set by the Arizona Department of Education for an additional indicator. Both of these refinements will be discussed in more detail later.

Percentage of Students Assessed

In order for a school, district, or the state to make adequate yearly progress it must assess 95 percent of its students for each subject in every grade offered, including each applicable subgroup. Students count as assessed if they had a valid score for AIMS or the alternative assessment for the severely disabled, AIMS-A.

All the students enrolled for the day of testing (high school) or the first day of the week the test was given (elementary) represent the population to be assessed.

Applicable Subgroups

In addition to assessing 95 percent of its students and meeting the intermediate goals for all subject/grade combinations it encompasses, an entity must also meet the same objectives for every applicable subgroup within each subject/grade combination. NCLB specifies the following subgroups be evaluated: the five major ethnic groups—Hispanic, White, African-American, Asian-Pacific Islander, and Native American—English Language Learners (ELL), students with disabilities, and students from low-income families.

Additional Indicators of School Performance

NCLB requires that an additional indicator be used for AYP determinations. The law mandates that a four-year graduation rate be used for high schools, but allows states to select the standard schools must meet. The performance goal for the high school graduation rate was set at 71 percent, the state average graduation rate for 2001. To make adequate yearly progress, a high school must have a four-year graduation rate of 71 percent, or show a 1 percentage-point improvement in the graduation rate over the previous year.

NCLB allows states to select the additional indicator used for elementary schools. Arizona has chosen to use the school-wide attendance rate. The performance goal for the attendance rate was set at 90 percent, the implicit expectation for school attendance rates set by the state's school finance laws in A.R.S. § 15-902 A. To make AYP, elementary schools must have a school-wide attendance rate of 90 percent, or show a 1 percentage-point improvement in the attendance rate over the previous year.

Putting It All Together

Table 2.4 provides an example of how the three performance measures—proficiency in state standards, percentage of students assessed, and an additional indicator—are combined to determine whether a school has made AYP. The example given is for a K-5 school. The school is evaluated based on student performance on AIMS reading and mathematics tests for grades 3 and 5, the percentage of students evaluated for each test and attendance rates. Since our example is an elementary school, all the combinations for which a typical elementary school would be evaluated under NCLB are provided; there are 73 separate combinations examined.

NCLB requires that schools be evaluated using a conjunctive model. That is, to make AYP, a school must meet the performance objective in *every* category in which it is evaluated. For example, if the school in table 2.4 fails to meet the objective in any one of the cells in the table, it fails to make AYP.

Table 2.4. Categories Evaluated Under NCLB for a K-5 Elementary School

Grade	Third				Fifth			
Subject	Math		Reading		Math		Reading	
Subgroup	Met 95% tested?	Met AMO?	Met 95% tested?	Met AMO?	Met 95% tested?	Met AMO?	Met 95% tested?	Met AMO?
All students	Yes/No	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
African American	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Asian-Pacific Islander	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Hispanic	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Native American	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
White	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Special Education	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
English Language Learner	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Low Income	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
Met Other School wide Indicator: Attendance Rate?	Y/N							

3. Data Verification

Districts and charter holders are solely responsible for submitting the data necessary for calculating achievement profiles for their schools and for ensuring its accuracy. Because of the stakes involved and the volume and scope of the data used, the ADE considered it prudent to allow districts and charter holders to review their data before preliminary AYP evaluations were carried out.

From June 22, 2005, through August 12, 2005 schools and districts were given an opportunity to review and correct data through the common logon on the ADE web site. The primary purpose of the application was to allow districts and charter holders to correct the information for individual students. A link was provided through the common logon that allowed schools to download student-level testing data in order to make any necessary corrections. Schools also had the opportunity to correct data up through the close of the appeals window on August 12, 2005.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The criteria used to select AIMS scores for evaluation of AYP differ from the criteria used to select scores for Arizona LEARNS. Indeed, the criteria differ among the separate components of the AYP evaluation. The criteria also differ from the scores provided to schools by the testing contractor, the scores publicly reported by ADE, and the scores available through the ADE's AIMS wizard located at www.ade.az.gov/profile/publicview.

Timeline

The timeline for AYP Determination was:

- June 22, 2005. Opening of data verification process.
- July 13, 2005. Public release of AIMS Scores.
- August 1, 2005. Preliminary release of AYP evaluations for all schools and districts; opening of appeals process.
- August 12, 2005. Closing of appeals process.
- September 1, 2005. Public release of AYP evaluations for all schools and districts.

4. Meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives for Proficiency

Calculation of Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)

This section describes the calculation used to determine if schools met the annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for student proficiency in math and reading/language arts. NCLB requires that schools meet the AMOs set by the state in order to make AYP. A description of how the AMOs were set is given in section two. Schools must meet the AMOs for each subject/grade combination and all the applicable subgroups.

