

Defining Consistently Underperforming Subgroups for Targeted Support:

New York Regents Discussion Document

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Given:

- the requirements defined *within statute* regarding how consistently underperforming sub-groups should be defined ;
- the state’s values, priorities, and theory of action as reflected in the accountability system design; and
- the implications associated with classification as a consistently underperforming sub-group school...

What criteria should the state use to identify “consistently underperforming” subgroups and, consequently, schools for Targeted Support and Intervention?

To answer this question, a state must define their priorities with respect to a variety of factors:

1. **Consistency:** What does the state consider the target of the label “*consistently*” underperforming”?
 - a) *across multiple indicators* (e.g., a subgroup fails to perform at an expected level, or progress at an expected rate, across multiple indicators within a given year)
 - b) *across multiple years* (e.g., a subgroup fails to perform at an expected level, or progress at an expected rate, on one or more indicators across multiple years)
 - If defined in terms of performance over time, how many years should be considered? What factors/data should influence this determination?
 - how “underperforming” is defined and the amount and type of change necessary to move out of this classification
2. **Relative Performance:** How should “underperforming” be defined (i.e., relative to what)?
 - a) Criterion Referenced: performance of sub-group relative to state-defined long term goals and interim progress measures for academic achievement, graduation rate, progress toward attainment of ELP or other state-selected indicators.
 - b) Norm Referenced: performance of sub-group relative to performance of the state, district or the school.
 - Must determine what norm group is most appropriate/reasonable given the type of information you are seeking and the characteristics of the school

3. **Type I vs. Type II Error:** Given the implications of identification of a school for targeted support and improvement because of a consistently underperforming sub-group, what does the state believe is more detrimental: identifying a school for targeted support that does not have a consistently underperforming sub-group, or failing to identify a school for targeted support when it that has a underperforming sub-group?
 - Need to consider the positive and negative implications of establishing a conservative definition that identifies a large number of schools and subgroups.

Examples for Discussion and Consideration

The examples provided below reflect different priorities related to 3 factors listed above. They are intended to facilitate discussion around the way in which “consistently underperforming” might be defined and the potential pros/cons associated with different specifications. Clearly each example could be modified in a variety of ways based on the state’s theory of action and thinking related to the factors outlined above.

Definition of Consistently Underperforming Subgroup	Comments
<p>1. A sub-group for which calculated performance on the Content Mastery indicator and the Progress component of the accountability system is lower than that calculated using the bottom 25% of students in the school for the given school year.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i> Achievement: Within a grade band, identify the bottom 25% of performers on each test (based on valid scaled scores). Use those students to calculate the content mastery score for the school. Calculate the content mastery score associated with each sub-group in a similar manner. Compare the points earned (e.g. out of 20 possible)</p> <p><i>Progress:</i> Within a grade band, identify the bottom 25% of SGP associated with each test. Calculate the progress points for the school using those students. Calculate the progress points associated with each sub-group. Compare the points earned across the two groups (e.g., out of 40)</p>	<p>Primary question: Are there specific sub-group(s) showing lower proficiency and growth than that of the lowest performing 25% of students within the school?</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus is on identifying differential academic subgroup performance within the school¹. ○ Utilizing the same group currently used for achievement gap calculations (bottom 25%) ○ Gives schools the benefit of the doubt by using a conjunctive approach to flagging. ○ Relatively easy to explain and interpret. <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If schools are relatively homogeneous, using the bottom 25% in the school as the norm-group may be problematic (i.e., it may be comprised predominantly of students from one sub-group)². ○ Conjunctive flagging rule may be difficult to defend. Suggests that a sub-group that shows growth above that of the bottom 25%, but lower proficiency rates should not be flagged for support. Is this reasonable?³ ○ Ignores other academic indicators within the Achievement Component, making the definition based solely on test performance. ○ Does not consider sub-group performance on all indicators in the accountability system.

¹ This in contrast to the identification of low performing sub-groups which are based on all indicators relative to the performance of the lowest performing schools in the state (comprehensive support)

² Could put rules in place that indicate schools that are too homogeneous, such that the lowest 25% in the district is a more reasonable norm group.

³ Could also consider a compensatory approach where a sub-group must earn a score on the elements that is greater than that observed in the lowest 25%.

<p>2. A sub-group for which performance on any reported component of the accountability system is at the lowest performance level for 2 consecutive years.</p> <p><i>Calculation:</i></p> <p>Calculate the “score” associated with each reportable component of the system using performance data for students in a particular sub-group. Apply the established cut scores (or classification rules) to determine the performance level for that sub-group on each indicator. Flag subgroups performing in the lowest performance level on one or more indicators for 2 years in a row.</p>	<p>Primary question: Are there sub-groups that consistently perform at the lowest performance level on one or more key accountability indicators for 2 years in a row?</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Considers and values performance on all indicators, not just test based. ○ Transparent and easy to understand. <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If performance levels are were defined specifically to support meaningful differentiation among schools, this may result in in large numbers of sub-groups and schools being flagged for support.⁴ ○ For some indicators, it may be unreasonable to expect movement from one performance level to another within a 2-year period. ○ Logistically cumbersome to track/monitor performance on all indicators over multiple years.
<p>3. A sub-group that does not meet the state-defined interim progress goals for their sub-group related to: academic achievement (as defined in terms of proficiency on the state test) OR increased progress in achieving ELP, OR graduation rate for three years in a row.</p>	<p>Primary question: Which sub-groups are not tracking toward meeting the state’s long term goals?</p> <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acknowledges and incentivizes progress toward the state goals and measures of interim progress. ○ Clearly ties the provision of support to the state’s long term goals and measures of interim progress. ○ May be easy to explain and interpret – depending on how easily state goals generalize to a school level <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assumes the state-defined interim progress goals are reasonable and fair to use for this purpose. ○ May result in a large number of schools and sub-groups being flagged for support. ○ Logistically cumbersome to track/monitor performance on all indicators over multiple years.

⁴ Would require careful consideration of the broader implications of indicator-level cut scores during the standard setting process OR, potentially identify different cut-scores that are associated with classification as a consistently underperforming sub-group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It will be difficult for a sub-group to get back on track after 3 years of not meeting interim progress goals
<p>4. A sub-group that has not met the required 95% participation rate on the state test OR for which the rate of chronic absenteeism is higher than that observed in the lowest performing 5% of schools for 2 years in a row.</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transparent and easy to calculate ○ Focuses on different elements of the accountability system than are considered in the identification of low performing sub-groups ○ Serves to incent participation on the state test especially for schools that may not otherwise be flagged for targeted supports <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does not consider all indicators within the accountability system. ○ Schools having small sub-groups are more likely to be flagged for not meeting participation rates than larger schools (e.g., A sub-group of 30 must have 29 students participate to meet 95%).