



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ARKANSAS SCHOOLS

In Arkansas, the bar to reach adequate yearly progress, or AYP, is raised each year, and this year the percentage that must be proficient to make AYP ranges. For 2008-2009 test scores depending on grade and test, that bar is set from 55.69 percent to 64 percent. Those percentages must be met by the test-taking student body as a whole and also within individual subgroups of test-taking students in literacy and in mathematics. Schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are placed in school improvement status.

The Arkansas Comprehensive Testing Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) established the 2001-2002 school year as the initial year for tracking student performance. For each school, the percent proficient is determined by dividing the sum of all eligible students tested in mathematics and literacy who scored at or above the proficient level by the total number of students enrolled. A school may use a percentage for a singular year or may use the percentage representing a three-year average. Whichever method a school chooses for reporting scores must be used for all of the tests that year.

Schools achieve adequate yearly progress under No Child Left Behind using what is called the “status model.” That model mandates that schools have an increasing percentage of their students scoring proficient on the state’s Benchmark Exams each year so that by the 2013-2014 school year, all students score proficient. (The state’s Benchmark Exams are administered in math and literacy for grades three through eight, and in science for grades five and seven. In addition, all 11th-graders take an end-of-grade Literacy Benchmark, and End-of-Course Exams are administered to all Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and biology students. All of these tests save for the science Benchmark Exams and the Algebra II and Biology End-of-Course Exams, are used in AYP calculations for the status model.)

Adequate yearly progress must occur for the combined population of test-takers as well as for test-takers within each of the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, African-American, Caucasian and Hispanic. If any of these groups fails to make AYP in mathematics or in literacy, the entire school is considered not to have made AYP. Subgroups are considered in the AYP calculation when they include 40 or more such students in the school.

When a school fails to make AYP for two consecutive years, then they are considered to be in “school improvement.” A school must make AYP for two consecutive years to be removed from the school improvement list.

Because Arkansas was approved for use of a growth model, schools may avoid the “in need of improvement label” if their students have achieved sufficient academic growth from the previous year. The growth model adds to a school’s percentage of proficient

students and the percentage of students who have made adequate growth along individual trajectories that lead to proficiency by the time the students are in the eighth grade. If the sum of those two percentages reaches the target percentage for AYP, the school makes AYP.

In addition to the growth model, schools can also make AYP by meeting "safe harbor." Schools qualify for safe harbor if they have a 91.13 percent attendance rate or a 73.9 graduation rate and have 95 percent or more of their students taking the Benchmarks in addition to reducing the number of students scoring below proficient by 10 percent.