The formula used to calculate the percentage of students passing is:

$$\text{Percent Pass} = \frac{\text{Number of students meeting/exceeding the standard on AIMS}}{\text{Number of students tested}}$$

This fraction is rounded to two digits, e.g.: .941=.94; .946=.95.

To ensure that the decision regarding whether a school met the AMOs is statistically reliable and not overly influenced by random factors, the determination for meeting the AMOs is made employing a 99 percent (one-tailed) confidence interval. The confidence interval methodology is designed to ensure that 99 out of 100 times the confidence interval will contain a school's true performance level. If the AMO in question is below the upper bound of the confidence interval calculated for the school, the school is deemed to have met the standard.

Example. Twenty-nine percent of a school's third graders passed the AIMS mathematics test. The upper bound of the 99 percent confidence interval for this subject/grade combination for this school is calculated to be 35 percent. Since this is greater than the intermediate goal of 32 percent, the school is considered to have met the standard.

Let p =the percent of students in a group passing the AIMS and n =the number of students in the group. Then the equation for the upper bound of the 99 percent confidence interval (UB99) is:

$$UB99 = p + 2.33\sqrt{p(1-p)/n}.$$

As can be seen from the equation, the confidence interval depends upon the percent of students who passed the test, and the number of students tested. Thus, the confidence interval will differ among grades, subjects, and schools.

The equation is an approximation of the confidence interval for a binomially distributed variable. It uses the standard normal distribution and is sufficiently accurate if the group size and percentage of students passing are large enough. For small values of n and small p , a more accurate estimate of the confidence interval is made using statistical tables that provide confidence intervals for a binomially distributed variable.¹ The tables were applied using the rules given in table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Rules for Determining UB99 for Small n and p .

<u>If $n \geq 30$ and $n < 35$, and</u>	<u>If $n \geq 40$ and $n < 45$, and</u>
$p \geq 0$ and $p < .05$, UB99=.16	$p \geq 0$ and $p < .05$, UB99=.13
$p \geq .05$ and $p < .10$, UB99=.25	$p \geq .05$ and $p < .10$, UB99=.22
$p \geq .10$ and $p < .15$, UB99=.33	$p \geq .10$ and $p < .15$, UB99=.28
$p \geq .15$ and $p < .20$, UB99=.38	$p \geq .15$ and $p < .20$, UB99=.35
$p \geq .20$ and $p < .25$, UB99=.45	
$p \geq .25$ and $p < .30$, UB99=.51	
<u>If $n \geq 35$ and $n < 40$, and</u>	<u>If $n \geq 45$ and $n < 50$, and</u>
$p \geq 0$ and $p < .05$, UB99=.15	$p \geq 0$ and $p < .05$, UB99=.12
$p \geq .05$ and $p < .10$, UB99=.24	$p \geq .05$ and $p < .10$, UB99=.21
$p \geq .10$ and $p < .15$, UB99=.30	$p \geq .10$ and $p < .15$, UB99=.27
$p \geq .15$ and $p < .20$, UB99=.36	$n \geq 50$ and $n < 55$, and
$p \geq .20$ and $p < .25$, UB99=.43	$p \geq 0$ and $p < .05$, UB99=.11
	$p \geq .05$ and $p < .10$, UB99=.20
	<u>If $n \geq 55$ and $n < 60$, and</u>
	$p = 0$, UB99=.10
	<u>If $n \geq 60$ and $n < 100$ and</u>
	$p = 0$, UB99=.09
	<u>If $n \geq 100$ and $n < 200$ and</u>
	$p = 0$, UB99=.06
	<u>If $n \geq 200$ and $p = 0$,</u>
	UB99=0

¹ Mansfield, Edwin. 1991. *Statistics for Business and Economics, 4th Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 280-284.

Even if after calculating the confidence interval the percent of students proficient in a subgroup still falls short of the AMO, the group may still make AYP if its achievement indicators meet certain safe harbor provisions. To make safe harbor a subgroup has to meet the following two-part test:

- a) Make a 10 percent decrease in the fraction of students failing to meet the standard (i.e. failing AIMS) from the previous year, and
- b) Have a 90 percent attendance rate for that group, or make a one-percentage point improvement in the group's attendance rate over the previous year. Since graduation rate data was not available for the applicable subgroups, attendance rate was used as the additional safe-harbor indicator for high schools as well.

