

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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What is the School Progress Report on Education and Equity (SPREE)?

The SPREE is the School District of Philadelphia's report on school performance and progress over time. It provides information on how schools – and groups of students within schools – are performing against the Board of Education's [Goals and Guardrails](#).

It also compares school performance against goals that the state has set for school performance.

How does the SPREE differ for the 2021-2022 school year?

For the 2021-2022 school year, the District is producing the "SPREE." Because this is the first release of the standard report, and because it represents the first year for which we have comprehensive data since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it includes school performance data. In future years, the SPREE will also measure change in performance from the previous year.

The 2021-2022 SPREE report looks different than the "SPREE Lite" that the District produced in 2020-2021 because many of the measures were not previously available due to:

- Statewide changes to requirements to participate in state assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic

- Data that were not yet collected for either District or Charter schools (e.g., participation in co-curricular activities)
- Data that charter schools were not historically asked to collect or report on (e.g., the percentage of students participating in visual or performing arts)

Although this year's SPREE is more complete than the SPREE Lite, it still looks different from how it will be presented in the future. This year's SPREE will differ from the full SPREE in the following ways:

- No prior-year performance or year-over-year comparisons will be made, and so reports will not include information on whether schools improved over time.
- Due to the lack of year-over-year comparisons, schools will only receive an overall Level of 1, 3, or 5.
- The SPREE will not include growth data in the areas of Reading & English Language Arts (ELA), Math & Science, or English Learners' progress towards English language proficiency. This is because these metrics incorporate how students performed on state assessments during the 2020-2021 school year, when few students took the state assessments.
- To help users focus on the key measures, the 2021-2022 SPREE will not display data for some informational metrics (e.g., within-year reading and math assessment performance).

What are the Board's Goals and Guardrails?

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Board of Education established five Goals related to student performance and four Guardrails that outline the conditions necessary for student success.

The five Goals focus on:

- 1) Reading performance in grades 3-8
- 2) Reading performance in grade 3
- 3) Math performance in grades 3-8
- 4) Algebra, Biology, and Literature performance in grade 11
- 5) Industry preparation for Career and Technical Education (CTE) students

The four Guardrails focus on:

- 1) Welcoming and supportive schools
- 2) Enriching and well-rounded school experiences
- 3) Partnering with parents/family members
- 4) Addressing racist practices

The Board has set targets for expected performance on these measures by the 2025-2026 school year. The Board also set annual targets for the Goals and Guardrails to track progress toward the 2025-2026 targets, and monitors progress on these throughout the academic year.

The SPREE measures how a school is performing against these local annual targets for the school year reported on.

How does the SPREE differ from the School Progress Report (SPR)?

The SPR was the School District of Philadelphia's previous tool for understanding school performance and was produced for school years 2012-2013 to 2018-2019. An end-of-year report for 2019-2020, that included some measures from the SPR, was released for 2019-2020 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SPR measured performance on key metrics aligned to the previous Superintendent's Action Plan 2.0. While many of the metrics from the SPR are included on the SPREE, the SPREE measures performance against and progress toward annual target values aligned to the Board's Goals and Guardrails. The SPREE also more explicitly incorporates measures of equity – and includes student group breakouts – while the SPR included measures and scores only related to schoolwide performance.

Additionally, the SPREE includes many more unscored measures to provide context about student and school performance while keeping the focus squarely on measures aligned to state and local goals.

How do schools perform relative to each other on the SPREE?

The SPREE focuses on how a particular school is performing against the annual targets for student performance on state and local goals. These annual targets generally increase over time. The SPREE also focuses on how a school's performance has changed from the previous year and how a school is performing for the different groups of students that it serves. The SPREE is not focused on showing how schools are performing compared to each other.

How does the SPREE account for students who are learning English or students who receive special education services?

Many of the measures on the SPREE are displayed separately for student groups, including students who are learning English and those who are receiving special education services. For these measures, the school has the same target for all student groups – that is, the school performance is expected to reach

the same levels for the different groups of students that it serves.

In most years, the SPREE also includes an overall rating of the school's performance for each student group served. This rating provides a sense of whether a school is meeting its targets and improving for all groups of students it serves.

How does the graduation rate account for students who receive special education services through age 21?

The four-year cohort graduation rate includes all students who entered high school in the cohort year (for the 2021-2022 report, students who first entered ninth grade in the 2018-2019 school year). Students who receive special education services through age 21 are included in this rate -- in line with federal and state guidelines for how graduation rates are calculated.

Students receiving special education services who are eligible to remain enrolled through age 21 will be included as "continuing" students (that is, students who have not graduated and are still enrolled in the school).

Does the SPREE include students who are enrolled in alternative education programs?

Students in alternative education programs – programs for out-of-school youth, students who are significantly at risk for dropping out, and students who are subject to disciplinary transfer or expulsion – are excluded from the calculation of all metrics and do not count toward their neighborhood school's performance.

The performance of each alternative program is reflected in the [Alternative Education Progress Reports \(AEPR\)](#) released each year.

