

## ACCOUNTABILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### NEW VERSUS OLD SYSTEM

- ***What changes were made to the Louisiana Accountability System?***

The accountability system was [updated](#) to:

- ✓ **Simplify the formula**

- Easy to understand scale (100 = A, <50 = F)
- Award an “A” for each desired outcome (e.g., proficient scores, graduating with a diploma, graduation rate of 80%)

- ✓ **Align with higher standards to ensure postsecondary success**

- No longer award points for students below grade level
- Ensure students are transitioning successfully to high school
- Value rigorous ACT, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate results, as indicators of postsecondary readiness

- ✓ **Focus on students below grade level**

- Reward schools that make progress with persistently low performing students

In response to local school leaders’ requests to help educators and the public understand the change in systems and to allow schools to demonstrate growth in this first year of the updated system, schools and districts received two scores:

- The **2013 Annual SPS** (New scale) is based on a 150 point scale that does not award points for non-proficient achievement levels on state assessments, encourages broader participation in ACT and Advanced Placement, and recognizes progress with struggling students.
- The **2013 Growth SPS** (Old scale) is based on the previously-used 200 point system, and it provides for comparison to scores and letter grades released in the past.

- ***How have the points awarded for students’ assessment scores changed?***

There is a new scale for assessment index points based on a maximum of 150 points instead of 200 points. Any proficient score earns an “A” or 100+ points. Additionally, scores that are not considered proficient receive zero points.

- ***In 2012-13, which students were counted in the SPS?***

All students who tested in the spring on LEAP, iLEAP, LAA-1 and LAA-2 tests were included in the SPS of a K-8 school.

All students who tested on all EOC administrations for Algebra I, English II, Geometry, Biology, and English III, as well as LAA-1 were included in the high school SPS.<sup>1</sup>

- ***How can schools earn bonus points?***

For the 2013 Annual SPS and in the future, schools earn up to 10 bonus points by demonstrating academic growth with the non-proficient students. To learn more about the non-proficient super-subgroup, click [here](#).

In previous years, schools earned a different type of bonus points for repeating 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that achieved at higher levels on retests. For this year only, these old retest bonus points were awarded only in the 2012 Transition Baseline SPS and the 2013 Growth SPS this year.

## **GROWTH TARGETS AND TOP GAINS**

- ***Did schools receive growth targets?***

Schools no longer receive individualized growth targets. Instead, all schools with letter grade “A” are required to increase their SPS by 5 points to be considered Top Gains. All schools with letter grade “B” through “F” are required to increase their SPS by 10 points to earn Top Gains status.

Failing to achieve these targets has no negative consequences, but achieving the targets could result in a “Top Gains” label for the school.

- ***How does a school qualify for Top Gains?***

For Fall 2013, schools were eligible for Top Gains if they met the growth goal of 5 points for schools with letter grade “A” and 10 points for schools with letter grade “B” through “F.” Schools could meet this goal in one of two ways:

- SPS scale growth as measured by the difference between the 2012 Transition Baseline SPS and the 2013 Growth SPS; or
- bonus points from the non-proficient super-subgroup calculations.

A school was not eligible for Top Gains if it was assigned to any level of school improvement due to subgroups of students failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more years. Additionally, a school was ineligible for Top Gains if the letter grade assigned to the 2013 Annual SPS was lower than the letter grade assigned to the 2013 Growth SPS.

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<sup>1</sup> Initial testers only

- ***What are the rewards for Top Gains schools?***

- Public recognition
- Top Gains seal for website
- NOTE: Due to a recent court ruling requiring the use of the 2012 MFP formula which does not provide for monetary rewards, no additional funds will be awarded to Top Gains schools this year.

## **NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS**

- ***What happens if a school or district did not make subgroup Adequate Yearly Progress?***

A school that failed subgroup AYP for the first time was eligible to be a Top Gains School. However, a school that was assigned to any level of school improvement (i.e., fail subgroup for 2+ years) was not eligible for Top Gains.

