



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.

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 educators as part of the Educator Effectiveness System
- Provide parents with performance measures for the school of residence, neighboring schools, and schools 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.
- Provide a tool to inform goal setting, planning, and resource allocation to improve student achievement.

2. 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.

3. 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, and ACT results from ACT, Inc.

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

4. Is the School Performance Profile (SPP) replacing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

With the approval of Pennsylvania’s ESEA Flexibility Waiver, AYP is no longer the federal accountability measure. The SPP provides an academic performance score for all schools while waiver designations are designed for Title I schools only.

5. How frequently will the School Performance Profile be released?

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

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

Intermediate units 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.

7. Will individual educator performance ratings be made available to the public?

The PA School Performance Profile is designed to provide a building level score. No educator specific data or individual performance data are included in the SPP.

8. Are charter schools included in the School Performance Profile?

Yes, charter schools are included in the SPP and receive an academic performance score based upon its configuration.

Data Elements and Calculations

9. 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 educational 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.
- The Academic Performance tab displays the school’s academic score, academic performance fast facts, the academic performance elements and scores, and the federal accountability designation, as applicable.
- 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.

10. How are school scores calculated?

The PA School Performance Profile will provide a quantitative academic score based upon a 100-point scale, using the following source data:

Indicators of Academic Achievement 40% (44% for CTCs)

- Percent Proficient or Advanced on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)/Keystone Exams in Mathematics/Algebra I, Reading/Literature, Science/Biology, 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% (3% for CTCs)

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

Indicators of Closing the Achievement Gap – Historically Underperforming Students 5% (3% for CTCs)

- 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 in each of the assessed content areas.

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)/Keystone Exams in Mathematics/Algebra I, Reading/Literature, Science/Biology, 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.

11. 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.

12. For AYP calculations, schools had to 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.

13. How are Historically Underperforming Students identified?

This category replaces the various subgroups previously identified for purposes of AYP. With an N count of 11, 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/Keystone Exams. 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.

14. How is Closing the Achievement Gap calculated?

Closing the Achievement Gap is calculated for each of the PSSA/Keystone Exam subjects (Mathematics/Algebra I, Reading/Literature, Writing, and Science/Biology). 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.)

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

If a school offers any combination of International Baccalaureate (IB), 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.)

16. How is student mobility factored into a school's score?

In calculating Proficient/Advanced related to academic achievement, students must be in

school by October 1 and stay in the school through the PSSA/Keystone Exam testing date in order to be attributed to a school.

17. How will Keystone Exams impact calculations in PVAAS?

PVAAS reporting for the Keystone Exams will be provided in September 2013. This reporting will include students who have taken a Keystone related course and the corresponding Keystone Exam in SY12-13. This will NOT include students who are not enrolled in a Keystone course in SY12-13 (Example: taking a Keystone for federal accountability purposes only).

The SY12-13 PVAAS reporting of the Keystone Exams will be included in the School Performance Profile (SPP). Each Keystone Exam area is included in that PVAAS subject area for the SPP.

- Keystone Algebra I will be included in the PVAAS Math reporting section of a school's SPP.
- Keystone Literature will be included in the PVAAS Reading reporting section of a school's SPP.
- Keystone Biology will be included in the PVAAS Science reporting section of a school's SPP.

There may be some schools that have PVAAS reporting for PSSAs and Keystone Exams in the same subject area (Example: PSSA Math and Keystone Algebra I. They would both be included in that PVAAS Math growth reporting for the SPP.)

18. 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

19. 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 cumulative closure will be calculated. As long as a school is meeting the overall closure, it will be defined as meeting its annual target.

Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement

20. 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.

21. 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

22. Does a school receive an academic performance score in its first year of operation?

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

23. 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, promotion rate, and attendance rate.

For the Keystone achievement results in the SPP, keep in mind that Keystone Exam scores are banked, and it is the 11th grade cohort that is used in the calculation of the achievement data.

24. 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 school 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 cohort 11 Keystone Exam scores will be used.

25. 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.

26. 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 schools; thus, the attribution for these students is with the home schools. Full time comprehensive CTCs have Fast Facts and receive an academic performance score.

Communicating the School Performance Profile

27. 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

28. 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.

29. 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.

Questions

30. Who can I contact if I have questions?

Questions about the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile may be sent to ra-paprofile@pa.gov