



ASBA held a Webinar on April 27th on the new A-F Letter Grade system. Following that webinar, there were many questions asked regarding some technical aspects of the new formula. ASBA Government Relations staff has worked to compile the answers to those questions. If you missed it, you can [view the archived webinar here](#), and consult the [State Board of Education A-F documentation](#). Also attached to the bottom of this document are clarifications to the A-F business rules the SBE adopted at its May 22nd regular meeting. If you require further information, please contact Chris Kotterman, Director of Governmental Relations, at ckotterman@azsba.org.

Proficiency/Stability

Does proficiency on one test count for proficiency across the board? (e.g. if I am proficient on AIMS Science if I take it but on ELA/Math, is that enough to count me as proficient for that year?)

In the calculation of points each test provides points and each test contributes to the divisor. For an individual student his/her points are an average of all the tests.

Does stability require students to stay within a school, or are students included in the stability count if they move to a different school within the same district?

The student would have to stay within the school for school level stability. If LEA-level stability is ever calculated, it is assumed the student could move within district schools and still be considered stable. That is what was done under NCLB.

Can you give an example that more clearly explains how in the K-8 model the points for proficiency work for 1, 2, and 3 years?

The model will always yield thirty points for students in proficiency. However, these points will be adjusted for how long the school has been open or for a non-traditional grade configuration.

	Max Proficiency Weights		
	3 years of FAY	2 Years of FAY	1 Year of FAY
Has 3 Years	15	10	5
Has 2 Years (Example: only serves Grade 7-8)		18	12
Has 1 Year (Example: New School)			30

K-8 Acceleration

Is the 3rd grade minimally proficient item for both ELA and Math, or just ELA?

The 3rd Grade minimally proficient item on the K-8 acceleration menu is for ELA (in keeping with the focus on early literacy)

How are menu items selected for schools? Is it based on whatever combination of options yields the highest number of points? Do district / schools choose?

The model is currently silent on this. However, the option that most benefits schools would be to have ADE choose those items that yield the most points. Schools wishing to target their approach to certain elements for max points are free to do so.

Growth

Will students that are new to the district not be included in the SGT?

If the student is FAY, and has an SGT created from a previous score, then it is assumed they will be included, as the SGT created is not specific to the LEA. It

Are ELA and Math combined to create a single SGP and SGT for each student?

SGP will be calculated using the 2015 and 2016 results for grouping students (and possibly earlier results if that is determined to be useful) and the 2017 results for ranking students. SGT annual targets will start with the 2017 administration and results with the reaching proficiency target set for 2019.

The ELA data will count for 25%/10% (K-8/9-12) and the math data will count for 10%/25%, they are not averaged or combined.

CCRI

How do the points generated by students total up to account for the 20%?

This calculation is extremely mathematically complex depending on how many students are involved because the board raised the CCRI percentage from 15-20 at adoption. ADE will scale the scores appropriately for this year, and in future years, it should be a straight computation to 20% of the total. The [spreadsheet sent to LEAs](#) has the math coded in, and will calculate the total CCRI score for you. Therefore, it is very important that LEAs not allow the spreadsheet to become corrupted.

Small Schools/Non-Conventional Grade Configurations

What about K-2 schools, or schools with say, 7-12 configurations?

- *If a school has one grade that crosses over the grade categories (i.e., K-9, 8-12), then the method used for the majority of grades will be applied to all grades.*
- *If a school has several K-8 and 9-12 grades, both calculations will be computed using the appropriate grade levels. Both calculations will be shared publicly, but the higher of the two letter grades will be assigned for accountability purposes for the 2017 year and it will be reexamined for future years.*
- *If a school does not have all K-8 or 9-12 grades but enough enrollment to calculate points, then the typical method for those grades is applied.*

- *If a school has a non-typical grade configuration and too few students to calculate points, we recommend giving a NR or Not Rated label for this year and developing an appropriate method for calculating in time for next year's letter grades.*

How will grades for extremely small schools be calculated?

Indicators should have a minimum of 20 FAY students to be included except for EOC acceleration points. If a school has fewer than 80 points for K-12 and 50 for 9-12 (i.e., not enough AzMERIT scores) then the small school method should be applied to calculate the number of points.

State Board Questions

When are the cut scores going to be established for tests such as the ACT or SAT etc. on the HS CCR rubric?

The cut scores for these assessments have been established and are included on the [CCRI information collection spreadsheet](#) developed by SBE and ADE

Are all the CCR Indicators available to be used this current year?

Yes, all CCRI indicators are available for use this year

Has a timeline for preliminary Letter Grade been determined as well as for the final Letter Grade?

At its May 22 regular meeting, the board voted to delay adoption of a timeline until it could further discuss the matter following its June 26 regular meeting. Currently, CCRI data is due to the department by July 14. This raised concerns from the field that this is very close to the reporting of AP scores. The proposed timeline was as follows, but has not been formally adopted:

July 14—cutoff for verifying data in AzEDS by LEAs, and self-reporting CCRI data.

Week of August 7—Board convenes to set A-F cut Scores

Week of August 28—Letter grades issued for traditional K-8, (-12 to LEAs subject to embargo.

September 5—Embargo lifted; letter grades publicly released.

Have cut points for A, B, etc. been determined?

No, see above.

How does ADE capture self-reported data and does this begin next month with this graduation class?

All students, including the class of 17, will count in the CCRI data. LEAs should report data using the [CCRI Information Collection Spreadsheet](#) available via ADE Connect.

