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**PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE**

***Frequently Asked Questions***

**Introduction**

The Pennsylvania School Performance Profile (SPP) is an integral part of the Educator Effectiveness System (teacher and principal evaluation). As an online site, the SPP provides a school level academic score for public schools, charter and cyber charter schools, and full-time comprehensive career and technical centers.

The information below is based on the June 2013 version of the School Performance Profile. FAQs will be updated periodically and posted in the SPP site and Pennsylvania School Performance Profile Professional Learning Community in SAS.

**General Questions**

1. **What is the purpose of the School Performance Profile?**

The PA School Performance Profile is designed to serve several purposes:

* Provide a building level score for teachers, as part of the Educator Effectiveness System
* Provide parents with performance measures for the school/district of residence, neighboring schools/districts and schools/districts across the state
* Inform the public of the academic performance measures of each district, school, comprehensive career and technical center, cyber charter and charter school in Pennsylvania.
* Use as a tool to inform goal setting, planning, and resource allocation to improve student achievement.

1. **Upon what authority** was **the SPP created?**

ACT 82 of 2012 addresses the evaluation of the effectiveness of professional employees and temporary professional employees serving as classroom teachers and principals. The academic performance score comprises 15% of each teacher and principal’s evaluation and will be a part of the educator effectiveness system for teachers starting with the 2013-2014 school year and for principals in the 2014-2015 school year.

1. **What is the source of the data used in the calculations? Who performs the calculations?**

All data comes from PDE’s authoritative data sources such as PSSA results from Data

Recognition Corporation, Bureau of Assessment and Accountability, Bureau of Special Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, Education Names and Addresses (EdNA), Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS), Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) results from SAS, Inc., Advanced Placement (AP), SAT results from the College Board, ACT results from ACT, Inc., and district/school self-reported data for demographic fast facts from PIMS.

The actual scores are calculated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education; specifically under the direction of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

1. **What is the score distribution for schools across the state?**

Based upon preliminary 2011-2012 school data used to create the SPP, score distribution is as follows:

(I reordered these.)

* Approximately 20% of schools scored 90 or higher (4 schools exceeded 100).
* Approximately 52% of schools scored 80 or higher.
* Approximately 75% of schools scored 70 or higher.
* Approximately 13% of schools scored below 70.
* Approximately 12% of schools scored below 60.

1. **Is the School Performance Profile (SPP) replacing AYP?**

AYP is the current federal accountability measure and is based upon stringent federal requirements. The SPP is a state-created measure intentionally designed to capture more than PSSA test scores to provide a more comprehensive assessment that more clearly defines high performing schools. Pennsylvania is applying for a flexibility waiver that may change the accountability measure; more information will be forthcoming as available.

1. **How frequently will the School Performance Profile be released?**

The Pennsylvania School Performance Profile will be released annually each fall.

1. **How will educators be trained to use the PA SPP website?**

Intermediate unites across the state have been trained by PDE and have provided introductory training to LEAs. PDE will continue to conduct informational sessions around the state as well as offer statewide webinars. Updates will be provided to IUs who will then communicate with their LEAs.

1. **Will individual teacher performance ratings made available to the public?**

The PA School Performance Profile is designed to provide a building level score. No teacher specific data is included in the SPP.

1. **Is a charter school an LEA?**

Charter schools are considered separate LEAs for the purpose of the School Performance Profile.

**Data Elements and Calculations**

1. **What is included in the School Performance Profile?**

* Fast Facts for districts and schools include such specifics as enrollment, number of schools, average years of teaching experience, and geographic size of district. Student enrollment for the district is also displayed by ethnicity. Links to related agencies, such as career and technical centers and intermediate units are displayed as well as links to supplemental reports.
* The Scoring tab provides an explanation of the factors that contribute to the academic score.
* Upon choosing a school within a district, Fast Facts are available for the individual school.
* The Academic Performance tab displays the school’s academic score, academic performance fast facts, and the academic performance elements and scores.
* The Compare tab offers options to select schools for comparison – whether in the same LEA or schools in other LEAs across the state.
* The School Supports tab, when fully operational, will provide specific improvement strategies directly related to the elements of the SPP.

