

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

OHIO

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All information was current as of that date.*

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.

Senate Bill 55, passed by the Ohio General Assembly in the summer of 1997 revamped the state's assessment and accountability system. Changes included the implementation of a "Fourth Grade Guarantee," and increased rigor of the high school graduation exam.

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)* **Ohio Proficiency Tests**

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*
 - Grades 1, 2, and 3: local assessment of reading skills
 - Grades 4, 6, 9 and 12: Writing, Reading, Mathematics, Citizenship, and Science (Note: Grade 9 tests are being phased out, to be replaced by the new High School Graduation Tests)
 - Local CBE assessment required at every grade level in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced* Criterion-referenced

- CRT (state); Local can be either
- *Matrix or Census Testing*
 - Census
- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.*
 - Grade 4: Writing test (two pieces of writing based on one stimulus); Reading (28-32 multiple choice, 5-7 short answer, 2 extended response); Mathematics (30 multiple choice, 8 short answer, 2 extended response); Citizenship (30 multiple choice, 8 short answer, 2 extended response); Science (30 multiple choice, 8 short answer, 2 extended response)
 - Grade 6: Writing test (two pieces of writing based on one stimulus); Reading (24-28 multiple choice, 7-9 short answer, 2 extended response); Mathematics (34 multiple choice, 10 short answer, 2 extended response); Citizenship (34 multiple choice; 10 short answer; 2 extended response); Science (34 multiple choice, 10 short answer, 2 extended response).
 - Grade 9: Writing test (two essays, two prompts), Reading (40 multiple choice); Mathematics (40 multiple choice); Citizenship (50 multiple choice); Science (40 multiple choice).
 - Grade 12: Writing (two essays, two prompts); Reading (40 multiple choice); Mathematics (50 multiple choice or machine scored); Citizenship (50 multiple choice); Science (40 multiple choice).
- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)*
 - Grades 4 and 6: Testing begins on the first Monday following the 15th of March
 - Grade 9: Testing begins on the fourth Monday in October for the fall administration. Testing begins on the first Monday in March for the spring administration.
 - Grade 12: Testing begins on the first Monday in February.
- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

Currently, each non-exempted student in Ohio must pass all of the ninth-grade proficiency tests and meet state and local curricular requirements before receiving a diploma. In addition, any student graduating after September 15, 2000, is required to pass the ninth-grade science test and meet the other requirements in order to receive a diploma (science standards were the most recently adopted).

However, Senate Bill 55 phases out the ninth-grade proficiency tests. The last administration of the ninth-grade proficiency tests will be in Summer 2004. Anyone graduating after September 15, 2004 is required to pass new high school graduation qualifying exams.

In addition, graduates have the possibility of receiving a high school Diploma with Honors or certificates for high achievement on proficiency tests. Two standards have been established

by the State Board of Education for each twelfth-grade proficiency test: proficient level and honors level. While the proficient level describes satisfactory performance of the “typical” high school graduate, the honors level describes a higher level of performance. Certificates shall be provided by the state to schools for awarding to students who achieve proficient levels on all five tests, or who achieve honors level in one or more of the tests. Students may also earn a \$500 voucher if they are proficient in all five twelfth-grade tests and if they enroll in an Ohio institution of higher education.

A Diploma with Honors shall be awarded to students who complete the high school curriculum or IEP, demonstrate proficiency on ninth-grade proficiency tests, and meet seven of the eight following honors criteria (The following criteria are for students who take a college preparatory curriculum. Slightly different criteria are required of students who complete a vocational track and would like to obtain a Diploma with Honors):

- Earn four units of English
 - Earn three units of mathematics, including at least the competencies obtained in Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry
 - Earn three units of science
 - Earn three units of social studies
 - Earn either three units of one foreign language or two units each of two foreign languages
 - Earn one unit of fine arts
 - Maintain an overall high-school grade point average of at least 3.5 on a four-point scale up to the last grading period of the senior year.
 - Obtain the honors level score(s) on the twelfth-grade proficiency tests or obtain a composite score of 27 on the ACT or an equivalent composite score on the SAT (1130 on SAT or 1210 on SAT 1).
- *Other Assessments* NAEP
 - *Transitional or Final Assessment System* Ohio is in the process of implementing the final assessment system.
3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state? Probe on:*
- *State Department of Education*
 - *Commercial Testing Organization*
 - *State teachers and administrators*
 - *Assessment Committee*
 - *Other*

If a commercial test was used by the state, were modifications or additions made to the assessment to address state requirements or standards? If so, what did they include?

