



TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: John B. King, Jr.

SUBJECT: Establishment of Graduation Rate Goal and Progress Targets for 2011-12 School and Local Educational Agency (LEA) Accountability

DATE: June 1, 2011

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Regents approve staff's recommendation that for the 2011-12 school year, the graduation rate goal for school and LEA accountability be maintained at 80% and that new gap reduction progress targets be established at 10% for the four-year graduation rate cohort and 20% for the five-year extended graduation rate cohort?

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the P-12 Education Committee for action at its June 2011 meeting.

Background Information

In October 2009, in response to the new federal requirements, the Regents established that New York's graduation goal for determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs would be that 80% of students graduate within four years of first entry into grade nine. The Regents further established that schools and LEAs could make AYP by meeting a progress target of reducing the gap between the graduation rate goal of 80% and prior year performance by 20%.

In October 2009, the Regents also made the policy decision that beginning in 2011-12, when United States Department of Education (USDE) rules require that AYP be based on schools and LEAs having all groups for which they are accountable achieve the graduation rate goal or progress target, New York State (NYS) would begin

to use an extended-year graduation rate in addition to the four-year graduation rate to make AYP determinations.

A decision must be made regarding whether NYS should maintain the current graduation rate goal of 80% and gap reduction progress target of 20% for the four-year cohort and determine what progress target for the extended year cohort should be set.

In order to meet American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) requirements, SED will report the 2006 cohort four-year results in September 2011 using the new USDE methodology. SED will then, as part of the annual graduation release in approximately December 2011, report 2006 cohort five-year outcomes and 2007 cohort four-year outcomes using the new methodology. This methodology differs from how NYS currently reports results at the LEA and school level in that:

1. Currently, students who have been enrolled in a particular school or LEA for fewer than five months are not counted in the cohort for school and LEA accountability (although we do count those students in the statewide cohort). This exclusion will not be permitted under the new USDE definition.
2. Currently, NYS considers all incarcerated youth as transfers and, therefore, does not include them in the cohort and does not hold schools and LEAs responsible for those students. The USDE definition will only allow those incarcerated youth in programs that lead to regular high school diplomas to be considered transfers.
3. Currently, NYS enters ungraded students with disabilities into a cohort based on the school year a student becomes age 17 rather than when the student first becomes enrolled in a high school program. The USDE definition will require that these students be entered into a cohort based upon when they first entered a 9th grade program, as all other students are entered.

Beginning with 2011-12 school year accountability determinations, these rules also apply to how the graduation rate is computed for schools and LEAs.

Implications of Using a Five-Year Extended Graduation Rate

When the four-year graduation rate and the five-year extended graduation rate are used in combination to make AYP determinations, an accountability group has four ways to make AYP:

- its **four-year** graduation rate cohort meets or exceeds the graduation goal; or
 - its **four-year** graduation rate cohort meets or exceeds the four-year progress target;
- or
- its **five-year** extended graduation rate cohort meets or exceeds the graduation goal; or
 - its **five-year** extended graduation rate cohort meets or exceeds the five-year progress target.

For example, a school's Hispanic student subgroup has a 2006 four-year graduation rate of 60% and 2005 five-year graduation rate of 65%. If the gap reduction progress target for the four-year cohort is 10%, then the gap reduction goal for the 2007 four-year cohort for the Hispanic student subgroup will be 62% $((80\% - 60\%) \times 10\% = 2\% + 60\% = 62\%)$. If 20% is the gap reduction requirement for the five-year cohort, then the 2006 five-year progress target will be 68% $((80\% - 65\%) \times 20\% = 3\% + 65\% = 68\%)$. In this case, the school can make AYP for the Hispanic student subgroup if the 2006 four-year graduation rate is at or above 62% or the 2005 five-year graduation rate is at or above 68%. For the school to make AYP for graduation rate, all groups for which it is accountable must achieve the four-year graduation goal or progress targets or all groups must achieve the five-year extended rate graduation goal or progress targets. A school cannot make AYP if some groups meet the four-year graduation goal or progress targets while other groups meet the five-year extended graduation goal or progress targets.