Accountability Advisory Group Business Rules Recommendations

N Size

What if you do not have 20 for a major indicator (e.g., less than 20 graduates)? Indicators should have a minimum of 20 FAY students to be included except for EOC acceleration points (see below). If a school has fewer than 80 points for K-12 and 50 for 9-12 (i.e., not enough AzMERIT scores) then the small school method should be applied to calculate the number of points.

Non-typical grade configurations

- If a school has one grade that crosses over the grade categories (i.e., K-9, 8-12), then the method used for the majority of grades will be applied to all grades.
- If a school has several K-8 and 9-12 grades, both calculations will be computed using the appropriate grade levels. Both calculations will be shared publicly, but the higher of the two letter grades will be assigned for accountability purposes for the 2017 year and it will be reexamined for future years.
- If a school does not have all K-8 or 9-12 grades but enough enrollment to calculate points, then the typical method for those grades is applied.
- If a school has a non-typical grade configuration and too few students to calculate points, we recommend giving a NR or Not Rated label for this year and developing an appropriate method for calculating in time for next year's letter grades.

Group Membership

If a student was in Special Education or ELL at any time during the year they are to be included in that group. This would also apply to the subgroups. Pre-K students are not included in the accountability calculations.

Should there be a maintenance level for the indicators?

For the indicators that require improvement we recommend that there be a point at which schools should be able to maintain a certain level in order to get points. For example, we may have a school that had 96% of sub-group students at proficiency one year and 94% the next due to different group sizes or even if just one student did not hit the level the last group of students did. We recommend that the school should not lose the points because they are at such a high level of success. We recommend that at 90% or above a school could maintain at 90% and still get points.

Should points be binary (0 or 5) or graduated?

Some indicators are partial credit and some are binary – 5 or 0. We agreed that the acceleration items and CCR items should be all or no points because they can help a school but do not penalize a school (they just are not used to rate a school if points are not received).

Timeline for Measures needed

We recommend that a timeline of when indicators are available be created so it is clear to all what data from what date will be used. For example, when ACT, SAT and AP data is available and when it will be used in the calculation.

Technical manual needed

There should be a detailed technical report that clearly defines how each component of the model is calculated so that a school or LEA could replicate the calculation of the points to the extent possible. This will ensure that districts can communicate the A-F model accurately to parents and staff.

SGP/SGT

SGP will be calculated using the 2015 and 2016 results for grouping students (and possibly earlier results if that is determined to be useful) and the 2017 results for ranking students. SGT annual targets will start with the 2017 administration and results with the reaching proficiency target set for 2019.

The ELA data will count for 25%/10% (K-8/9-12) and the math data will count for 10%/25%, they are not averaged or combined.

Menu items – EOC in K-8

EOC passing is indicated in the document, not passing and increased participation. We agree with this approach because of the concern that we do not want to incentivize putting students in EOC classes when they may not be ready to succeed. This is a measure where the state may want to consider an N size of ten or greater rather than 20 so that more elementary schools could get credit for having their students take advanced math.

We would recommend deleting the 25% or more proficiency for maintenance and making it 90% like other measures.

Note: The State Board voted to clarify that both participation and proficiency must increase at least until 25% is reached. It remains unclear whether proficiency must increase once 25% participation is reached.

AZELLA one year measurement issue

ADE has made the AZELLA cut points tougher this year, so it is much less likely that a school would do better than last year's average. We recommend comparing schools to the state average in 2017 this year and in future years the state average be the prior year.

FAY Issues

Proficiency – what do you do if you don't have 3 years FAY because of your grade config or being a new school? We would suggest weighting the students in this manner:

	Max Proficiency Weights		
	3 years of FAY	2 Years of FAY	1 Year of FAY
Has 3 Years	15	10	5
Has 2 Years (Example: only serves Grade 7-8)		18	12
Has 1 Year (Example: New School)			30

We do not recommend a change at 9-12 in using more than one year FAY. This is an issue that can be examined in future years.

K-8 Menu: Absenteeism

Since these are FAY students, 18 or more should be the definition of chronic absences. For schools with a non-traditional calendar (e.g., 4 day weeks), 10% or more of the school days would be considered chronically absent. If the percent of chronically absent students declined from the prior year, the school would get these points.

Note: The State Board voted to clarify that chronic absenteeism is defined as 18 days absent, or 10% of instructional days if the school is on a non-traditional calendar.

K-8 Menu: What is available to a new school?

The same rules as the non-typical grade configuration should be applied when calculating a new school's points.

K-8 Menu: Sub-groups

The groups that count are the ESSA ethnic groups, special education, ELL, lower SES and FEP. Groups that do not count but will be reported include gender, foster, military and homeless students.

9-12 CCRI Menu Issues

The CCRI points should be 10 and 20 instead of 7.5 and 15. We understand why they are not done this way this year and a transformation is applied. However, in future years it is more transparent if the points were 10 and 20. The number of bonus points should remain the same this year.

95% tested

95% tested is based on total enrollment at start of the testing window, not just FAY. For K-8 it would be grade level enrollment. For 9-12 we recommend suspending applying the 95% rule to schools as we determine the most accurate way to calculate that for EOC enrollments. In the future we should consider the ESSA requirement of 1 math and 1 ELA test some time during the high school years.

Note: The State Board voted to suspend the 95% tested requirement to grades 9-12 in school year 16-17. In the future, the board recommends requiring 95% complete 1 math and one ELA exam during high school. The suspension is for 16-17 only, to aid in letter grade calculation.

Appeal Process

An appeal process is needed for unusual or unanticipated circumstances. Since accountability is a joint SBE-ADE process this time, how that appeal process will be structured and who will conduct the appeals needs to be made explicit.