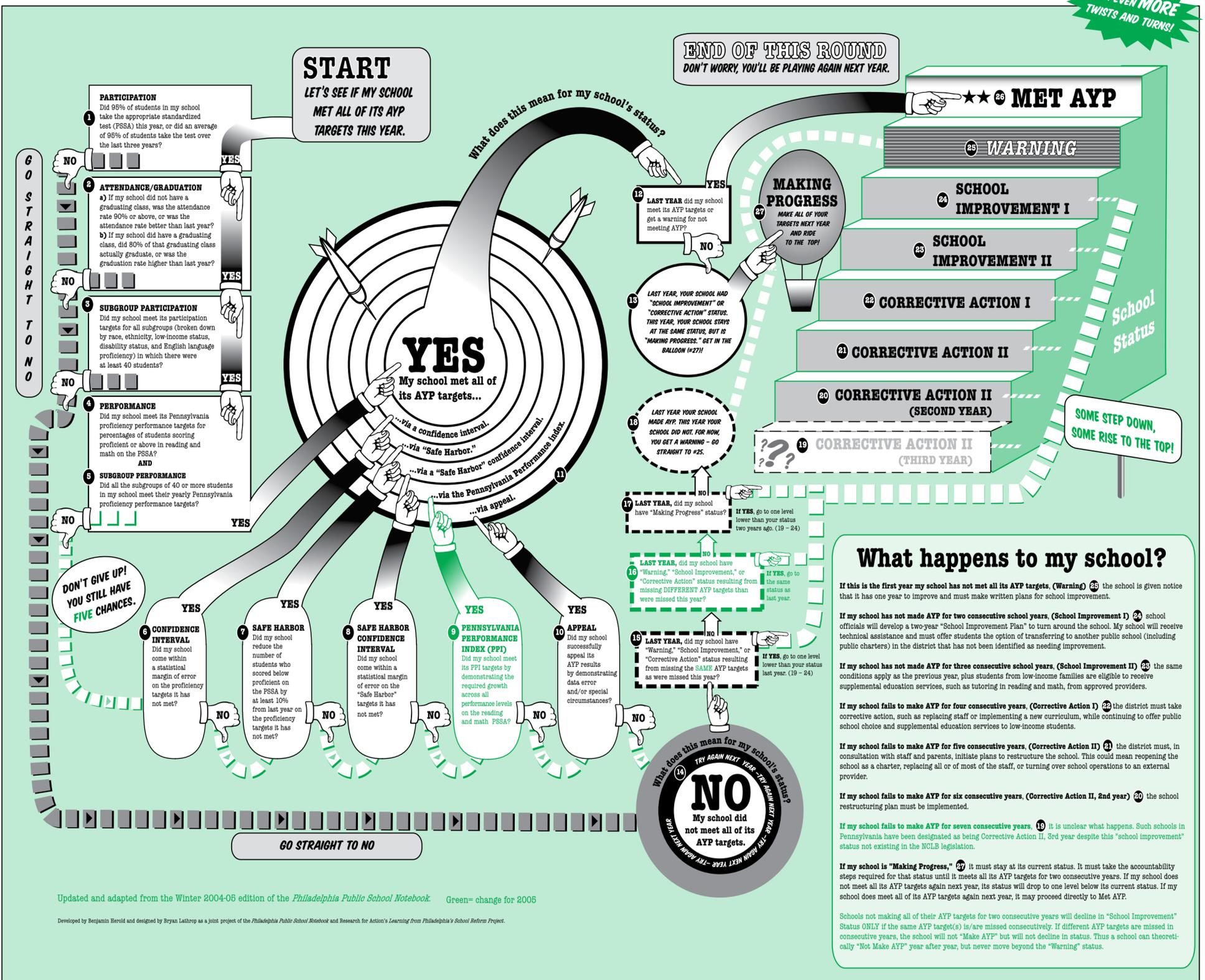


# MAKING AYP: THE GAME (NEW! 2005 PENNSYLVANIA EDITION)

WITH EVEN MORE TWISTS AND TURNS!



Updated and adapted from the Winter 2004-06 edition of the Philadelphia Public School Notebook. Green= change for 2005  
Developed by Benjamin Herold and designed by Bryan Lathrop as a joint project of the Philadelphia Public School Notebook and Research for Action's Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform Project.

## M A K I N G A Y P : T H E G L O S S A R Y

**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT (NCLB):** Federal legislation signed into law in 2002, NCLB mandates that states must create standards, administer tests that are aligned to these standards, and measure whether districts and schools are making "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP). If districts or schools repeatedly fail to make AYP they will be subject to an escalating series of accountability measures. (See "What happens to my school?")

**PSSA:** "PSSA" stands for "Pennsylvania System of School Assessment." This is the test that Pennsylvania uses to evaluate schools on student achievement for NCLB. It is aligned with state standards. It is currently administered in reading and math in grades 3-8 and 11.

**AYP:** "AYP" stands for "Adequate Yearly Progress," which is the system established under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) for measuring progress towards the goal of high achievement for all public school students. NCLB has set the goal that all public school students must reach the "proficient" or "advanced" level on reading and math standardized tests by the end of the 2013-14 school year. NCLB requires that schools be evaluated based on test scores, test participation, and graduation rates (or one other measure for middle and elementary schools). Within this established federal framework, each state has some flexibility to define its own specific standards for making AYP, but must submit these standards to the U.S. Department of Education for approval.

**AYP TARGETS:** In Pennsylvania, schools have targets for test score performance and test participation in reading and math, and either attendance rate (at elementary and middle schools) or graduation rate (at high schools). The total number of targets varies from school to school, because schools must also meet the targets for subgroups. The more subgroups a school has, the more targets the school must reach to achieve AYP.