For the fourth and sixth grade proficiency tests, the initial banks of items were constructed by Riverside Publishing Company. The initial banks of items for the ninth-grade proficiency tests were constructed by IOX Assessment Associates Inc. ACT prepared and field tested additional items for the original tests and new items for ninth-grade science, as well as items for all the twelfth-grade proficiency tests. Measurement Incorporated then continued item

development. Items were written according to specifications provided by Ohio educators and field tested in Ohio schools.

All test questions and related material on any of the tests are written or selected according to specifications provided by Ohio educators and field tested in Ohio schools. Ohio educators, serving as subject matter specialists on a content committee for each test area at each grade level tested, review all items prior to and following completion of field testing.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

District responsibilities with regard to statewide assessment concern the remediation of students who score below the proficiency level on state assessments. As of July 1, 1999, districts were required to begin summer remediation for those students who were below proficient in three or more 4th or 6th grade tests. In the summer of 2001 they are required to offer remediation for students below proficient on the 4th grade reading test as well.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:*
- *Refining standards*
 - *Revamping assessments*
 - *Adding components to assessments*

All of the tests at each grade are based upon learning outcomes adopted by the State Board of Education. These learning outcomes specify the knowledge and skills that each student is expected to have encountered in each content area and grade level by the time he or she reaches that grade level. These learning outcomes reflect expectations outlined in State adopted model competency-based education programs.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The Ohio proficiency assessments were developed specifically for Ohio based on Ohio standards. Moreover, the grade level content committees and the bias review panel recommend those items that should be retained in the item bank for use on test form and those that should be discarded. Only reviewed, field tested, and approved items are used on any of the proficiency tests or the half-length practice tests that the state provides.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*
- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification*
 - *Teacher, School and/or District accountability*
 - *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)*
 - *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.*
 - *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers*
 - *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)*

The primary purpose of the proficiency tests are:

- To evaluate high school curriculum in writing, reading, mathematics, citizenship, and science relative to the learning outcomes adopted.
- To measure student proficiency with respect to what is taught in high school
- To provide an indication to students tested whether or not they have attained the knowledge and skills expected of the “typical” high school graduate.
- Identify student needing intervention (4th and 6th grades)
- Graduation from high school (9th grade)
- School Accountability (all grades)
- Program Evaluation (all grades)
- School Improvement (all grades)

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The most imminent change to the Ohio assessment system will be the implementation of high school graduation requirements as legislated by Senate Bill 55 (details provided in question 2). In addition, local requirements for remediation will be implemented in 2001.

In spring 2000, the Governor convened a commission to review the assessment and accountability systems. Their report and recommendations are expected by the end of the year.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

A unique issue with regard to assessment in Ohio: Maryland and Ohio have signed a reciprocity agreement regarding the ninth-grade mathematics and citizenship tests. A student who passes the Maryland Functional Testing Program tests in mathematics and/or citizenship and then moves to Ohio will get credit in Ohio for the areas passed and the same is true for a student who passes Ohio's tests and moves to Maryland.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Policies regarding students with disabilities: In accordance with Ohio rule 3301-13-03, each school district shall adopt a policy and establish procedures regarding the participation of students with disabilities in the proficiency testing programs. A school district may exempt a student with a disability from taking one or more of the proficiency tests administered during any school year. Such an exemption is made through the individualized education program (IEP). Any student who is granted such an IEP exemption shall take all other proficiency tests

that are prescribed by rule 3301-13-01, but are not specifically exempted by the IEP. After July 1, 2000, any student who does not take the state tests must have an alternative assessment in accordance with this rule.

Policies regarding students with Limited English Proficiency: LEP students may be exempted from the state assessments for the first two years that they are enrolled in U.S. schools. The decision to exempt an LEP student is made by the school and district, in consultation with parents. An exempted LEP student may still take the assessment, but the results are not required to be reported to the state. This two-year exemption, however, does not excuse students from the requirement of passing the 9th grade proficiency test in order to receive a high school diploma.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Each district shall make modifications in test format and/or test administration procedures to accommodate the needs of the individual student in accordance with the provisions of the IEP. However, no modification shall be made in the content of any test. Modifications must be consistent with those typically afforded the student in the classroom, and are specified in the IEP. Braille and large-print versions of the test are provided to districts upon request. A variety of modifications in administrative procedures could also be made, including, but not limited to, increased time, oral administration, and use of a scribe.