Examples

1. In 2004, 20 percent of fifth graders in Gila Monster Elementary passed the AIMS reading test. The upper bound of the confidence interval was 25 percent, still below the annual measurable objective of 32 percent. However, in 2003, 10 percent of fifth graders passed the AIMS reading test, thus Gila Monster Elementary saw a decrease of 11 percent in the percentage failing $[(80-90)/90 = -11 \text{ percent}]$. Furthermore, the attendance rate for Gila Monster's fifth graders was 96 percent, greater than the standard of 90 percent. So, Gila Monster's fifth graders make AYP in reading.
2. In 2004, 20 percent of eighth graders in Javelina Middle School passed the AIMS reading test. The upper bound of the confidence interval was 27 percent, still below the annual measurable objective of 31 percent. In 2002, 15 percent of fifth graders passed the AIMS reading test, thus Javelina Middle School saw a decrease of only 6 percent in the percentage failing $[(80-85)/85 = -6 \text{ percent}]$. Even though the attendance rate for Javelina's eighth grade was 96 percent, greater than the standard of 90 percent, it fails to make the safe harbor provisions, and so does not make AYP in eighth grade reading.
3. In 2004, 30 percent of third graders in Gila Monster Elementary passed the AIMS reading test. The upper bound of the confidence interval was 40 percent, still below the annual measurable objective of 44 percent. However, in 2003, 20 percent of third graders passed the AIMS reading test, thus Gila Monster El. saw an improvement of 13 percent in performance $[(70-80)/80 = -13 \text{ percent}]$. However, the attendance rate for Gila Monster's third grade was 85 percent, less than the standard of 90 percent and identical to last year's attendance rate, so Gila Monster's third graders fail to make AYP in reading.
4. In 2004, 20 percent of third graders in Saguaro Elementary passed the AIMS reading test. The upper bound of the confidence interval was 30 percent, still below the annual measurable objective of 32 percent. However, in 2003, 10 percent of fifth graders passed the AIMS reading test, thus Saguaro Elementary saw an improvement of over 11 percent in performance $[(80-90)/90 = -11 \text{ percent}]$. The attendance rate for Saguaro's third grade was 80 percent, less than the standard of 90 percent. However, in 2002, the attendance rate for Saguaro's third grade was 81 percent. Since Saguaro saw an 11 percent improvement in the fraction of third graders meeting the standard in math *and* a 1 percent

improvement in the attendance rate for third graders, it meets the safe harbor provision for third grade math, and thus makes AYP.

If a group had less than 40 students tested in 2005, it was automatically considered to have met the safe harbor provision. If a group had an ADM of less than 40 in 2005, then it was automatically considered to have met the attendance rate criterion for safe harbor.

Data used

Students are included in the calculation if they meet the following criteria:

- Have taken either the AIMS or AIMS-A and received a score of FFB or above,
- Began the year in the same school. (Answered yes or left blank question number 3 on the AIMS demographic questionnaire; the field STARTYR in the AIMS data set = Y or blank.)

Students in each of the following subgroups in every subject/grade combination are required to meet the annual measurable objective.

- **Ethnicity.** The fraction of students meeting the standard is calculated for each of the five ethnic groups—White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Hispanic.
- **English Language Learners (ELL).** ELL status is determined using the answer to question number eight on the AIMS test sheet (ELLPROF in the ADE AIMS database.) Students with ELLPROF = 1 are considered English language learners. Students with ELLRPOF = 2 or blank are considered English proficient.
- **Special Education Students.** A student is identified as special education if she takes the AIMS-A, or is specified as a member of a special education program in SAIS.
- **Low income.** A student is identified as being from a low-income family if the AIMS demographic information indicates she is eligible for a free or reduced lunch.

Special rule

Minimum group size. A group or subgroup is not evaluated if it had less than 40 test scores that meet the selection criteria. A sample size of 40 was considered large enough to provide statistically meaningful results.

5. Meeting the Standard for Number of Students Tested

Calculation

This section describes the calculation used to determine if a school has assessed 95 percent of its students. To make AYP, schools must test 95 percent of their students in reading and mathematics in all grades in which AIMS is administered, and must test 95 percent of their students in each applicable subgroup.

The formula used to calculate the percentage of students tested is:

$$\text{Percent Tested} = \frac{\text{Number of students tested}}{\text{Number of students enrolled}}$$

The fraction of percent tested is rounded to two digits, e.g.: .941=.94; .946=.95.

Data used

Number of students tested. All students who take either the AIMS or AIMS-A and received a score of FFB or above. Students who receive a score of Did Not Attempt (DNA) are excluded from the calculation.

Number of students enrolled. The denominator for the percent tested calculation is an unduplicated enrollment count at the school level. For grades three, five, and eight, enrollment used for all subjects is the first day of the week of testing: April 11, 2005—as reported to the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS). For grade 10, enrollment used is for the day the test was administered: April 12, 2005 for mathematics, and February 23, 2005 for reading.

The rules used to select students for enrollment are:

- Students were counted in both schools if they were concurrently enrolled in more than one school on the relevant day.
- Students are not selected if they had more than one attribute on the relevant day. For example, a student could not have been assigned to more than one grade or more than one ethnicity on that particular day.