1. **How are school scores calculated?**

The PA School Performance Profile will provide a quantitative academic score based upon a 100-point scale for Educator Effectiveness (teacher evaluation) ratings using the following source data:

Indicators of Academic Achievement 40%

* Percent Proficient or Advanced on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing
* Percent Competent or Advanced on industry certification exams [NOCTI (a job ready assessment for career and technical center students) and/or NIMS (National Institute for Metalworking Skills certification)]
* Percent Proficient or Advanced on PSSA grade 3 reading
* SAT/ACT College Ready Benchmark

Indicators of Closing the Achievement Gap – All Students (5%)

* Percent of required gap closure met in Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing

Indicators of Closing the Achievement Gap – Historically Underperforming Students (5%)

* Percent of required gap closure met in Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing for historically underperforming students (economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners, students with disabilities)

Indicators of Academic Growth / PVAAS (40%)

* The PVAAS growth index representing the school’s impact on the academic progress of groups of students from year-to-year.

Other Academic Indicators (10%)

* Cohort graduation rate
* Promotion rate
* Attendance rate
* Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma or college credit
* PSAT/PLAN Participation

Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement (up to 7 points)

* Percent Advanced on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing
* Percent Advanced on industry standards-based competency assessments [NOCTI (a job ready assessment for career and technical center students) and/or NIMS (National Institute for Metalworking Skills certification)]
* Advanced Placement achievement (scores 3 or higher)

Scores are calculated based upon defined weighted data elements. If a school has insufficient data to calculate a representative score, the display area will reflect that circumstance and adjust total points accordingly.

1. **Can you explain how Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and college credit are calculated?**

If a school offers International Baccalaureate, it receives the maximum point value.

If a school offers any combination of college credit or AP courses covering the four core academic areas (Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies), it is awarded maximum points. (Example: A minimum of one course in each of the three core areas would be 75 points, two courses in each core area 50 points, etc.).

1. **How were the academic data elements chosen? How was the weighting for each data element determined?**

Teams of educators, statisticians, and psychometricians analyzed research to identify factors that define high performing schools. Data elements are linked to research related to high achieving schools. (When the site is fully operational, this research will be available in the *Research* tab located on the SPP home page.)

1. **How are historically underperforming students identified?**

Historically underperforming students are defined as a non-duplicated count of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners enrolled for a full academic year taking the PSSA. If a student is in more than one of the individual groups (e.g., special education and English Language Learner), s/he is only included in the Historically Underperforming Student group one time – a non- duplicated count. This group is not a cohort but rather students currently in the building meeting the definition during the reported year.

1. **How is Closing the Achievement Gap calculated?**

Closing the Achievement Gap is calculated for each of the PSSA subjects (Mathematics, Reading, Writing, and Science). The achievement gap is determined by comparing the baseline percent of students who are proficient or advanced to the goal of 100% proficiency. The benchmark for success is defined as closing one-half of the achievement gap over a six-year period. (See Closing the Achievement Gap handout for more detail.)

1. **For AYP calculations, schools must have an N count of 40. What is the minimum number (N) count for the SPP?**

The minimum count for the SPP measures is a count of 11. The intent is to represent as many groups as possible. When calculating at the school level and particularly for subgroups, 40 is a large number. The smaller numerical threshold for schools allows for the inclusion of more subgroup populations in a school; thereby including subgroups that might otherwise not be represented.

1. **Are there any other school performance measures that may be added to the SPP?**

As the PA School Performance Profile currently focuses on academic performance, factors such as school safety and fiscal responsibility are under consideration for possible inclusion in the SPP in subsequent phases.

1. **How is student mobility factored into a school’s score?**

Students must be in school by October 1 and stay in the school through the testing date in order to be attributed to a school.

1. **How will Keystone Exams impact calculations in PVAAS?**

Final implementation of the Keystone Exams in SY12-13 will be examined to determine specific details on inclusion in the SPP formula and score.

With regard to PVAAS reporting overall, reporting in PVAAS for the Keystone Exams will be provided in the fall of 2013. This will reflect students who have taken a Keystone related course followed by the Keystone Exams as end of course assessment in SY12-13. This will not reflect students who are only taking the Keystones for AYP purposes.