LEP students may qualify for an alternative (oral) administration on the ninth-grade proficiency tests if they are in the second semester of 12th grade, have not yet passed the high school exit exam but will fulfil all other graduation requirements that semester. They may also request use of a state-provided interpreter. This interpreter may translate questions and answers in math and citizenship. In the case of reading, the interpreter may translate questions, but cannot do so for the passage that is to be read. At any grade level, students whose native language is not English may use a translation dictionary and have extended testing time.

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

Ohio provides translations of state-level assessments in languages other than English only as described in number 2 above. However, the state department does recommend that native language assessment be used to determine the academic placement and progress of students who have limited English proficiency.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages*

Ohio developed a model set of assessment procedures that school districts may use, or each district may select other alternative measures.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

Yes, Ohio has the goal of inclusion of students with disabilities and LEP students on statewide assessments.

6. *Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are currently planned, other than the implementation of the alternate assessment.

Performance Standards

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

Ohio reports assessment results with different levels, depending on the grade level tested. Student results of the ninth-grade tests are reported as pass or fail. Results of the fourth and sixth grade tests are reported as advanced, proficient, or below proficient. Results of the twelfth grade tests are reported as honors, proficient, or below proficient. The scores associated with each of these designations vary among the grade levels and content areas.

There is only one standard (proficient) for the ninth-grade tests because those test reflect minimum proficiency levels. The other three testing program do reflect more than minimum level, consequently they have a proficient score and a second, higher, standard.

The scores associated with the assessments and performance standards as follows:

Grade Four

	Writing	Reading	Mathematics	Citizenship	Science
Proficient Standards 1999 and after	5 of 8	217 Actual 1999 raw score of 34 of 42	218 Actual 1999 raw score 36 of 54	218 Actual 1999 raw score 42 of 54	215 Actual 199 raw score 31 of 54
Advanced Standards	7 of 8	250 Actual 1999 raw score 41 of 42	250 Actual 1999 raw score 46 of 54	250 Actual 1999 raw score 50 of 54	250 Actual 1999 raw score 40 of 54

Grade Six

	Writing	Reading	Mathematics	Citizenship	Science
Proficient Standards 1999 and after	5 of 8	222 Actual 1999 raw score 35 of 50	200 Actual 1999 raw score 29 of 62	200 Actual 1999 raw score 37 of 62	200 Actual 1999 raw score 33 of 62
Advanced Standards	7 of 8	250 Actual 1999 raw score 42 of 50	250 Actual 1999 raw score 50 of 62	250 Actual 1999 raw score 56 of 62	250 Actual 1999 raw score 50 of 62

Grade 9

	Writing	Reading	Mathematics	Citizenship	Science
Proficient Standards	5 of 8	200 Actual 1999 raw score 28 of 40	200 Actual 1999 raw score 25 of 40	200 Actual 1999 raw score 30 of 50	200 Actual 1999 raw score 24 of 40

Grade 12

	Writing	Reading	Mathematics	Citizenship	Science
Proficient Standards 1998 and after	7 of 12	215 Actual 1999 raw score 26 of 40	218 Actual 1999 raw score 29 of 50	221 Actual 1999 raw score 32 of 50	200 Actual 1999 raw score 23 of 40
Honors Standards	10 of 12	250 Actual 1999 raw score 36 of 40	250 Actual 1999 raw score 39 of 50	250 Actual 1999 raw score 40 of 50	250 Actual 1999 raw score 32 of 40

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required*

Ohio has established target percentages of students who are expected to pass the proficiency tests at various grade levels. These percentages refer to district-wide assessment results:

- 75% of students should pass the citizenship, mathematics, reading, and writing portion of the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Tests.

- 75% of students should pass the citizenship, mathematics, reading, and writing portions of the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests by the end of 9th grade.
- 85% of students should pass the citizenship, mathematics, reading, and writing portions of the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests by the end of 10th grade.
- 60% of students should pass the citizenship, mathematics, reading, and writing portions of the Twelfth-Grade Proficiency Tests.