Applicable subgroups

- **Ethnicity.** Schools are required to have tested 95 percent of their students in the five ethnic groups—White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Hispanic. The ethnicity of students tested was taken from the answer to the ethnic information question on the AIMS test document. The number of students enrolled for each ethnicity was taken from SAIS enrollment data for the selected days described in chapter two.

- **English Language Learners (ELL).** Schools are required to test 95 percent of their English language learners in order to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). The number of ELL students tested is the sum of all students identified as ELL students in the AIMS test file. ELL status is determined using the answer to question 8 on the AIMS test sheet (ELLPROF in the ADE AIMS database.) Students with ELLPROF = 1 are considered English language learners. Students with ELLRPOF = 2 or blank are considered English proficient. The number of ELL students enrolled is taken from SAIS. Students must have been enrolled as English Language Learners on the relevant day in order to be included in the enrollment counts for this subgroup.
- **Special Education Students.** Schools are required to test 95 percent of their special education students in order to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). The number of special education students tested is the sum of all students identified as special education in the AIMS test file. A student is identified as special education if he/she took the AIMS-A, or was specified as a member of a special education program. The number of special education students enrolled is taken from the SAIS system. Students must have been enrolled in a special education program on the relevant day in order to be included in the enrollment counts for this subgroup.

Special rules

100 percent tested. If a school tested 100 percent of its students overall in a subject/grade category, it is assumed that it tested 100 percent for each subgroup in that subject/grade category, regardless of how students were labeled or mislabeled on testing documents.

Consistency Check for Number Tested. Subgroups for a subject/grade are deemed to have met the 95 percent goal for percentage of students tested if the data for the entire subject/grade implies that missing the goal was mathematically impossible.

Example. Data for Gila Monster Elementary show 98 students have taken AIMS for fifth grade reading and 100 fifth grade students enrolled. However, data submitted to ADE show 50 students enrolled in special education programs but only 45 students with special education status indicated on their AIMS demographic information. Since only two students did not take the test, it is mathematically impossible for Gila Monster to have tested less than 48 of its special education students—there must be special education students in the data who are not labeled as such. Since $48/50 = .96 > .95$, Gila Monster meets the 95 percent assessed threshold for its special education students.

Minimum group size. A group or subgroup is not evaluated if it had less than 40 students enrolled on the relevant day. A sample size of 40 was considered large enough to provide statistically meaningful results.

6. Other Indicators of School Performance

Attendance Rate

This section describes the calculation used to determine if a school met the other performance indicators for AYP. NCLB requires that schools be evaluated on a third performance indicator as well as percentage of students assessed and percentage of students proficient in the standard. The law requires that graduation rate be used for the third indicator for high schools, and gives states the discretion to choose the third indicator for elementary schools. Arizona has chosen the school-wide attendance rate as the third indicator for elementary schools. To make AYP a high school must have a graduation rate of 71 percent; an elementary school must have an attendance rate of 90 percent.

Calculation. The formula used to calculate the attendance rate is:

$$\text{Schoolwide Attendance Rate} = \frac{\text{Average Daily Attendance}}{\text{Average Daily Membership}}$$

The attendance rate is rounded to two digits, e.g.: e.g.: .891=.89; .896=.90.

Data used. The average daily attendance (ADA) and average daily membership (ADM) for the 100-day counts for all grades offered by a school, except for pre-school and kindergarten, are used in the calculation.

Safe Harbor. If a school demonstrates a one-percentage point improvement in its attendance rate from the previous year, it is deemed to have met the performance standard. The growth rate is rounded to the nearest hundredth of a point, e.g. .009 = .01, .004=.00.

Example. Gila Monster Elementary had an attendance rate in 2005 of 88 percent, less than the standard of 90 percent. However, its 2004 attendance rate was 86 percent. Gila Monster Elementary demonstrated an improvement of two percentage points over the previous year, and so is deemed to have met the requirements for attendance rate.

Special rules. A school's attendance rate is not evaluated if it had an ADM of less than 40.

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate is an important complement to the AYP determination for high schools. Graduation rates indicate the success of students in meeting course requirements and achieving passing grades in subject areas not covered by the AIMS test. Graduation rates are used solely in the calculation of high school AYP. High school status was granted to any school that reported data in grade ten for each of the relevant school years (2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004).

The Graduation Rate is a four-year, longitudinal measure of how many students graduate from high school. By examining a cohort of students who began high school at the same time,

the graduation rate assesses how many students actually complete high school within four years of beginning high school.

Calculation. The formula used to calculate the graduation rate is:

Graduation Rate	=	$\frac{\text{Number of Cohort members who graduated within four years}}{\text{Original Cohort Membership} + \text{Transfers In} - \text{Transfers Out} - \text{Deceased}}$	X 100
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The graduation rate is rounded to three digits, e.g.: .7045=.705; .7044=.704.

