

Flexibility in State Accountability Plans

After reviewing approved state accountability plans, NGA has found the following flexibility. In each instance, NGA has also provided one example of a state taking advantage of this flexibility (there are usually other examples). If you have questions, please contact Scott Spicer (202/624-7811 or sspicer@nga.org).

Accountability systems may:

- Use AYP as one component of the state accountability system (e.g. Mississippi).
- Give partial credit to schools for gradations of non-proficient students. For example, schools can receive points for students that meet “basic”. Schools cannot receive full credit until a student is proficient (e.g. Massachusetts).
- Measure AYP for small schools using an evaluation of additional assessment data (e.g. Vermont).
- Have more demanding performance targets in later years (e.g. Arizona).
- Prorate assessment scores based on the school a student attended—for instance, 3rd grade test scores are prorated so that 25 percent of the score goes to the student’s kindergarten school, 25 percent to the first grade school, 25 percent to the second grade school and 25 percent to the third grade school (i.e. Delaware).

To increase the reliability of their accountability systems, states can:

- Use confidence intervals for AYP, safe harbor, or additional indicators (e.g. Nevada, Arkansas).
- Use confidence intervals that vary based on the number of targets a school must meet (i.e. Minnesota).
- Use the higher of most recent year, two years or three years of test data (e.g. Ohio).
- Require a school to miss targets in the same subject for two consecutive years before entering school improvement (e.g. Virginia).
- Require a school to miss targets in the same subject and same grade span for two consecutive years before entering school improvement (e.g. Michigan).

In holding schools accountable for subgroup performance, states can:

- Extend the period in which LEP students are included in the LEP subgroup for disaggregation (e.g. California).
- Have additional requirements for a subgroup to meet the minimum “n size” (e.g. Texas).
- Use a higher “n size” for students with disabilities (e.g. Ohio).
- Include special ed students taking out-of-level tests in participation rates (i.e. Connecticut).
- Use different “n sizes” for student achievement, participation rate and other indicators (e.g. New Hampshire).

Other flexibility:

- States can use what are traditionally considered norm-referenced tests (i.e. Iowa).
- Percent proficient can be calculated based on the number tested instead of the number enrolled (i.e. Pennsylvania).
- “Graduation rate” can include students graduating in more than four years (e.g. Maine).
- “Full academic year” can be extended (e.g. Oklahoma).
- Districts can select an additional indicator from several state-defined indicators (i.e. Georgia).
- The proficiency rate for high school assessments can be based on the number of students passing a high school test within four years (e.g. New York).
- Some states are reporting all schools that miss AYP. Others report only Title I schools that enter school improvement.