



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234**  
Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education

---

Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner  
Office of School Improvement and Community Services (NYC)  
55 Hanson Place, Room 400  
Brooklyn, New York 11217  
Tel. (718) 722-2796 / Fax: (718) 722-4559

January 2010

**To:** Superintendents of Schools and Charter School Principals  
**From:** Ira Schwartz  
**Subject:** Revised Graduation Rate Goal and Progress Targets for Determining 2010–11  
Accountability Status

This memorandum is to inform districts and charter schools regarding actions taken by the Board of Regents to meet federal requirements that each state submit for peer review a graduation rate goal and graduation rate progress target(s) to be used to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations beginning with 2009–10 school year results.

For 2009–10 and 2010–11 school year results, school and district graduation rate AYP determinations are based on whether the school's or the district's All Students group has met the graduation rate goal or the graduation rate progress target established by the Board of Regents. The progress target establishes the degree of continuous and substantial improvement an All Students group that has not yet reached the graduation rate goal must make each year toward the goal. If the school's or district's All Students group has not met either the graduation rate goal or the progress target, the school or district has not made AYP. If this occurs for two consecutive years, the school or district is identified as in need of improvement for graduation rate.

Consistent with regulations issued by the United States Department of Education (USED) on October 29, 2008, the Board of Regents have engaged in a series of discussions regarding policies related to graduation. In October 2009, the Regents decided that New York State would adopt the federal four-year adjusted graduation rate for accountability purposes beginning with 2011–12 school year results as required by federal regulations and would continue to use the current graduation rate definition for 2009–10 and 2010–11 school year accountability determinations as permitted by federal regulations. Also in October, the Regents made the decision that New York will apply to USED to use a five-year extended graduation rate in conjunction with implementation of the four-year adjusted graduation rate beginning with 2011–12 school year assessment results. Most recently, at the December 2009 meeting, the Board of Regents voted to approve the following:

1. For accountability purposes under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, beginning with 2009–10 school year data, set a graduation goal that 80% of applicable accountability groups graduate from high school within the specified number of years (four years after first entering grade 9

through August of the fourth year for the All Students group for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years).

2. Establish a progress target for the 2009–10 and 2010–11 school years that schools and districts below the graduation-rate goal achieve a 20% gap reduction (1 percentage point minimum) for the All Students group.
3. Not establish a minimum graduation rate (floor) for accountability purposes until New York begins with 2011–12 school year results to use a five-year extended-year graduation rate. (A graduation rate floor is the minimum percentage of students in an accountability group that must graduate for the group to be eligible to make AYP using the progress target.)
4. Beginning with 2009–10 school year data, set an aspirational goal that 95% of each school's and district's All Students group graduate within five years and report publicly on school and district report cards whether this goal has been achieved.

As an example of the gap reduction, if the 2004 cohort All Students group graduation rate is 65%, the 2005 cohort All Students group would need to have a graduation rate of at least 68% for the school to make AYP for graduation rate for 2009–10 school year results. (In this example, the State graduation rate goal is 80%, and the gap between the school's prior-year graduation rate (65%) and the goal is 15 percentage points. A 20% gap reduction would require the All Students group to increase by 3 percentage points (20% of 15) to 68% for the school to meet the progress target.) Note that New York lags graduation rate accountability determinations by one year to include August graduates in accountability determinations. Graduation rate AYP determinations for the 2009–10 school year are based on the performance of the 2005 graduation rate total cohort through August 2009.

The new graduation rate goal and targets also have implications for high school English language arts (ELA) and mathematics AYP determinations for 2009–10 and 2010–11 school year results. For a school or district to qualify to use the Safe Harbor provision at the secondary level, that group must now either meet or exceed the 80% graduation rate goal or the graduation progress target of a 20% gap reduction (1 percentage point minimum). We encourage school districts to review their 2005 graduation-rate total cohort results for all disaggregated groups to determine which groups will be eligible to make AYP in high school ELA or math using the Safe Harbor provision in 2009–10. Your school's or district's 2005 graduation-rate total cohort data for the 2009–10 school year will be available in the B Report (Subgroup Report) of the *2009–10 High School Accountability Verification Reports* on the New York State Testing and Accountability Reporting Tool at [www.nySTART.gov](http://www.nySTART.gov) soon. To determine the graduation rate for a subgroup, divide the count of students in the "Diploma" column by the count of students in the "Total Students Counted for Graduation Cohort" column and multiply the result by 100. Graduation rates are available now in the "Estimated Graduation Rate" cell of the *High School Accountability Data Verification Report for 2009–10 Level 2 Report* available from your data center.