In addition, the state has set two non-cognitive goals:

- 93% minimum student attendance rate
- 90% graduation rate

These targets are used to generate the following performance categories for school districts in Ohio:

- Effective
- Continuous Improvement
- Academic Watch
- Academic Emergency

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

The performance categories outlined in question #1 are based entirely on assessments. The performance categories for districts (Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, Academic Emergency) are based upon 27 cognitive and non-cognitive indicators. Each indicator is given equal weight. The final unit of analysis is the district designation, as listed above.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

All students are included except those exempted by an IEP and those exempted temporarily because they have not attended U.S. schools for two years.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are proposed.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

As of the spring of 2000, the school districts in Ohio fell into the following categories:

- Academic Emergency: 69 districts
- Academic Watch: 131 districts
- Continuous Improvement: 377 districts
- Effective: 30 districts

Reporting Performance Data

1. Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:

- *Student reports*

Reports with results on individual student performance on proficiency tests are sent home to parents.

- *School reports*

Ohio produces **School Building Report Cards** which include the following information:

- ✓ General Enrollment
- ✓ Annual spending per pupil
- ✓ Assessment results by grade, subject, school, district, state average, and 3-year trends.
- ✓ Student attendance rate in school, district, state, and 3-year trend.
- ✓ High school graduation rate by school, district, state, and 3-year trend.
- ✓ Graduates with state honors diploma by school, district, state, and 3-year trend.

- *District reports*

Ohio produces **School District Reports**, which include:

- ✓ District Rating and explanation of rating system
- ✓ District performance on 27 performance standards (proficiency tests and minimum state performance standards)
- ✓ Percentage of students passing each test, compared to similar districts and state average, by grade and subject
- ✓ Three-year trend information on proficiency tests
- ✓ Percentage of students required to take the test, those who actually did take the test, those who passed, for all students and students with disabilities
- ✓ Student attendance rate and 3-year trend
- ✓ Students suspended
- ✓ Average length of suspension
- ✓ 4th graders promoted to 5th grade
- ✓ 6th graders promoted to 7th grade
- ✓ High School graduation rate and 3-year trend
- ✓ Graduates with state honors diploma
- ✓ Career-Technical placement rate
- ✓ Questions to discuss in your community
- ✓ Contacts for more information
- ✓ Disaggregated enrollment information
- ✓ Staffing data
- ✓ Revenue per pupil from different sources

- ✓ Annual spending

Ohio also produces **Student Performance Results by Gender and Ethnic Group** for each district. These reports include data on:

- ✓ Student attendance rate
- ✓ Percentage of students suspended
- ✓ Average length of student suspensions
- ✓ Percentage of 4th graders promoted to 5th grade
- ✓ Percentage of 6th graders promoted to 7th grade
- ✓ High school graduation rate
- ✓ Percentage of Graduates with honors diplomas

All data is disaggregated by gender and ethnic group (African-American, Hispanic, White, and other), by state and district.

- *State reports*

State-level Performance data is available on the Ohio Department of Education website. Data on the Proficiency tests is available by: state, district, grade, maximum raw score and scaled score, number of students tested, number of students passed, percent of students passed, number of students at proficient or honors level.

In addition, a statewide data file for report card analysis is provided in an Excel 5.0 file. This file may be used for comparative or aggregate analysis. The file contains the following information (includes some district level information as well):

- ✓ Percentage of students passing proficiency tests
- ✓ Attendance rate
- ✓ Graduation rate
- ✓ Similar district comparisons
- ✓ Summary of 9th grade proficiency results for each district, their similar districts and the whole state.
- ✓ Percentages of students required to take tests compared to actual percentage of students tested
- ✓ Disaggregation of performance for disability students.
- ✓ Additional data on the performance of districts: attendance, discipline
- ✓ Enrollment, disaggregated by disability, economically disadvantaged
- ✓ Median income
- ✓ Average number of pupils per teacher
- ✓ Teacher attendance rate
- ✓ Revenue by source and expenditure type.

- *Title I reports*

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

The report cards are sent to parents of all children enrolled in public schools. Moreover, a statewide public education campaign was conducted around the release of the report cards to

raise awareness of school improvement efforts and to emphasize the importance of community involvement and support of public schools. To increase access to the report cards for all Ohio taxpayers, including those who do not have school-age children in Ohio's public schools, the report cards are available through local public libraries on CD-ROM, the Department of Education website, and via a toll-free hotline.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)? Check on the following categories required by federal regulation:*

- *Gender*
- *Race*
- *LEP status*
- *Migrant Status*
- *SWD*
- *SES*

The following data is disaggregated by gender and ethnic group: student attendance rate, percentage of students suspended, average length of student suspension, percentage of 4th graders promoted to 5th grade, percentage of 6th graders promoted to 7th grade, high school graduation rate, percentage of graduates with honors diplomas. The pass rates on proficiency tests by grade and subject for students with disabilities are included in district reports. Disaggregated data is available for download from the state Department of Education website and in print format.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from "1996-97 on")?*

Report cards generally contain trend data for the past three years.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The percentage of students who were required to take proficiency tests, the numbers of those who actually took the tests, and the pass rates are provided for all students and those with disabilities. Results are given by proficiency subject test and by grade.

6. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

Ohio law requires any district designated as CI, AW or AE to develop a three-year **Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)**. CIPs must include the following: (a) analysis of why the district has not met certain state standards, (b) strategies the district will use to improve its performance and (c) resources the district will allocate to address the problem. At least one public hearing must be held on the CIP before the local school board formally adopts it. Copies of the final plan must be made available to the public.

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

Ohio is in the process of implementing a report card system that was legislated by Senate Bill 55 and House Bill 412 in 1997. February 2000 was the date of the first distribution of “official” report cards; pilot report cards had been distributed in previous years. Future implementation plans include the calculation of annual progress based on the standard unit of improvement established in law and the determination of whether districts may move into a new performance category.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

One interesting issue with regard to reporting in Ohio is the degree to which report cards attempt to engage stakeholders in the educational process. Each school and district report card includes sections such as:

- ✓ What to do with this information: (examples) visit your school, ask about what’s being done to improve your school’s performance, review results with your children
- ✓ Want more information: contact information
- ✓ Questions to discuss in your community: (examples) how is your district doing compared to others with similar characteristics? What efforts are underway to improve areas where results are not satisfactory? Are most students in your district required to take the tests? Are most students actually taking the test? How does your district ensure a safe, disciplined, drug-free learning environment?

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

Ohio is in the process of implementing a new accountability system, in response to Senate Bill 55 in 1997. The key components are new high school exit exams, the “Fourth-Grade Guarantee,” and a district rating system.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?*

Probe on:

- *Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?*
- *For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?*
- *Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?*
- *To what targets or performance levels?*
- *With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?*

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

High School Exit Exams

Currently, each non-exempted student in Ohio must pass all of the ninth-grade proficiency tests and meet state and local curricular requirements before receiving a diploma. In addition, any student graduating after September 15, 2000, is required to pass the ninth-grade science test and meet the other requirements in order to receive a diploma (science standards were the most recently adopted).

However, Senate Bill 55 phases out the Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests in favor of a new set of tests designed to provide a more rigorous measure of students' high school achievement.

These tests will be:

- Administered at least once each school year to all tenth-grade students
- Administered at least twice each school year to all eleventh- and twelfth-grade students who have not yet attained a passing score on any of the tests.
- Required to qualify for a high school diploma starting September 15, 2004
- Beginning in the spring 2003, the existing Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests will be phased out.

“Fourth-Grade Guarantee”

The Fourth-Grade Guarantee was created by Ohio legislators in 1997 as part of Senate Bill 55. Its intent is to ensure that students learn to read at grade level in their early years, especially by fourth grade. The guarantee emphasizes prevention of reading difficulties and immediate intervention and intense remediation if a student is reading behind grade level. It encourages the involvement of parents in this process.

Beginning with the 1998-99 school year, the Fourth-Grade Guarantee requires school districts to:

1. Assess each student at the end of the first-, second- and third-grades to identify students reading below grade level.
2. Offer intervention services to first-, second- and third-grade students identified as reading below grade level during the school year, including intense summer remediation for third-graders not reading at grade level during the summer of 1999.
3. Notify the parent or guardian of each student in the first-, second- and third- grades identified as reading below grade level and provide intervention services. For each student required to receive intervention, the district will involve the student's parent or guardian and classroom teacher in the development of the intervention strategy and will offer to the parent or guardian the opportunity to be involved in implementation.
4. Offer remediation in the summer of 1999 to any fourth-grade or sixth-grade student who failed three or more sections of the proficiency test.
5. In addition, beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, Senate Bill 55 permits school districts to retain any student who fails three or more of the five fourth-grade proficiency or sixth-grade proficiency tests, regardless of whether the student attends summer school.

As of July 1, 2001, the Fourth-Grade Guarantee prohibits any school district from promoting to fifth grade, a student who has not passed the reading section of the fourth-grade proficiency test, unless

- the student is a child with a disability whose IEP excused him or her from taking the test or
- the student's principal and reading teacher agree that the student is academically prepared, as defined in the district's promotion policy for fifth grade.

