

## District Improvement and the Grade Level Band Rule

In response to guidance from the United States Department of Education in the summer of 2004, Ohio implemented three amendments to the state accountability plan under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). One of these amendments concerns the identification of districts for improvement (Element 4.1). This amendment can allow **At Risk** districts with at least one student subgroup that does not meet AYP in the *reading and/or mathematics* components not to move into District Improvement (DI) if at least one grade level band meets AYP criteria in the subject component(s) for which AYP was not met. An At Risk district is one that has not met AYP outright for one year and that could enter District Improvement if it does not meet AYP in the same component for a second consecutive year. If a district that is At Risk for *reading and/or mathematics* meets its participation rate requirement and the relevant student subgroup(s) meets AYP criteria in at least one grade level band, then the district will not advance into DI. This amendment changes the way districts enter improvement, but it does not change the way AYP determinations are made. It also does not apply to school buildings.

The grade level bands are defined as: 1) grades 3-5 (elementary school); 2) grades 6-8 (middle school); and 3) grade 10-OGT (high school). The following table illustrates how this method of determining whether a district moves into improvement status works:

**Table 1.** Transition from FY07 to FY08 District Improvement Status for OK and At Risk Districts

<b>FY06 AYP Determination</b>	<b>FY07 DI Status</b>	<b>FY07 AYP Determination</b>	<b>FY07 AYP Met for Any Grade Level Band?</b>	<b>FY08 Projected DI Status</b>
Met	OK	Met	N/A; District is not At Risk	OK
Met	OK	Not Met	N/A; District is not At Risk	At Risk
Not Met	At Risk	Met	N/A; District met AYP	OK
<b>Not Met</b>	<b>At Risk</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>At Risk-Hold</b>
Not Met	At Risk	Not Met	No	DI Year 1

When determining AYP for districts based on 2006-2007 results, the results from all tested grade levels (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> [OGT]) are aggregated for reading and for mathematics. In order for a district to meet AYP, all student subgroups aggregated across grades must: 1) meet subject- and grade-specific goals with either a) current year results or b) two-year combined results; or 2) meet the safe harbor provision. All student subgroups must also meet the target participation rate (95%) in each subject. If any student subgroup (composed of students in all tested grades) does not meet its goals, the district does not meet AYP.

The modified AYP weighting method in place for 2006-2007, which is applied separately to each subject and takes into account all tested grades within a district, requires that: 1) the difference between the percentage of proficient students and the AYP goal is calculated separately for each grade; 2) the percentage of all students taking assessments who are enrolled in a given tested grade is calculated separately for each grade; 3) the difference calculated in the first step and the percentage calculated in the second step are multiplied separately for each grade; and 4) the products calculated for each grade in step three are summed together to achieve a result that is zero, positive, or negative. A final sum that is zero or greater means that the district met AYP, whereas a final sum that is less than zero means that the district did not meet AYP.

The grade level band flexibility means that At Risk districts that do not meet AYP via one of these three methods will not be identified for improvement *if at least one grade level band meets AYP criteria* and the district meets the participation rate requirement. So, if a district did not meet AYP in FY06 and was designated as At Risk for FY07, the district will retain its DI status (i.e., At Risk) for the upcoming FY08

school year if at least one grade level band meets AYP criteria in FY07 in the same component for which the district did not meet AYP in FY06. The district’s FY07 DI status of At Risk will be put on “hold” for FY08 (i.e., the district will not advance into DI).

This flexibility is implemented at the subgroup level for each subject. For example, if the only student group that does not meet AYP with its aggregated results in mathematics achievement at the district level is Asian American/Pacific Islander students, then the grade level band rule is applied to that subgroup. If Asian American/Pacific Islander students in the elementary school grade level band, the middle school grade level band, or the high school grade level band satisfy AYP criteria in mathematics, or if they do not meet minimum subgroup size requirements within one of the grade level bands, then the district will not move into DI.

For the 2006-2007 school year, the elementary and middle school grade level bands contain multiple tested grades. In the elementary school grade level band, reading and mathematics tests were administered in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, whereas in the middle school grade level band, reading and mathematics tests were given in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. To determine whether a grade level band has met AYP criteria for 2006-2007, ODE will examine the combined district-level results for all grades contained within a grade level band. The AYP weighting method used to calculate overall district results will be used to calculate results for the individual grade level bands. If any one of the grade level bands within a district has a result that meets the AYP criteria (i.e., the sum of the results from all grades in the grade level band is either zero or positive), then the district would not go into improvement. The following table provides an example of how the grade level band rule can keep a district from entering improvement:

**Table 2.** AYP Weighted Points for Grade Level Bands – Reading Example

(A) Grade	(B) Number Tested	(C) Number Proficient	(D) Percent Proficient (C/B)	(E) AYP Goal	(F) Difference (D-E)	(G) Percent in Each Grade (B/Total)*	(H) Weighted Points (F*G)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	75	50	66.7%	71.2%	-4.5	17.9%	-.81
4 <sup>th</sup>	70	45	64.3%	68.3%	-4.0	16.7%	-.66
5 <sup>th</sup>	65	45	69.2%	68.3%	.9	15.5%	.14
6 <sup>th</sup>	60	45	75.0%	75.8%	-.8	14.3%	-.11
7 <sup>th</sup>	55	45	81.8%	68.6%	13.2	13.1%	1.73
8 <sup>th</sup>	50	35	70.0%	73.8%	-3.8	11.9%	-.45
10 <sup>th</sup>	45	30	66.7%	71.8%	-5.1	10.7%	-.55
--	Σ = 420	--	--	--	--	--	Σ = -.72

\*The Total used in this example is 420, the sum of all students enrolled in the tested grades (see Column B).

In this example for the reading test, the district earned -.72 AYP weighted points total, which would indicate that the district did not meet AYP. However, if the grade level band rule is applied, a different picture emerges. The elementary school grade level band earned -1.33 AYP weighted points (-.81 + -.66 + .14 = -1.33). The middle school grade level band earned 1.16 AYP weighted points (-.11 + 1.73 + -.45 = 1.16). The high school grade level band earned -.55 AYP weighted points. Because the middle school grade level band has an AYP weighted points total that is greater than zero, the district will not move into improvement based on its reading results as long as the participation rate requirement is also met. Note that only one grade (7<sup>th</sup>) in the grade level band actually met its AYP goal outright; however, because of how well that one grade (and thus grade level band) performed, the entire district is prevented from going into improvement.

A district's At Risk status may be on hold for any number of years, provided that at least one grade level band meets AYP criteria in the subject(s) in which AYP was initially not met for each of those years. However, as soon as an At Risk district does not meet AYP *and* has at least one student subgroup that does not meet AYP in all three grade level bands in the subject(s) for which the district is At Risk, the district will be considered to have not met AYP for its second consecutive year and thus will advance in its DI status to District Improvement Year 1. In order for a district to exit its At Risk-Hold status completely, it would have to meet AYP with its aggregate results for one year.

Once a district enters DI-Year 1 or higher, missing AYP overall advances the years of DI – the grade band rule does not apply any longer. To get out of District Improvement completely and have a DI status of OK, the district has to meet AYP overall for two consecutive years.

If you have any questions about the application of the grade level band rule, please call ODE's AYP Question Line at 614-995-0098.