Data used. Federal requirements mandate that Arizona use the four-year graduation rate rather than the five-year rate used for Arizona LEARNS. The threshold graduation rate was for the cohort class of 2004, which represents the most recent graduation rate statistics. The graduation rate for the cohort class of 2003 was used for the determination of safe harbor.

Safe Harbor. If a school demonstrates a one-half-percentage point improvement in its graduation rate from the previous year, it is deemed to have met the performance standard. The growth rate is rounded to the nearest thousandth of a point, e.g. .0045 = .005, .0044=.004.

Example. Gila Monster High School had a graduation rate in 2004 of 69.0 percent, less than the standard of 70.5 percent. However, its 2003 graduation rate was 67.0 percent. Gila Monster High demonstrated an improvement of two percentage points over the previous year, and so is deemed to have met the requirements for graduation rate.

Special rules. A school's graduation rate is not evaluated if it had an ADM of less than 40.

7. Calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress for K-2 Schools

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that a state evaluate *all* schools. Consequently, an alternative methodology for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) had to be developed for schools that did not offer any of the grades in which AIMS is administered. In Arizona, this group consisted of schools that offered grades two and below.

Meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives for Proficiency for K-2 Schools

K-2 schools are evaluated based on two criteria: whether they meet the annual measurable objectives and attendance rate. Because AIMS is not administered in these schools, the AMO evaluation used the performance of their graduates on the third grade AIMS. As for other schools, the conjunctive model is used. A K-2 school has to meet both the AMO and the performance standard for attendance rate to make AYP. The percentage of students assessed is not used in determining AYP for K-2 Schools

The Arizona Department of Education has the ability to track test scores across years. ADE will create rosters of students who attend K-2 schools in the 2003 – 2004 school year. It will then match these rosters to the students' 2005 third grade AIMS test scores. The AIMS scores of matched students are used to calculate the AMO for the K-2 school. This is then compared to third grade AMO for the subject.

For a K-2 school to make the AMO in 2005, 53.3 percent of the matched students had to pass reading and 43.3 percent of the matched students had to pass math.

Attendance Criteria for K-2 Schools

Minimum group size. A subject group is not evaluated if it had less than 40 test scores that met the selection criteria.

Attendance rate was calculated the same way as regular school. To make AYP an elementary school must have an attendance rate of 90 percent.

Calculation. The formula used to calculate the attendance rate is:

$$\text{Schoolwide Attendance Rate} = \frac{\text{Average Daily Attendance}}{\text{Average Daily Membership}}$$

The attendance rate is rounded to two digits, e.g.: .891=.89; .896=.90.

Data used. The average daily attendance (ADA) and average daily membership (ADM) for the 100-day counts for all grades offered by a school, except for pre-school and kindergarten, are used in the calculation.

Summary of AYP Determination for K-2 Schools

To make AYP a school has to meet the AMO and the school-wide attendance goal of 90 percent.

Table 7.1 below summarizes the AYP determination process for K-2 schools. The conjunctive model requires that all cells in the table have a “yes” for a school to make AYP.

Table 7.1. AYP Determination for K-2 Schools

Met AMO for Reading?	Met AMO for Math?	Met Goal for Attendance Rate?
Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

8. Calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress for Small Schools

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that a state evaluate *all* schools. Consequently, an alternative methodology for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) had to be developed for schools that did not have any grade with 40 students enrolled. All the calculations are done the same way for small schools as the regular schools. There are two differences: (a) Three years of data is used in the calculations (b) Small schools do not get safe harbor part of the calculation. This is explained in detail below.

Meeting the 95% tested Requirement

For this calculation, the current year percent tested is calculated as well as the three year average. In the current year, if 95 % of the students were tested, the school has met the 95% requirement. The formula used to calculate the percent tested in the current year is:

$$\text{Percent tested} = \frac{\text{\# tested in 2005}}{\text{\# enrolled in 2005}}$$

Data is aggregated across three years to evaluate whether 95% of the students were tested in the past three years. The formula used to calculate Percent tested is:

$$\text{Percent tested} = \frac{\text{\# tested in 2003} + \text{\# tested in 2004} + \text{\# tested in 2005}}{\text{\# enrolled in 2003} + \text{\# enrolled in 2004} + \text{\# enrolled in 2005}}$$

Meeting the Annual Measurable Objectives Small Schools

Annual measurable Objectives is calculated by aggregating data for the past three years. Students excluded from this calculation are students who did not start the year at the school and students who do not have a score on the test. For small schools, there is no safe harbor because improvement cannot be determined.