Retention of Truant Students

Senate Bill 55 sets out a number of restrictions on the promotion from one grade to another of students who are chronically absent from school. These restrictions include prohibiting school districts from promoting a student to the next grade level if the student has been absent, without an excuse, for more than 10 percent of the school year **and** has failed two or more subjects.

School districts must promote such a student if his or her principal and the teachers of the failed subjects agree the student is academically prepared for the next grade level.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Ohio accountability policies do not focus on the school level. However, the General Assembly appropriated money to award to schools demonstrating significant improvement on report card indicators from 1998 to 1999 and 1999 to 2000.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Senate Bill 55 puts in place a performance accountability rating system that uses a tiered approach to identifying districts based on their performance and focuses on improvement over time. Under the new law, the State Board of Education and State Department of Education are required to issue, for each school district, an annual report card and designate each district as Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, or Academic Emergency.

Senate Bill 55 established 18 performance criteria (numbered). Legislative changes since the passage of Senate Bill 55 expanded that number to 27; new indicators are marked with (*):

1. 75% of students passing the citizenship (1), mathematics (2), reading (3), writing (4) and science(*) portions of the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Tests.
2. 75% of students passing the citizenship (*), mathematics (*), reading (*), writing (*), and science (*) portions of the Sixth-Grade Proficiency Tests.
3. 75% of students passing the citizenship (5), mathematics (6), reading (7), writing (8), and science (*) portions of the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests by the end of 9th grade.
4. 85% of students passing the citizenship (9), mathematics (10), reading (11), writing (12), and science (*) portions of the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests by the end of 10th grade.

5. 60% of students passing the citizenship (13), mathematics (14), reading (15), writing (16) and science (*) portions of the Twelfth-Grade Proficiency Tests.
6. 93% minimum student attendance rate (17).
7. 90% graduation rate (18) (changed from 3% dropout rate).

School districts are assigned a performance accountability rating based on the number of performance indicators they meet. According to Senate Bill 55, school districts will be rated according to the following criteria:

- **Effective:** Achieves 26 or more of the indicators
- **Continuous Improvement:** Achieves 14 to 25 of the indicators
- **Academic Watch:** Achieves 9 to 13 of the indicators
- **Academic Emergency:** Achieves 8 or fewer of the indicators.

Ohio law requires any district designated as CI, AW or AE to **develop a three-year Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)**. CIPs must include the following: (a) analysis of why the district has not met certain state standards, (b) strategies the district will use to improve its performance and (c) resources the district will allocate to address the problem. At least one public hearing must be held on the CIP before the local school board formally adopts it. Copies of the final plan must be made available to the public.

AW and AE districts are required to take these additional actions:

- Adopt a mission statement to guide the improvement efforts.
- Establish an advisory committee to analyze local performance and determine improvement priorities, goals and corrective actions. The advisory committee must include parents, business and community leaders, and representatives of vocational education planning districts and local organizations serving students and their families.
- Submit evidence of the local school board's approval of the CIP, and of the public hearing on the plan, to the Ohio Department of Education.
- Develop a timeline and process for implementing the CIP, including establishing spending priorities, monitoring the results of the improvement strategies (and adjusting the plan if needed), and reporting progress annually.

AE and AW districts are subject to three potential levels of intervention by the Department. These interventions, which are designed to assist low-performing districts in their improvement efforts, include:

1. **CIP Review.** AE and AW districts are required to submit their CIPs to the ODE within 120 days of being designated as AE or AW. They are then required to modify the plan if requested by the Department, and to implement the plan within 165 days of their designation.

2. Site Evaluation. Districts that do not achieve satisfactory overall progress for two consecutive years, or that fail to submit a CIP to the Department within the required time, are subject to a site evaluation by representatives of the Department. Site evaluations are designed to review the conditions in the district and to determine the district's progress on implementation of its CIP. (For AW districts, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may order a site evaluation if the district does not meet its annual improvement targets; for AE districts, the state superintendent is required to order a site evaluation under such conditions.)

3. School Improvement Guidance Panel. Depending on the results of the site evaluation, the state superintendent may appoint a school improvement guidance panel. Members would be recommended by the local board of education with community input. The role of the panel would be to:

- Direct an independent audit of the district
- Provide direction for revising the district's CIP, as necessary
- Oversee and assist in the implementation of the CIP and
- Inform the Department and the local school board of its actions and of the district's progress.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
- *Other*

As noted above, Ohio has adopted minimum performance standards on each of the state proficiency tests. In addition to these, Ohio developed a “**standard unit of improvement**” for those districts that have not yet achieved effective status.