Please note that the 2009–10 graduation rate progress targets in the 2008–09 New York State Report Cards were determined using policy in place as of November 2009, when the final report cards were generated. The appendix at the end of this memorandum may be used to determine the revised 2009–10 graduation rate progress targets for your school or district. 2008–09 graduation rates are available on the graduation rate page of the accountability section of the *Accountability and Overview Report*, which is available to authorized users at [www.nySTART.gov](http://www.nySTART.gov).

The federal regulations also require that, beginning with 2011–12 school year results, for a school or district to make AYP in graduation rate, the school or district must meet the state graduation rate goal and progress targets for all NCLB disaggregated student groups. The groups are: All Students, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White, Multiracial, English language learners, Low-Income, and Students with Disabilities. Beginning with 2011–12 school year results, the graduation goal of 80% will be applied to all disaggregated student groups. The progress target(s) that groups below this goal must achieve to make AYP will be set by the Board of Regents at a later date.

NYSED staff will post updates on its website as more information is available. Please contact Maria (Parzych) Sokol at [mparzych@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:mparzych@mail.nysed.gov) with questions. We look forward to working with you to make this transition as smooth as possible.

cc: David Steiner  
John King  
Rebecca Cort  
Jean Stevens  
Alan Ray  
David Abrams  
Ken Wagner  
Ray Kesper  
Maria Sokol

Appendix: Revised 2009–10 Graduation Rate Progress Targets

2008–09 Graduation Rate	Old 2009–10 Progress Target	Revised 2009–10 Progress Target
0	1	16
1	2	17
2	3	18
3	4	18
4	5	19
5	6	20
6	7	21
7	8	22
8	9	22
9	10	23
10	11	24
11	12	25
12	13	26
13	14	26
14	15	27
15	16	28
16	17	29
17	18	30
18	19	30
19	20	31
20	21	32
21	22	33
22	23	34
23	24	34
24	25	35
25	26	36
26	27	37
27	28	38
28	29	38
29	30	39
30	31	40
31	32	41
32	33	42
33	34	42
34	35	43
35	36	44
36	37	45
37	38	46
38	39	46
39	40	47
40	41	48
41	42	49
42	43	50
43	44	50
44	45	51
45	46	52
46	47	53
47	48	54
48	49	54
49	50	55
50	51	56

2008–09 Graduation Rate	Old 2009–10 Progress Target	Revised 2009–10 Progress Target
51	52	57
52	53	58
53	54	58
54	55	59
55	N/A	60
56	N/A	61
57	N/A	62
58	N/A	62
59	N/A	63
60	N/A	64
61	N/A	65
62	N/A	66
63	N/A	66
64	N/A	67
65	N/A	68
66	N/A	69
67	N/A	70
68	N/A	70
69	N/A	71
70	N/A	72
71	N/A	73
72	N/A	74
73	N/A	74
74	N/A	75
75	N/A	76
76	N/A	77
77	N/A	78
78	N/A	79
79	N/A	80
80	N/A	N/A
81	N/A	N/A
82	N/A	N/A
83	N/A	N/A
84	N/A	N/A
85	N/A	N/A
86	N/A	N/A
87	N/A	N/A
88	N/A	N/A
89	N/A	N/A
90	N/A	N/A
91	N/A	N/A
92	N/A	N/A
93	N/A	N/A
94	N/A	N/A
95	N/A	N/A
96	N/A	N/A
97	N/A	N/A
98	N/A	N/A
99	N/A	N/A
100	N/A	N/A