**SUBGROUPS:** To make sure schools are held accountable for all students, NCLB requires that test scores be broken down ("disaggregated") by "subgroups." In Pennsylvania, schools and districts are held accountable for the following subgroups if there are 40 or more students in a group in the tested grade(s): major racial/ethnic groups (including Black, Latino, Asian, White), students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with limited English proficiency status. In order for a school to meet AYP, each of its subgroups of 40 or more students must also meet the AYP targets for test scores and test participation.

**AYP STATUS:** A school's "AYP status" depends on whether it has met its AYP targets and what the school's status has been in previous years. A school's status could be "Met AYP," "Warning," "School Improvement I," "School Improvement II," "Corrective Action I," "Corrective Action II," or "Making Progress." (See "What happens to my school?")

**"SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT" STATUS:** Schools enter NCLB's "school improvement" process when they fail to meet the same AYP targets for two years in a row. These schools are subject to an escalating series of accountability measures based on the number of years in which they fail to meet all of their AYP targets. If a school continues to fall short of its AYP targets, NCLB's consequences for one year and level carry over to the next level, and new consequences are added. To exit the "school improvement" process, a school must meet all of its AYP targets for two years in a row. Only then will it be labeled as having met AYP.

**PROFICIENT:** "Proficient" is a category of performance on state-mandated standardized tests that indicates that a student has a solid understanding of a state's academic standards and can display the skills associated with those standards on a test aligned with them. Students who have scored "proficient" or higher have reached "proficiency."

**PROFICIENCY PERFORMANCE TARGETS:** NCLB requires that all states set escalating test score targets for schools beginning in 2002-03. The percentage of students expected to score "proficient" or "advanced" on state tests rises each year until 2013-14, when 100% of students are expected to reach proficiency. The table below shows Pennsylvania's proficiency performance targets on the PSSA:

	2002-04	2005-07	2008-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<b>READING:</b>	45	54	63	72	81	91	100
<b>MATH:</b>	35	45	56	67	78	89	100

(Percentage Proficient or Advanced)

**CONFIDENCE INTERVAL:** The confidence interval is a statistical adjustment made by Pennsylvania (and some other states) and approved by the federal government, to provide a margin of error to take into account the fact that students in the tested grades may not be a representative sample of all the students in the school. Confidence intervals may allow schools to meet AYP when they fall just short of reaching targets for proficiency or Safe Harbor.

**SAFE HARBOR:** "Safe Harbor" is a way for a school or district to achieve AYP without meeting the standard achievement targets. If a school or subgroup does not meet a performance target, that target can still be met by reducing the percentage of below-proficient students by 10% or more, and the state will consider it to have met that AYP target.

**APPEAL:** A school may appeal its performance in meeting AYP targets on two grounds: 'data error' and 'special circumstances.'

**PENNSYLVANIA PERFORMANCE INDEX (PPI):** PPI is a way for schools to achieve AYP without meeting the standard AYP achievement targets for students scoring proficient or above on the reading and math PSSAs. PPI is a scaled system that detects and rewards growth at all PSSA performance levels, including "Basic" and "Below Basic." Like NCLB, PPI sets performance targets that rise each year until 2013-14, when 100% of students are expected to reach proficiency.

**SOURCES:**  
Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Assessment and Accountability  
United States Department of Education  
Pennsylvania Public Education Partnership

For more information see: [www.nclb.gov](http://www.nclb.gov)  
[www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us)  
[www.mvec.org](http://www.mvec.org)

Philadelphia Public School  
**NOTEBOOK**  
[www.thenotebook.org](http://www.thenotebook.org)

**RESEARCH for ACTION**  
[www.researchforaction.org](http://www.researchforaction.org)

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## **Making AYP: The Game (NEW! 2005 Pennsylvania Edition)**

Schools and school districts across the country are under pressure to show that student performance on standardized tests is improving. Much of this pressure is based on the idea that clear expectations, combined with sanctions for poor performance, will motivate educators and students to try harder and do better. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is the most comprehensive expression of this pressure. NCLB sets performance targets that schools and districts must meet - referred to as "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP). NCLB also outlines a series of escalating consequences for not meeting AYP targets.

In response, school districts and state departments of education are providing large amounts of data about student performance and school progress to educators, parents, and the general public. The theory behind this emphasis on data is that if educators have more information about their students, they can improve the ways they teach and influence how well their students perform. This data can also be an important resource for parents and community members who want to find out about their local schools and become part of efforts to improve them.

Research for Action (RFA) is committed to developing a set of resources to help the public take advantage of the increasing availability of school performance data in order to influence policy and

improve schools. As part of this effort, RFA is pleased to partner with the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook* to provide tools designed to help educators and the public better understand AYP.

In addition, because AYP is only one among many possible means of evaluating students and schools, RFA will be looking at other ways of using data and measuring student achievement to help educators and the public become informed, active participants in school improvement efforts in the era of No Child Left Behind.

*Research for Action (RFA) is a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization engaged in education research and evaluation. Founded in 1992, RFA works with public school districts, educational institutions, and community organizations to improve the educational opportunities for those traditionally disadvantaged by race/ethnicity, class, gender, language/cultural difference, and ability/disability.*

*Learning from Philadelphia's School Reform, led by RFA, is a four-year research and public awareness project assessing the current reform efforts in Philadelphia public schools. Future resources will examine how schools learn to use achievement data and will analyze student outcomes. For more information, please visit: [www.researchforaction.org](http://www.researchforaction.org).*

*The Philadelphia Public School Notebook is an independent newspaper promoting informed public involvement in the Philadelphia schools. For more information, please visit [www.thenotebook.org](http://www.thenotebook.org).*



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