Continuous improvement is a critical component of Ohio's performance accountability system. To assist school districts designated as Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch and Academic Emergency in making appropriate levels of progress over time, certain expectations, follow-up actions and state-level interventions are required. Satisfactory improvement is tied to the rating scale and to a “**standard unit of improvement,**” which represents 2.5 percentage points of improvement for indicators where the district did not meet the state's minimum performance standard.

For districts not achieving the Effective rating, satisfactory improvement must be demonstrated in three ways:

- 1. Total percentage points improvement.** Each year, districts must show a total improvement that equals or exceeds the total number of indicators not met the previous year multiplied by 2.5 percentage points.
- 2. Number of indicators with at least 2.5 percentage points improvement.** Each year, districts also must show at least 2.5 percentage points improvement for at least two-thirds of the indicators not met the previous year.

- 3. Progress toward moving to next higher rating.** Districts also must show enough improvement to move from their current rating to the next higher rating, according to the following schedule:
- AE** 5 years to achieve Academic Watch
 - AW** 3 years to achieve Continuous Improvement
 - CI** 5 years to achieve Effective

These three requirements are designed to assist districts in making steady and adequate progress over a reasonable time frame. Districts are subject to all three requirements until they achieve an Effective rating. These districts are required to establish annual performance goals for each school building in the district to ensure that the appropriate time line is met.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

All students required to take the proficiency tests are included in calculating the measures of progress.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The Title I and non-Title I systems of adequate yearly progress are both based on the same Standard Unit of Improvement and the twenty-seven state performance indicators.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Subgroup performance measures are not included as an indicator of progress in the accountability system.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

The state performance accountability system applies only to public school districts. However, any student graduating from a chartered nonpublic high school after September 15, 1998, must pass ninth-grade proficiency tests in writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Ohio is in the process of implementing an accountability system that was the product of Senate Bill 55. The timeline for continued implementation is as follows:

- July 2000: CIPs for Academic Watch and Academic Emergency districts are due to the Ohio Department of Education.
- July – August 2000: Academic Watch and Academic emergency districts must begin implementation of their CIPs.

- February 2001: Annual progress will be calculated for districts in Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, and Academic Emergency based on the standard unit of improvement established by law.
- July 1, 2001: The Fourth-Grade Guarantee prohibits any school district from promoting to fifth grade, a student who has not passed the reading section of the fourth-grade proficiency test
- February 2002: Annual progress will be calculated for districts in Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, and Academic Emergency. Site evaluations scheduled for districts declining in performance for two consecutive years.
- February 2003: New or modified CIPs submitted to Department of Education based on new designation. Annual progress calculated for districts in Continuous Improvement and Academic Emergency and Academic Watch. Site evaluations scheduled for districts declining in performance for two consecutive years. Three-year progress calculated to determine whether districts move into a new category.
- Spring 2003: The existing Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests will be phased out.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

Ohio officials did not identify any challenges at this point.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Districts are identified as low-performing when they receive the designation as Academic Watch (AW) or Academic Emergency (AE), on the basis of the accountability rating system, outlined in the section on accountability, above.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

The state identifies districts that are characterized as low performing.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

The state provides all of the above forms of assistance. For details, please see below.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

In November 1999, the Department of Education rolled out its Technical Assistance program for those districts identified as AE or AW. It is coordinated and staffed through the Department and through Educational Service Centers. In addition, the state has been divided into nine regions to

improve access to services. Through regional coordinating teams, successful strategies will be shared and partnerships will be created among districts and education stakeholders.

Regional Coordinating Teams will include representatives from education-related organizations such as:

- Colleges and Universities
- Families and Children First Councils
- Regional Professional Development Centers
- Special Education Regional Resource Centers
- Educational Televisions Corporations
- Ohio Education Computer Network Sites

Each AE and AW district will receive training, personalized assistance and follow-up in each of the following areas:

- Information on the state's performance accountability system
- How to develop and implement a Continuous Improvement Plan
- Analysis of performance data at the district, building and classroom levels
- Analysis and alignment of district's curriculum – and aligning the curriculum with the state proficiency outcomes
- Whole-school reform models such as the New American Schools Models, Success for All or Baldrige
- Needs-assessment to identify areas for intensive, ongoing professional development for classroom teachers, and assistance in brokering resources for professional development.