The formula used to calculate the percent passing is:

$$\text{Percent passing} = \frac{\text{\# passed in 2003} + \text{\# passed in 2004} + \text{\# passed in 2005}}{\text{\# tested in 2003} + \text{\# tested in 2004} + \text{\# enrolled in 2005}}$$

The upperbound of 99% confidence interval is also calculated for small schools. Please refer to regular school calculations which are discussed in an earlier chapter.

Meeting the Additional Indicator

Attendance rate was calculated the same way as regular school but a three year average is determined using data from three years. To make AYP an elementary school must have an attendance rate of 90 percent.

Calculation. The formula used to calculate the attendance rate is:

$$\text{Schoolwide Attendance Rate} = \frac{\text{Average Daily Attendance}}{\text{Average Daily Membership}}$$

The attendance rate is rounded to two digits, e.g.: .891=.89; .896=.90.

Data used. The average daily attendance (ADA) and average daily membership (ADM) for the 100-day counts for all grades offered by a school, except for pre-school and kindergarten, are used in the calculation.

Graduation Rate

To make AYP a high school must have a 4-year graduation rate of 71%. A three average graduation rate of 71% is required to meet the additional indicator.

9. Determining Adequate Yearly Progress for School Districts and Charter Holders

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that local education agencies (LEAs), districts and charter holders, be evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress. The method for determining AYP (AYP) for districts is analogous to that used for schools with data being aggregated to the district level as if a district were one large school.² The details of the AYP calculation for districts are nearly identical to that for schools.

- Districts are evaluated for percentage of students passing AIMS, percentage of students assessed, and a third indicator.
- Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and the performance goals for percentage of students assessed, attendance rate, and graduation rate are the same for districts as they are for schools.
- The applicable subgroups for AYP evaluation are the same for districts as they are for schools.
- Confidence intervals, safe harbor provisions, and minimum group size requirements are applied to district AYP using the same methodology and parameters as for school AYP.
- District AYP uses a conjunctive model. To make AYP, a district must meet all the performance standards for all subjects, grades, and subgroups that are applicable.

Differences between District and School AYP Evaluation Methods

There are four differences between the AYP evaluation method used for districts and that used for schools.

1. ***Measure of student mobility.*** NCLB requires that students mobile with respect to an entity are not included in the AMO part of the AYP evaluation. For a school, this meant excluding students who did not start the year at that school. District level mobility is determined by whether the student started the school year at the district. If the student did not start the school year at the district, she is excluded from the AMO calculation.
2. ***Limit on the number of students with alternative assessment who count toward meeting the proficiency standard.*** NCLB mandates that the number of students who take an alternative assessment who count as being proficient may not be greater than 1 percent of the total number enrolled in the grades tested. For the 2005 AYP determination, students who took the AIMS-A are considered to have taken an alternate assessment. Federal guidance requires that students be treated consistently at all levels of accountability. Therefore a student who is deemed not proficient because her district exceeded the 1 percent cap will be deemed not proficient when determining if her school met AYP as well.

Example. Gila Monster Elementary District has 1000 students enrolled in grades three, five, eight and ten. Only one percent can be counted as proficient for AMO for AIMS-A. One percent of 1000 is 10, therefore, if 20 students took the AIMS-A and 15 of them were proficient, only 10 of them will be counted as proficient when

² All statements in this section apply to both districts and charter holders. For the sake of brevity, we use “district” to refer to both types of entities/LEAs.

determining if Gila Monster Elementary District met the AMO. The other five students will be counted as not proficient.

3. ***Graduation/Attendance Rates.*** Graduation rate is used as the third indicator required by NCLB for unified and high school districts. Attendance rate is used for elementary districts.

10. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Appeals Process

Procedure and Timeline

PROCEDURE

The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Appeals Process developed by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) provided districts and schools the opportunity to appeal 2004 – 2005 AYP determinations. In accordance with Title I, Section 1116 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the ADE allowed districts and schools to appeal their respective AYP determinations for statistical and/or substantive reasons.

Step 1: Data Correction

The first step in completing the AYP Appeals Process required *all* districts and schools to review *all* data in order to confirm its accuracy. The data correction took place utilizing the AZ LEARNS/Adequate Yearly Progress (NCLB) Application through the Common Logon located at the ADE's Website. Data correction took place June 27– August 12, 2005. In the application, schools/districts were asked to verify and correct:

- **SAIS/Student Details Demographic Data**, which included Student's SAIS number, date, month and year of birth, number of years student has been classified at level of English proficiency (ELL Year), did the student receive a 504 accommodation on the test (AP504), did the student take the test in Braille, did the student take the test using a test booklet printed in large print (Lprint).
- All other data could be corrected in the SAIS system. The data in SAIS will overwrite the data in AIMS download.

It is important to note that districts and charter holders were solely responsible for verifying information for their districts and schools. If a district or charter holder did not verify the information for its district and schools through the correction process, the ADE assumed the schools on file and the data available were correct as listed.