Staff has created a model to project how many schools will likely make AYP if the Regents adopted different goals and progress targets for the four-year and five-year cohorts. Based on the model, the following can be concluded:

- If the Regents were to maintain the current standard of an 80% graduation rate goal and a 20% gap reduction target without adopting an extended year graduation rate, the percentage of schools making AYP is projected to decline from 73% to approximately 59%. The majority of schools held accountable for students with disabilities or English language learners (ELL) would fail to make AYP. However, if the Regents adopt a five-year extended rate graduation goal and progress target, the percentage of schools that are projected to make AYP is likely to be approximately the same as at present.
- While the use of a five-year extended graduation rate modestly increases the percentage of schools that make AYP with the White and Asian subgroups, it significantly improves the percentage of schools that make AYP for the Black, Hispanic, ELL and student with disabilities subgroups.
- Even with the use of a five-year extended graduation rate cohort, the majority of transfer schools, (i.e., schools in which the majority of students enroll after first being unsuccessful at another high school) will likely not make AYP for graduation rate. SED is in discussions with the USDE to determine whether NYS will be permitted to use a six-year cohort graduation rate for transfer schools.

Rationale for Recommendation

Staff recommends the use of a gap reduction methodology as opposed to setting a fixed progress target that all schools must achieve (e.g., all schools must show an increase of two percent) because the gap reduction methodology requires schools that are farthest from the goal to show a greater absolute gain while requiring all schools to

close the gap by an equal amount. The attached chart shows projections using various combinations of graduation rate goals and progress targets on schools and accountability groups making AYP.

Staff recommends that an 80% graduation goal with a 10% four-year gap reduction progress target and a 20% five-year gap reduction progress target be selected because:

- An 80% graduation goal is consistent with the current approved goal. If the target is raised it will be seen as retroactively changing standards.
- A goal higher than 80% for the students with disabilities population graduating with a diploma would be inappropriate given that certain students with disabilities will need more than five years to graduate and others have disabilities that make it impossible for them to achieve anything other than a high school individualized education program diploma, which does not count as a favorable outcome in the computation of the graduation rate.
- The number of schools predicted to be able to make AYP using these cut points is roughly equivalent to the results from the 2009-10 school year, which is 73%.
- The percentage of schools that make AYP with each No Child Left Behind accountability group is largely equalized using this goal and progress targets.

It should be noted that because graduation rate determinations are lagged by one year, the 2011-12 school year results will be based upon students who graduated by August 2011. However, in October 2009, the field was alerted of the new rules for computing graduation rates and the intention of the Regents to begin to use a five-year extended graduation rate. This combined with the fact that the graduation rate goal will remain unchanged, and the use of the five-year extended graduation rate is something for which many stakeholders have advocated, we believe this proposal will be welcomed by the field.

Next Steps

Upon approval of this proposal by the Regents, Department staff will submit a request to the USDE to amend New York's No Child Left Behind accountability workbook. Upon approval of this amendment by USDE, staff will draft for Regents action regulations to implement the new system beginning in the 2011-12 school year.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Regents P-12 Education Committee approve the proposed graduation goal and progress targets as specified in this item and direct staff to seek approval from the United States Department of Education to amend New York's No Child Left Behind Accountability Workbook to use this goal and these progress targets for 2011-12 school and district accountability.

Attachment

ATTACHMENT A

Projected* Results of Using Various Combinations of Graduation Rate Goals and Progress Targets on Schools and Accountability Groups Making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Cohort	Goal	4 Year Target	5 Year Target	School Making AYP	All Students Making AYP	SWD Making AYP	ELL Making AYP	Low-Income Making AYP	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
2005 4 Year	80%	20%	NA	73%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2006 4 Year	80%	20%	NA	59%	71%	54%	38%	63%	86%	56%	58%	81%
2006 4 Year 2005 5 Year	80%	20%	20%	77%	87%	72%	59%	84%	96%	79%	81%	94%
2006 4 Year 2005 5 Year	80%	10%	20%	78%	90%	78%	73%	87%	97%	84%	84%	96%
2006 4 Year 2005 5 Year	80%	15%	25%	76%	86%	73%	60%	84%	96%	80%	81%	96%
2006 4 Year 2005 5 Year	85%	20%	20%	71%	82%	68%	53%	78%	93%	73%	75%	91%
2006 4 Year 2005 5 Year	85%	10%	15%	75%	87%	78%	75%	84%	95%	81%	81%	94%
2006 4 Year 2005 5 Year	90%	5%	10%	75%	87%	83%	84%	84%	93%	84%	83%	94%

*These projections are based upon the percentage of schools that would have made AYP using various graduation goals and progress targets if these had been in place for making 2009-10 school year determinations. The projections are based upon schools being accountable for students immediately upon their enrollment in a school as required by the rules that will be used for 2011-12 accountability determinations. These projections do not take into account the fact that the number of Regents which must be passed with 65% will be higher for future cohorts, the new rules for including incarcerated youth and ungraded students with disabilities (SWD) in the cohort, or any changes to rules regarding SWD earning local diplomas. Staff does not believe these factors will substantially change the projections for the 2011-12 school year.