Finally, School Improvement Award funds are available to approximately 30 of the highest priority schools in the state, based on the percentage of low income students and low assessment results.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

The support provided to low performing districts and schools is the same, regardless of Title I status. This support is specifically designed for low-performing districts, and is not general support for all districts.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

As noted in the previous section, districts that are identified as AE or AW may improve their designation as they improve on the following indicators:

1. Total percentage points improvement. Each year, districts must show a total improvement that exceeds the total number of indicators not met the previous year multiplied by 2.5 percentage points.

2. Number of indicators with at least 2.5 percentage points improvement. Each year, districts also must show at least 2.5 percentage points improvement for at least two-thirds of the indicators not met the previous year.
3. Progress toward moving to next higher rating. Districts also must show enough improvement to move from their current rating to the next higher rating, according to the following schedule:

AE	5 years to achieve Academic Watch
AW	3 years to achieve Continuous Improvement

These three requirements are designed to assist districts in making steady and adequate progress over a reasonable time frame. Districts are subject to all three requirements until they achieve an Effective rating. These districts are required to establish annual performance goals for each school building in the district to ensure that the appropriate time line is met.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Ohio law requires any district designated as CI, AW or AE to develop a three-year **Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)**. CIPs must include the following: (a) analysis of why the district has not met certain state standards, (b) strategies the district will use to improve its performance and (c) resources the district will allocate to address the problem. At least one public hearing must be held on the CIP before the local school board formally adopts it. Copies of the final plan must be made available to the public.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The changes *in* the identification of low-performing districts will mirror the changes that are anticipated for the state accountability system. For more information, please refer to the section on accountability, above.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*
 - *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
 - *What targets have been established?*
 - *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
 - *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

The criteria that are used in the definition of adequate yearly progress in Ohio are the same as those used in the general accountability system. The twenty-seven indicators, which are listed on page 15, include both cognitive and non-cognitive data. The targets that have been established

for Title I schools are also those that were discussed earlier in the section on accountability. Subgroup performance is not included in the criteria, nor are local assessments.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

The state's minimum performance indicators – the twenty-seven indicators discussed earlier – also apply to Title I schools for purposes of Title I accountability and adequate yearly progress. Hence, to make adequate yearly progress, a Title I school or district must either meet the state standards, or advance by one standard unit of improvement.

The general system of accountability in Ohio applies to districts; hence for district adequate yearly progress under Title I, the process is exactly the same as under the general state system. Title I schools use the same indicators, but only those that are applicable for their level of schooling. For example, a school with grade four would use the academic indicators that are relevant for grade 4, plus the attendance rate indicator. A high school with grades 9-12 would use the cognitive indicators for grade 9, the cognitive indicators for grade 12, the attendance indicator and the graduation indicator. This is a final definition.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The district is responsible for identifying schools that have not made adequate yearly progress, based on state data. The state is responsible for identifying districts that have not made adequate yearly progress.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

It is the responsibility of the district to identify schools that are in need of improvement. If a school does not meet state standards or does not improve by one standard unit of improvement for two years, then it is placed in program improvement. A school must meet state standards or show adequate progress for two years out of three to be removed from program improvement. Ohio does not identify districts for program improvement. However, districts with schools in need of improvement must specify strategies for improvement in their application for Title I funding for the subsequent year.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*

- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

As with low-performing schools in general, the state provides all of the above types of assistance. For details, please see below.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*
- *Other – Explain*

As with all low-performing schools, the State offers many types of assistance:

- ✓ State Department of Education consultants assigned to each school district
- ✓ Nine Regional Coordinating Teams, who assist with improvement plans, instructional strategies, alignment between curriculum and assessment, etc.
- ✓ School improvement funds, with special funds for approximately thirty of the highest priority schools in the state.

In addition, the state Title I office has consultants who are assigned to each of the counties in the state to address school improvement needs. Finally, schools that are identified as in need of improvement must devote 10% of their Title I funds to professional development.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Ohio officials state that waivers have not played a significant role in Title I, with the exception of a blanket waiver for schoolwide programs; the state was able to lower the poverty threshold to 35% in order to implement a schoolwide program.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Aside from the continued implementation of the accountability system, there are no Title I-specific changes that are anticipated.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

The Title I and non-Title I systems of adequate yearly progress are both based on the same Standard Unit of Improvement and the twenty-seven state performance indicators.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

Ohio officials identified two challenges in the area of Title I

- The appropriate allocation of funds
- The tension between federal law and local control; resistance from local level to federal regulations.

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