Districts and/or schools failing to complete the data correction process in its entirety by the deadline forfeited their right to file an NCLB or AZ LEARNS statistical appeal.

Step 2: Appeal Application

Administrators choosing to appeal a district or school AYP determination must have completed the AYP Appeal Application(s), which was accessible via the Common Logon during the specified appeal timeframe in order to indicate the exact issue(s) of the appeal(s). Appeals were only accepted through the website application. Appeals sent to ADE via email, fax, or mail/delivery were *not* be accepted.

Districts and schools were able to appeal AYP determinations in two categories: data (statistical) and non-data (substantive) reasons – districts and schools were not limited to one category and were able to appeal in both if necessary.

Statistical Appeals

Appeals based on statistical arguments could argue one or more of the following:

1. Calculation of 95% tested. This included appeals that addressed the accuracy of enrollment data and/or number of test documents in the analysis.
2. Calculation of AMO due to the inclusion of invalid scores. This type of appeal included appealing the inclusion of English Language Learners not yet considered English proficient and/or the inclusion of Special Education students with non-standard accommodations.
3. Calculation of additional indicators: attendance (elementary schools) and graduation rate (high schools).

Substantive Appeals

Districts and schools that appealed based on substantive arguments could argue that mitigating circumstances, outside of the district's/school's control, negatively impacted the quantity or quality of test data. This included circumstances that affected test conditions, test scores, percent tested, and/or additional indicators (attendance – elementary schools, graduation rate – high schools).

Important Notes for the Appeal Process

Administrators that chose to appeal a district or school AYP determination must have clearly articulated the issue(s) they believe merited an appeal through the AYP appeal application. Administrators must have submitted evidence that the issue(s) they believe merited an appeal directly resulted in a *significant* decrease in student academic achievement as demonstrated on AIMS and/or a decrease in student participation during the administration of AIMS. The evidence must have been submitted to ADE at the time the appeal was submitted. Failure to provide this evidence resulted in the appeal not being granted. Evidence submitted after the appeal deadline closed was not considered. Once appeals were submitted through the Common Logon, the school/district/charter holder received an email verifying that the appeal was received.

The ADE, if necessary, requested that a district or school administrator provide additional information/evidence to assist in the appeals process. Only those requests for additional information that were provided during the specified timeframe allotted were included in the appeals process. Requests submitted after the specified timeframe were excluded from the appeals process. Unsolicited additional information submitted after the appeal deadline was not accepted.

Both district and school AYP determinations were separate and distinct. Districts and schools had to submit separate appeals for both if necessary. Appealing the school determination did not have an impact on the district determination. Appealing the school determination did not have an impact on the district determination or vice versa.

Step 3: Appeal Resolution

After all appeals were submitted and the appeals window closed, the ADE began to process the appeals. Appeals were addressed categorically, not necessarily in the order received, so the fact that a district or school submitted its appeal during the first day of the appeal window did not mean it necessarily received a decision first during the resolution process. The appeal resolution process was implemented in three stages.

Stage 1 – Statistical Appeals Process

All appeals of a statistical nature based on data discrepancies were reviewed.

Appeals that challenged the calculation of 95% tested and/or attendance/graduation were processed by verifying that the information taken from the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS) and the numbers used in the calculations were true and accurate.

Note: It is the responsibility of the school/district/charter holder to ensure that the information reported to SAIS was accurate and the district’s/school’s numbers match those reported to ADE.

Appeals that challenged the calculation of AMO due to the inclusion of invalid scores were evaluated using three modified data sets. The first was a data set that excluded the English Language Learners (ELL) from the calculations to determine if the school would in fact have met the AMO Objective had it not been for the special education group of students. The second modified data set excluded the Special Education students from the calculations to determine if AYP would be met without the special population of students. The third modified data set excluded both the ELL and Special Education students from the calculations.

All statistical appeals needed to be supported with compelling evidence. For example, if the percent of students tested objective was not met in the ELL subgroup because of the miscoding of ELL students on the test, evidence of miscoding needed to be provided. Simply stating “ELL numbers at ADE don’t match the district’s or school’s” was not compelling; ADE needed to know *why* the numbers were different; meaning that particular student needed to be identified as miscoded.

Note: In the past, some schools, when providing information in the appeals, mentioned specific details about students such as name, id #, ethnicity, and specific attendance/student record information which violates guidelines set forth by FERPA. Schools were strongly encouraged to follow FERPA guidelines in the future. When referring to students in appeals, identifying student information such as name, id#, etc. was not to be submitted with the appeal. Instead, students were to be referred to as student #1, student #2, etc.

Stage 2 – Substantive Appeals Process

Substantive appeals were resolved in a committee process. All committee members represented a diverse background to ensure that appeals were considered from multiple perspectives.