1. **Why is grade 3 reading a separate data element in the calculation?**

Research reveals that reading proficiently by the end of third grade can be a “make-or-break” benchmark in a child’s educational development. Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing a child’s reading skills by the end of third grade

1. **How does a school determine whether or not it is meeting its annual target in Closing the Achievement Gap??**

The six-year target will be defined in the baseline year, 2012-2013; as each year progresses, the annual closure will be calculated. Since gains are cumulative, as long as a school is meeting the overall closure, it will be defined as meeting its annual target.

**Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement**

1. **What is the rationale for extra credit?**

Extra credit for students demonstrating advanced performance is designed to recognize schools for their efforts in promoting excellence. Although established proficiency acknowledges satisfactory performance, it is important to recognize advanced levels of academic achievement.

1. **How is Advanced Placement (AP) achievement calculated?**

A school can earn up to two additional points (Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement) for AP performance based upon the percent of students earning 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam. This is based upon the number of students in the grade 12 cohort – not the number of tests taken. It does not matter when students take the test. A student scoring 3 or higher on more than one exam is only counted as one student achieving this benchmark.

**Building Level Scores**

1. **Does a school is in its first year of operation receive a score?**

A school will receive a score the year after its first year of operation. While some data elements may not yet be available for that school, the available data elements will be used to create a score.

1. **What if a school has no tested grades/subjects that participate in state assessments?**

The same approach is used as was used for AYP. The LEA-wide data for the next tested grade for the school is used to yield the SPP. Example: For a K-2 school (no tested grades), the grade 3 scores from the district are used as part of the SPP score, in addition to other academic indicators such as attendance and promotion data. This also applies, for example, to schools with a grade 9 only, a grade 10 only, or a grade 9-10 configuration such that grade 11 scores will be used.

1. **Is a school score calculated each year based upon the prior year’s data?**

For most measures, data from the current year reported is used; however, due to availability, previous year data is used for graduation rate, dropout rate, promotion rate, and attendance rate.

1. **What if a school does not have one or more data elements included in the grading parameters?**

Some school configurations may not have each data element included within a specific factor area. The calculation of the score is adjusted accordingly; i.e., the calculation only includes the data elements that are possible for a school to earn. While a grade 6-8 school will have academic performance data in math, reading, science, and writing, a grade 6 only school will only have math and reading performance data. The academic score will only reflect those subjects tested in the school. For elements not applicable to a school, the points for each particular element are nulled out so that the total possible points decreases proportionally.

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1. **Do part time and full time Career and Technical Centers (CTC) receive scores?**

Part time CTCs will display Fast facts only because academic instruction occurs in the students’ home districts. Full time CTCs have both Fast Facts and receive an academic score.

**Communicating the School Performance Profile**

1. **How might a district or school use this data?**

The SPP is a resource for LEAs to communicate and compare performance, analyze performance indicators as related to achievement, and encourage best practice. Potential applications include the following:

* Employ as an analysis tool to inform goal setting, planning, and allocating resources to improve student achievement
* Compare performance to local schools
* Compare performance to schools with similar demographics
* Communicate performance to various constituencies

1. **How might a parent use this data?**

Parents can use the information on this website to examine the performance of their local district/schools. They can also compare the performance of their school to other schools across the state.

1. **There are many qualitative factors beyond the data presented in the SPP. How can schools communicate that data?**

While PDE can only report on statewide data currently collected, LEAs are encouraged to use their websites to provide other important facts and considerations which will more fully inform the public of school/district programs and initiatives. Such factors as arts offerings, athletic and other extra-curricular activities, and special programs and courses beyond what the SPP details will present a broader picture of the school.

PDE will provide LEAs with media kits. Included will be items such as PowerPoint presentations, press releases, news articles, and informational flyers to assist in communicating the SPP to constituencies.

1. **What is the anticipated public release date for the School Performance Profile? Is there a planned pre-release date for LEAs?**

The anticipated public release with 2012-2013 data is fall 2013. For planning purposes, LEAs will be provided with their academic scores prior to public release.

**Questions**

1. **Who can I contact if I have questions?**

Questions about the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile may be sent to

[**ra-paprofile@pa.gov**](mailto:ra-paprofile@pa.gov)