- ***What were the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) for English and mathematics in 2012-13?***

The federal AMOs and related timelines remain unchanged. For 2012-13, Louisiana's goal for proficiency in English/language arts was 89.4% and 88.6% for mathematics. The state continues to use confidence intervals and safe harbor as part of AYP determinations. Details related to subgroup calculations can be found in Bulletin 111, Chapter 7.

## **ACT**

- ***What scores counted for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who take the ACT?***

The highest available ACT composite score through spring 2013 was used from all students enrolled in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, regardless of program. To earn points toward the SPS, a student must make an 18 or higher.

- ***How were the EXPLORE and PLAN tests used in accountability?***

The scores from EXPLORE and PLAN tests were used to measure the growth of non-proficient students to determine if high schools are eligible for bonus points. For more information on how high schools earn bonus points, click [here](#).

- ***Did students with disabilities have to participate in the ACT administration?***

In 2012-13, LAA 1 students were not required to take the ACT. Because LAA 2 students are taught the same state content standards as the general student population, they were required to take the ACT and the scores were included in SPS calculations.

## **GRADUATION**

- ***How were students assigned to my school as part of the graduation cohort?***

Students are first assigned to the state cohort when they enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In the third cohort year, students are assigned to a district cohort. Students are not assigned to schools until the fourth year of their high

school experience. Students who drop out are assigned to the last school of record. Students are considered part of a subgroup based on their last record.

- ***Why are LAA-1 students included in the four-year cohort graduation rate if they have an IEP that allows them to remain in high school for more than four years?***

The federal guidance regarding the calculation of the four-year cohort graduation rate requires that all students be counted as eligible for graduation in four years. The guidance forbids cohort reassignment for any reason. However, the Louisiana accountability system has been approved to award points to students who graduate in five years as part of the graduation index.

## ACCOUNTABILITY ELIGIBILITY

- ***Will schools that have no tested grades still be required to pair with other schools?***

Yes. Schools that have no tested grades must still be included in all accountability decisions if they have kindergarten. If a school is part of a feeder pattern in the district, then it must be paired with the school to which it feeds the most students. If there is no feeder pattern, then the district can select the pairing school.

Schools that have only 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and, as such, have no students taking English II are required to pair with another school to share scores from English II for SPS and subgroup proficiency.

- ***How were new schools or reconfigured schools included in accountability?***

All schools with testing data from the 2012-2013 academic year were included in accountability and eligible for SPS, letter grades, and subgroup AYP determinations.

- ***Can students be routed from alternative schools to regular schools?***

In years past, the state School Performance Score system used routing and the Subgroup AYP federal system did not use routing per federal law. Now that both systems are merged and simplified via the NCLB waiver, Louisiana cannot route the scores of students who meet the full academic year definition at a school regardless of school type, students served, or grades tested.

## SCHOOL AND DISTRICT DATA

- ***Will schools and districts still receive report cards?***

Yes. School specific report cards are available on the [Department's website](#). Principal and subgroup report cards will be available at a later date.

- ***When did schools and districts have an opportunity to review the data used for SPS and Subgroup AYP?***

- In January, schools and districts completed dropout corrections in SIS for the previous school year. There is no additional process.

- In May, schools and districts had an opportunity to correct some assessment data through the DRC online cleanup system.
  - In February/March, schools and districts reviewed and requested changes to cohort gradation data through a Pacific Metrics online system.
  - In summer, schools and districts reviewed and requested updates to data for non-proficient super-subgroup bonus data as well as dropout/credit accumulation index data.
  - In August, schools and districts reviewed state and ACT assessment data for a final time in order to make any requested changes.
- ***How can schools or districts request an appeal of their SPS scores?***

Per policy, schools and districts have 15 days after the fall release of SPS to appeal using an [Appeals Form](#) that is distributed by the Department. The appeal cannot be based on any data that could have been corrected during the data certification process.

## CONTACT US

- ***Who can provide additional information about the new accountability system?***

For additional information, please contact Jessica Baghian at [Jessica.Baghian@la.gov](mailto:Jessica.Baghian@la.gov) or [Jennifer.Baird@la.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Baird@la.gov)