How is the SPREE scored?

For each scored metric on the SPREE, a school will receive one of four ratings:

- **Meeting and Improving (blue)** – meeting the current year's performance target and improving from the previous year's performance
 - A school that is already meeting the 2025-2026 target for a metric receives a label of "Meeting 2026 Goal," displayed in blue, regardless of improvement from the previous year.
 - A school that does not have information from the previous year but that is meeting the current year's target receives a label of "Meeting", displayed in blue.
- **Meeting but Not Improving (green)** – meeting the current year's performance target but not improving from the previous year's performance
- **Not Meeting but Improving (yellow)** – not yet meeting the current year's performance target, but improving from the previous year's performance
 - A school that does not have information from the previous year and is not meeting the current year's target receives a label of "Not Meeting", displayed in yellow.
- **Not Meeting and Not Improving (red)** – not meeting the current year's performance target and not improving from the previous year's performance

Annual targets are consistent across schools and have been set for every year through 2025-2026; details on each of these targets are available in the SPREE User Guide and on the [District's SPREE webpage](#).

What does it mean to show improvement for a measure?

To be considered “Improving,” a school must meet any of the following criteria.

- Improve by at least 2 percentage points for percentage-based metrics (like the PSSA or the graduation rate), which are on a scale of 0.0% to 100.0%
- Improve by at least 0.1 points for survey metrics, which are on a scale of 0.0 to 10.0
- Improve by at least 1 category for PVAAS AGI measures. As explained later in these FAQs, the PVAAS AGI categories are -2.00 and lower, -1.99 to -1.00, -1.00 to +1.00, +1.00 to +1.99, and +2.00 and higher.

Why is data on whether a school improved not available?

It is possible that data on whether a school improved may not be available for a few reasons, including:

- Measures could not be calculated for the previous year due to specific circumstances, like COVID-related adjustments or school closures.
- A small number of students were eligible for the metric in the previous year (e.g., a school that had 15 English Learners in the previous year would not have received a score for ACCESS Growth or for any of the English Learner group metrics).
- Schools were not open or were not eligible for a SPREE report in the previous year.
- Schools did not offer the specific program or course necessary for the metric (e.g., Career and Technical Education).

- Charter schools chose to participate in the SPREE for the first time.

For the 2021-2022 SPREE reports – We are not comparing performance to values presented in the 2020-2021 SPREE Lite, therefore improvement is not included for any metric on the 2021-2022 SPREE.

How are schools scored when the previous year’s data is not available?

If the previous year’s data is not available for a metric, the school receives a rating of either “Meeting” or “Not Meeting” depending on whether the school or student group is meeting the current year’s performance target for the metric.

Although not applicable for the 2021-22 SPREE, for a reporting year when improvement data is available but maybe for not all metrics, the overall level is based on the number of metrics that a school is improving for *out of the number for which it has improvement data*. Thus, a school that does not have the previous year’s data for a specific metric will use a different count of metrics when looking at the percentage for which a school is improving.

What does my school’s “level” indicate?

A school’s level reflects the percentage of metrics for which a school met the annual target and the percentage of metrics for which a school is improving (regardless of whether a school is meeting/not meeting its target). Based on these values, a school is labeled as one of six levels:

- **Level 1** – meeting at least 67% of targets and, when improvement data is available, improving for at least 50% of targets
- **Level 2** – meeting at least 67% of targets but improving for less than 50%

of targets (this level is not used when improvement data is not available)

- **Level 3** – meeting 34-66% of targets and, when improvement data is available, improving for at least 50% of targets
- **Level 4** – meeting 34-66% of targets but improving for less than 50% of targets (this level is not used when improvement data is not available)
- **Level 5** – meeting 0-33% of targets and, when improvement data is available, improving for at least 50% of targets
- **Level 6** – meeting 0-33% of targets but improving for less than 50% of targets (this level is not used when improvement data is not available)

For the 2021-2022 SPREE reports – only Levels 1, 3, and 5 were calculated due to the exclusion of prior-year data.

How were the targets for each of the measures set?

For measures that are based on the Goals and Guardrails (e.g., PSSA proficiency rates), metric targets are the same as those that are considered each year by the Board of Education.

For measures that are aligned to state goals (e.g., graduation rates), annual state targets – or District-created annual targets that put District performance on track to reach the state’s 2030 goals – were used.

Is there more information on how each metric is calculated?

In addition to the metric definitions provided in the SPREE User Guide, public business rules for each calculation are on the [District’s SPREE webpage](#). These rules are intended to

provide a high-level overview of what goes into each metric, including the source of the data, which students are included in the calculation, and which schools are eligible for a metric.

Why might the metric scores on the SPREE differ from similar information shared elsewhere?

