

2415.01 ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), requires New Jersey to implement a single accountability system to include challenging academic content and academic achievement standards. The accountability requirements under NCLB were built on the foundation of the former Improving America's Schools Act (IASA).

To meet the Federal requirements, New Jersey has adopted the New Jersey Single Accountability System. State assessments in language arts literacy and mathematics are based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. All pupils enrolled in New Jersey public schools, plus all pupil subgroups, must meet the proficiency benchmarks to ensure the goal of 100% proficiency. Pupils must score either "proficient" or "advanced proficient" on the assessments to be counted toward meeting the benchmarks.

Schools are evaluated using adequate yearly progress (AYP) indicators. Pupil achievement is determined by grade span (Elementary School – grades three through five, Middle School – grades six through eight, and High School – grades nine through twelve) and in each content area. There are indicators that must be met (including participation and proficiency rates) plus a secondary indicator. A safe harbor calculation is applied to measure significant progress if the benchmark is missed. When a school does not meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same content area, it is designated as a "school in need of improvement."

AYP shall be calculated for all New Jersey schools under the provisions of NCLB. Schools that do not meet AYP as defined under NCLB are placed into one of the following categories. Title I schools in need of improvement must implement the sanctions for each category.

Year 1 – Early Warning: A school that does not make AYP for one year is placed into "early warning" status.

Year 2 – In Need of Improvement/School Choice: A school that does not make AYP for two consecutive years in the same content area is designated as a “school in need of improvement.” Parents/legal guardians shall be promptly notified if their child’s school has been designated as in need of improvement. For Title I schools certain interventions apply, including intradistrict school choice (or supplemental educational services if choice is not available) and development of a school improvement plan (Title I Unified Plan). The district must offer the school technical assistance to address the areas that caused the school to be in need of improvement. Parents/legal guardians shall be notified of their right to request intradistrict public school choice and parents/legal guardians of eligible pupils shall be notified of the availability of supplemental educational services, if choice is not available, including the provider list Web address.

Year 3 – In Need of Improvement/Supplemental Educational Services (SES): A school that does not make AYP for three consecutive years in the same content area shall continue to be identified as a “school in need of improvement.” The Title I school must continue to offer intradistrict school choice and must also offer SES to eligible pupils. Technical assistance must continue to be offered by the district, parents must receive notification of the school’s status, and the school improvement plan (Title I Unified Plan) is updated annually. Parents/legal guardians of eligible pupils shall be notified of the availability of supplemental educational services, if choice is not available, including the provider list Web address.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) offers school support by engaging a team of experienced professionals to conduct an extensive school review called Collaborative Assessment and Planning for Achievement (CAPA). The CAPA team interviews stakeholders and staff, reviews school and district documents, and conducts on-site observations to develop a report that contains recommendations for school improvement, which then becomes part of the Title I Unified Plan.

Year 4 – Corrective Action: A school that does not make AYP for four consecutive years in the same content area is identified as a school in corrective action. The Title I school must continue to offer intradistrict school choice and SES, notify parents of the school's status, revise its school improvement plan (Title I Unified Plan), and receive technical assistance from the district and the NJDOE.

The district must take at least one of the following corrective actions:

1. Provide, for all relevant staff, appropriate, scientifically research-based professional development that is likely to improve academic achievement of low-performing pupils.
2. Institute a new curriculum grounded in scientifically-based research and provide appropriate professional development to support its implementation.
3. Extend the length of the school year or school day.
4. Replace the school staff who are deemed relevant to the school not making adequate progress.
5. Significantly decrease management authority at the school.
6. Restructure the internal organization of the school.
7. Appoint one or more outside experts to advise the school how to revise and strengthen the improvement plan it created while in school improvement status and how to address the specific issues underlying the school's continued inability to make AYP.

Year 5 – Planning for Restructuring: A Title I school that does not make AYP for five consecutive years in the same content area must plan to restructure. The restructuring plan is implemented at the beginning of the following school year if the school continues to miss AYP benchmarks and moves to Year 6. During the planning year, the Title I school must continue to offer intradistrict school choice and SES, notify parents of the school's status and invite parent input during the restructuring process, and receive technical assistance from the district and the NJDOE. The technical assistance design for a school being restructured emphasizes the following:

1. The importance of improving instruction by using strategies grounded in scientifically-based research so that all children in the school achieve proficiency in the core academic subjects of language arts and mathematics.
2. The importance of analyzing and applying data in decision-making.

The restructuring plan must include one of the following alternative governance systems for the school as outlined by NCLB regulations and consistent with New Jersey practice and statutes:

1. Implement any major restructuring of the school's governance that is consistent with the principles of restructuring as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act.
2. Re-open the school as a public charter school as defined by State statute and regulation (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A).
3. Replace all or most of the school staff, which may include the Principal, who are relevant to the school's inability to make adequate progress (consistent with existing contractual provisions and applicable statutory protections in Title 18A).

Year 6 – Restructuring-1: A Title I school that does not make AYP for six consecutive years in the same content area must implement the approved restructuring plan. The Title I school must continue to offer intradistrict school choice and SES, notify parents of the school's status and invite parent input and support during the implementation process, and receive technical assistance from the district and the NJDOE. Technical assistance is critical to help school staff remain focused on increasing pupil achievement while the school is adjusting to potentially radical changes in its administration and governance structures. A CAPA visit will occur at the school to determine the fidelity of implementation of the restructuring plans and to review the governance structure of the school.

Year 7 (and over) – Restructuring-2 (and over): If the school has not made AYP for seven or more consecutive years, the NJDOE will meet with school and district administrators to continually review implementation of the restructuring plan/Title I Unified Plan. Benchmark meetings with NJDOE staff, the school, and the district will occur twice a year to assess and support implementation of the school improvement plan.

Removal from Early Warning/Improvement Status: To be removed from early warning or improvement status, the school must make AYP for two consecutive years in the content area that caused the school to go into status, providing the school makes AYP in the other content areas. The first year of making AYP is a “hold year” and the school does not progress to the next sanction level, but must continue to implement current interventions. If the school does not make AYP the year following “hold,” the school goes back into improvement status at the level prior to the hold year.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, §1111

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