



Dear Families,

As a public charter school, we are expected to report important information each year that describes how our students fared on the previous year’s state benchmark exam, which is provided through the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). First, I should provide a brief explanation of the term AYP, which is a very important term for public schools. AYP is an acronym that you may have heard which stands for adequate yearly progress (AYP). To frame this more completely, AYP became a very important measure for public schools when the No Child Left Behind legislation was enacted by the federal government in 2001. This very important legislation, which is often referred to as NCLB, has had a profound impact on the educational landscape of our country. Measures associated with AYP and NCLB are provided below:

Calculating AYP Starting Points and Annual Expected Performance Levels
Revised June 2006

Starting Point	K-5 Math	K-5 Literacy	6-8 Math	6-8 Literacy	9-12 Math	9-12 Literacy
2005-2006	40.00	42.40	29.10	35.20	29.20	35.50
2006-2007	47.50	49.60	37.96	43.30	38.05	43.56
2007-2008	55.00	56.80	46.83	51.40	46.90	51.63
2008-2009	62.50	64.00	55.69	59.50	55.75	59.69
2009-2010	70.00	71.20	64.55	67.60	64.60	67.75
2010-2011	77.50	78.40	73.41	75.70	73.45	75.81
2011-2012	85.00	85.60	82.28	83.80	82.30	83.88
2012-2013	92.50	92.80	91.14	91.90	91.15	91.94
2013-2014	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

The way that adequate yearly progress (AYP) is calculated is based on the percentages provided above. For example, in 2005-2006, 40.00 (40%) of students in grades K-5 were expected to score proficient or advanced on the state benchmark exam in 2005-2006, while 42.4% of students in grades K-5 were expected to score proficient or advanced in literacy on the state benchmark exam in 2005-2006. In referencing proficient or advanced, you will recall if you had a student who was in grades 3-8 last year, you received benchmark results indicating that your student scored: below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced. The goal of No Child Left Behind is to bring all students within the U.S. to the proficient or advanced levels by 2013-2014. This is quite a lofty goal, but the idea behind it is that we have to help all students become stronger students and make progress toward improved achievement.

While we have made AYP each year to this point, the percentages of students expected to perform at proficient or advanced levels increased during the 2010-2011 school year by 7.5, 6, 8.8, and 8.1 percent for k-5 math, k-5 literacy, 6-8 math, and 6-8 literacy, respectively. We are excited to report that our students in grades 6-8 made AYP in literacy; however, we were not able to successfully meet the increased percentages for k-5 literacy and math or for 7-8 math. We did, however, meet the expectations for 6-8 math from a district standpoint. I should note that additional avenues through which a school can make AYP exist, but it becomes fairly complicated, so it will be best to pay most attention to the percentages provided in the chart. Additionally, AYP is calculated based on scores of students in grades 3-8. This would extend through high school if our school included grades 9-12.

With these things in mind, please notice the expected increase from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012. The percentage of students who are expected to be proficient or advanced increases very substantially from the 2010-2011 expectation of 77.5% k-5 math, 78.4% k-5 literacy, 73.4% 6-8 math, and 75.7% 6-8 literacy to the 2011-2012 expectations of 85% k-5 math, 85.6% k-5 literacy, 82.3% 6-8 math, and 83.8% 6-8 literacy. Again, these are percentages of students that a school is expected to have score within the proficient or advanced categories on the state benchmark exam. This would mean, for example, that we will be expected to have an increase of 8.1% of students in grades 6-8 scoring proficient or advanced in literacy.

With these increasing percentages and the current and pending implementation of changes in curriculum standards within the state of Arkansas, the Arkansas Department of Education has submitted a request for waiver from the percentage increases that would be in effect this year. While I do not know the specific details for the waiver request, I will share information with you about any changes in AYP when I am made aware. Unless we hear otherwise, the AYP goals set forth within the No Child Left Behind legislation will be the expected target for all public schools.

It is important that we keep this in perspective. A student who scores within the lower scores of basic and improves from one year to the next to score substantially higher within the basic category is growing academically, which is a success story for that year, but the ultimate goal is to continue to move our students toward proficiency, while helping all students grow as independent thinkers who love learning. Our goal is to provide the needed support to help every student make adequate progress from one year to the next. It is always important to remember that no two students are alike, and we must treat each student as an individual learner who can and will continue to develop academically, socially, and emotionally with encouragement, diligent work, and the support that we, together, provide for our students.

We look forward to this school year with your student and your family, and we will continue to work together to help our students develop in their pursuit of knowledge and academic growth.

Kind regards,



Scott Sides
Head of School