Once the committee was assembled, the appeals were evaluated utilizing an appeals rubric that evaluated the significance of the argument presented and how the circumstances presented in the argument affected the district's or the school's performance. The committee based their decisions on the following criteria:

1. ***Was the circumstance that affected the school outside the school's control?*** If the district or school was negligent in its test administration and/or data collection, the appeal was not deemed relevant and the appeal was not considered. For example, if the district or school forgot to test a certain class in a certain grade and remembered after the test window closed, that circumstance was not outside of the district's/school's control and therefore not a valid argument for appeal. Conversely, if the district or school did test everyone and some of the tests were lost by the testing contractor, then that would be outside of their control.
2. ***Did the special circumstance actually have an impact on the performance?*** Not all circumstances at a district or school impacted test data. For example, if the district or school had a long-lasting construction project on campus, did the actual test environment suffer during the test week? How? Or, if a teacher left mid-year, did the learning environment suffer? How? If the answers to these questions did not show adequate impact on testing environment, then the event most likely did not affect the actual performance at the district or school. Conversely, if it could be demonstrated that the event did influence the scores then that was a valid argument.
3. ***Was this problem one that was recurring and likely to happen in the future?*** Appeals made based on policy(s) at the district or school that impacted test collection/data results, which contradicted ADE/NCLB policy(s), were not accepted. For example, if the district's or school's enrollment numbers were inflated and they failed to make the 95% tested objective because the school did not withdraw students after the 10th consecutive missed day, opting instead to withdraw students after the 20th day, they could not appeal the enrollment figures because they were not following ADE policy and the problem was likely to happen again in the future if district/school policy did not change.
4. ***Was the problem eligible for appeal?*** Arguments that targeted NCLB regulations and ADE policy were not valid. For example, districts or schools could not argue that the 95% tested threshold be lowered for their school or that certain subgroups be excluded from the requirements.

Note: As mentioned in the statistical section, certain populations could be excluded

from the analysis of AMO such as ELL and Special Education students *after* the initial calculations were computed, but they could not be exempted from the 95% tested and/or additional indicator requirements. All students and subgroups have to be tested, attend school, and are expected to graduate.

5. ***Did the district or school provide compelling evidence of the circumstance?***

Compelling evidence of impact needed to be provided to support all substantive appeals. For example, if percent of students tested objective was not met, specific details to support the claim needed to be provided with the appeal at the time it was submitted. Simply stating “Students were absent and unable to make up the test” was not compelling; the committee needed to know *why* the students were unable to make up the test such as being extremely ill, suspended, incarcerated, or dealing with a family emergency for the entire test window.

Note: In the past, some schools, when providing information in the appeals, mentioned specific details about students such as name, id#, ethnicity, and specific attendance/student record information which violated guidelines set forth by FERPA. Schools were strongly encouraged to follow the FERPA guidelines in the future. When referring to students in appeals, identifying student information such as name, id#, etc. was not to be submitted with the appeal. Instead, students were to be referred to as student #1, student #2, etc.

Appeal Resolution Notes

If the district/school/charter submitted both a statistical and a substantive appeal, the statistical appeal was evaluated first. Only after the statistical arguments were exhausted was the appeal sent to the substantive committee for evaluation.

The appeals submitted should have addressed the appropriate category. During the first year of appeals, some appeals addressed issues that were not relevant. For example, some districts and schools presented arguments that ELL and Special Education students should be taken out of the analysis (an appeal for the AMO category) yet their school failed to meet the 95% tested objective. Therefore, the appeal was not relevant and was denied. Since everyone had to be tested at the 95% level, the school could not argue that ELL and SPED students be excluded from this requirement. Districts and schools in these situations should have addressed their appeal rationales as to *why* the school did not test 95% of the students.

Districts and schools needed to be certain that if they failed in two AYP categories the appeal addressed both deficiencies. Some appeals submitted in the first year addressed only one deficient area. While those arguments were compelling in that criterion, the overall AYP designation for the school did not change because part of the AYP designation was not addressed in the appeal.

Districts and schools needed to be certain to provide all information/support when submitting the appeal; late information to support the appeal was not accepted (unless ADE specifically asked for additional information as noted above).

Again, both district and school AYP determinations were separate and distinct. Districts and schools had to submit separate appeals for both if necessary. Appealing the school determination will not have an impact on the district determination or vice versa.

Stage 3 – Notification of Result Sent to Districts and Schools

Once all appeals were resolved, notifications were sent to the districts and/or schools that filed appeals. The contact person of record for the district/school would receive an email from Achieve with directions as to how to access appeal information via the Common Logon when the appeal had been processed. Districts and schools were notified before the final public release of the AYP determinations as to the outcome of the appeal process. All appeals were final.