

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 944272
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720



Contact: Phil Garcia
(916) 319-0827

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PROPOSAL FOR "ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS" UNDER NCLB
January 8, 2003
Q&A**

Q1) What is the federal government trying to accomplish by requiring all states to develop a plan for Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)?

Under NCLB, all states are required to develop and implement a single, statewide state accountability system that will ensure all public schools make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) toward enabling all students to meet the state's student academic achievement standards in reading and math. The overarching goal is to help states narrow the achievement gap that exists in many public schools.

Q2) Doesn't California already have an accountability system, the well-known Academic Performance Index or API?

Yes. California currently has a well-defined summary measure of academic achievement and school progress, the Academic Performance Index (API). Under the API, each school receives a statewide ranking and a similar schools ranking, with the lowest performing schools in Decile 1 and the highest performing in Decile 10. The API system requires all schools to meet a schoolwide growth target. In addition, all numerically significant subgroups at each school must make at least 80 percent of the schoolwide growth target. The significant subgroups in the API are major racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Q3) Could the API serve as the accountability system to comply with the AYP provisions of NCLB?

In informal discussions with the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), it became clear that California's API system is considered to be well-developed but simply does not fit the prescriptive requirements in the federal law. The API rewards "growth," so that even low-performing schools are recognized for the progress of their students, as measured by state standards-based tests. AYP, on the other hand, requires all students in all schools -- and each significant subgroup in each school -- to achieve the goal of proficiency in reading and math.

Q4) What must schools do to demonstrate AYP and by when?

All schools must demonstrate adequate yearly progress so that by 2014 all students in all schools perform at or above the "proficient" level in reading and math on tests that are tied to the state's rigorous academic content standards.

--more--

Q5) What is the definition of proficient in California?

California's academic content standards are rigorous and are a model for the nation. The result is that students who score at the "proficient" level on California's standards-based tests are performing at a high level. And California students who graduate at the "proficient" level are considered college-ready. Under the approved plan, "proficient" in reading and math in grades 2-8 would be based on the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the California Standards Tests (CSTs). At the high school level, the definition of "proficient" in reading and math would be tied to scores on the California High School Exit Exam, which is a pass/fail test. "Cut scores" for achieving proficiency at the high school level would be equivalent to achieving proficiency on the California standards-based tests in reading-language arts and math.

Q6) Under AYP, can an individual school meet its AYP target if the vast majority of its students score at proficient or higher?

No. Under the AYP model, a minimum percentage of students at each school must perform at or above the "proficient" level each year. The minimum percentage of students who are required to meet or exceed the proficient level each year applies separately to each subgroup, as well. The minimum percentage rises each year, so that by 2014, *all students in all schools* must achieve at the "proficient" level or higher in both reading and math.

Q7) Are the significant subgroups mandated by AYP the same as those in California's current API system?

No. California must add two student groups among those required to demonstrate comparable improvement in the statewide accountability system. The new subgroups are the following: students with disabilities, and students with limited English-language proficiency – known as English learners.

Q8) What action did the State Board of Education take to ensure California has a plan to comply with the AYP provisions of NCLB?

The State Board approved a proposal to append or supplement the API with an AYP report. As a result, the current well-known API report and the statewide ranking of schools will remain mostly unchanged, with the most important change being the addition of students with disabilities and English learners as significant subgroups. An AYP report would appear on the back of the traditional API report and would provide a breakdown on the percent of each subgroup scoring at "proficient or above" in reading and mathematics.

--more--

Q9) What is the purpose of retaining the API report?

There are four main reasons for retaining the API report: 1) California will maintain continuity and familiarity in its school accountability system; 2) schools will continue to gain recognition for making progress, no matter where they rank; 3) California will be able to track school progress over time; 4) California is required by the federal law to provide an additional academic indicator for grades 3-8.

Q10) Will the API report be submitted to the federal government?

No. API scores and statewide rankings would continue to be posted on the Internet for schools, students and parents, and the general public. AYP reports for each school, each school district and the state overall would be reported to the federal government, as required by NCLB.

Q11) Under NCLB, schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years are targeted for “Program Improvement” or special assistance, and the parents in such schools must be offered “school choice.” Will maintenance of the API affect or change how schools are identified for program improvement?

No. Schools that fail to make “adequate yearly progress” for two consecutive years on their AYP report will be targeted for improvement and interventions; schools that fail to make AYP for three consecutive years or more are subject to sanctions and corrective actions as outlined in NCLB. Under approved proposal, the API may be used in conjunction with AYP to prioritize interventions for schools identified for Program Improvement.

Q12) What is the next step in the process?

California’s AYP Plan is due to the USDE by January 31, 2003, after which it will undergo a “peer” review process at the USDE. After this review, the USDE may require changes in California’s AYP plan.

###