UNDERSTANDING CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The Academic Performance Score for a school is based upon indicators that define a high performing school. Many data elements contribute to the academic score – one of which is Closing the Achievement Gap.

Closing the Achievement Gap in the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile is measured for two groups of students:

- **All Students** – defined as all students enrolled for a full academic year taking the PSSA/Keystone Exam
- **Historically Underperforming Students** – 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 Exam. 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.

For both groups of students, Closing the Achievement Gap is calculated for each of the PSSA/Keystone 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 baseline year has been established as the 2012-2013 school year; thus, there will be no Closing the Achievement Gap scores for 2012 – 2013. Closing the Achievement Gap scores will be reported for the first time in 2013 – 2014.

Once the achievement gap is determined, schools are measured on the success in closing that gap.

- The benchmark for success is defined as closing one-half of the achievement gap over a six year period.
- This success rate is measured annually; if a school is on track or exceeding the cumulative rate needed to close the gap, a score of 100 is earned.
- If a school has closed 80% of the gap, a score of 80 is earned.
- A school not making any progress in closing the gap or even widening the gap earns a score of zero.
- Closing the gap is cumulative, i.e., if the annual goal is exceeded one year and not met the following year, the gain is calculated on a cumulative basis.
The Historically Underperforming Student group earned 40% Proficient or Advanced in the baseline year.

- Achievement gap = 60% (100 – 40).
- One-half of the achievement gap is 30%. (Closing one-half of the achievement gap over a six-year period)
- Over six years, the school must increase by 5 percentage points each year of the six-year period to meet the goal. (30%/6 = 5%).
- The score is scaled proportionally based upon percent of annual goal met.
  - 5 percentage points or more increase (meeting or exceeding the 5% annual goal) = 100%
  - 4 percentage points (meeting 80% of the annual goal) = 80%
  - 3 percentage points (meeting 60% of the annual goal) = 60%
  - 2 percentage points (meeting 40% of the annual goal) = 40%
  - 1 percentage point (meeting 20% of the annual goal) = 20%
  - No increase or decline = 0%
- The annual goal closure is cumulative, i.e., if the school improves scores by 6 percentage points in year 1 and 4 percentage points in year 2, it earns a 100% in year 1 and year 2.

**Proficient/Advanced 100%**

**TO CALCULATE THE GAP:** Subtract Proficient/Advanced from 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficient/Advanced (40%)</th>
<th>Achievement Gap (60%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100 – 40)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TO CLOSE THE GAP:** Must increase 5 percentage points each year for six years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>70%</td>
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