There are several reasons why the SPREE may display different information when compared to other sources, including:

- **Sample** – The SPREE sometimes reflects a different sample of students than other data sources, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Future Ready Index (FRI) or a school’s internal information system. For example, the PSSA metrics on the SPREE reflect the performance of students who were enrolled for a Full Academic Year; however, an individual school may be able to see results for all students who were assessed at the building, regardless of how long they were enrolled at the school.
- **Timing** – Other sources may look at a different time period than the SPREE. For example, the First-Fall College Matriculation Rate displayed on the 2021-2022 SPREE reflects the Fall 2022 enrollment of students who graduated in 2021-2022. However, the matriculation rate displayed on the FRI “lags” a year – that is, the matriculation rate on the 2021-2022 FRI reflects the enrollment of students who graduated in 2020-2021.
- **Definition** – Metrics on the SPREE may be calculated slightly differently than similar metrics available elsewhere. For example, the attendance metric on the SPREE reflects the percentage of students attending a certain percentage of days (e.g., 95% or more of instructional days),

while an attendance calculation posted by a partner agency may reflect another calculation, like Average Daily Attendance.

Why do some schools have two SPREES?

Because the Board of Education's Goals are specific to particular grade levels, the SPREE evaluates student outcomes for specific grade bands. Thus, schools serving both lower and high school grades receive separate reports for each grade band so that student outcomes can be evaluated separately. For example, a school serving grades 5-12 would receive a Middle School report (for grades 5-8) and a High School report (for grades 9-12).

Why don't some schools have a SPREE?

Alternative education schools, schools that serve a single grade level within a grade configuration, and charter schools in non-renewal status do not receive a SPREE. For example, YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School met all requirements to receive a SPREE but was ineligible due to its limited grade span (grade 12 only) and unique school model.

Additionally, not all charter schools choose to participate in the SPREE.

Why is there no 2021-22 data for charter schools?

The 2021-2022 initial SPREE release does not include reports for charter schools because data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) were delayed. When charter school data are released by PDE to the District, charter school reports will be generated and released on the District's website.

Which charter schools participated?

This year's release includes approximately 99% of all eligible charter schools operating in 2021-2022 – or all but one eligible charter school. Charter school participants value an apples-to-apples comparison of progress across all city schools and value the comprehensive view of school performance and progress reflected in the SPREE.

How does the SPREE reflect the District's commitment to equity?

The SPREE centers equity in several ways:

- **School Performance at the Metric Level for each Student Group Served** – The SPREE includes information on a school's performance and improvement on each measure disaggregated by student group – for example, how did the school perform on the state reading assessment for students receiving special education services.
- **New Measures of Access and Opportunity** – Several metrics on the SPREE look specifically at whether different groups of students within a school have similar opportunities – for example, similar access to advanced courses.
- **School-Level Rating for Student Groups** – In addition to providing a schoolwide level based on performance and improvement, the SPREE assigns a separate level based on school performance and improvement for each student group.

Together, these components of the SPREE help to provide a picture of whether a school is successfully serving all of its students.

How are the survey-based metrics scored?

The SPREE contains three scored survey metrics that use data from the 2021-2022

District-Wide Parent & Guardian, Student, and Teacher Surveys:

1. Instruction Score (incorporates responses from parents/guardians, students, and teachers)
2. Climate Score, incorporating responses from parents/guardians, students, and teachers
3. School Relationship Score, incorporating responses from parents/guardians

For the survey metrics, a school receives no score if it does not meet the minimum participation thresholds.

For the Instruction and Climate scores, a school must meet the participation thresholds for at least two of the three relevant respondent groups (students, parents/guardians, and teachers). To meet a participation threshold, there must be at least 5 respondents in the respondent group, and the minimum participation rate requirement must be met, as follows:

- a minimum of 25% for teachers and students (in grades 3-12) *and*
- a minimum of 10% for households

For example, the student participation threshold for a school that serves 100 students in grades 3-12 is 25, while the participation threshold for a school that serves 600 students in grades 3-12 is 150.

For the School Relationship score, there is only one relevant respondent group: parents/guardians. A school must have at least 5 responses from parents/guardians, representing at least 10% of households, to meet the threshold.

If a school meets the participation thresholds, it receives an “overall topic score” on a scale of 0.0-10.0. Meeting the minimum participation threshold does not guarantee that a school

receives a rating of “Meeting” for these metrics.

More information on the thresholds and scoring is available in the [technical report](#).

Which questions are included in the survey metrics?

The [Office of Research and Evaluation](#) (ORE) develops the survey metrics and administers the [District-Wide Survey](#). The specific questions included in a metric may change over time, but a copy of each year’s survey is available on ORE’s [website](#). More information on the surveys, including responses to individual survey items, can be found [online](#).

What do the PVAAS AGI values measure, and how are those metrics scored?

The PVAAS AGI metrics measure students’ growth from one year to the next, regardless of whether they entered the school year on, below, or above grade level. Students’ growth is calculated for grades 4-8 and high school using their prior-year and current-year performance on statewide assessments (the PSSAs and Keystones).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) categorizes AGI values as follows:

- -2.00 and lower (displayed as red in PVAAS reporting): Significant evidence that students did not meet the standard for PA Academic Growth
- -1.00 to -1.99 (displayed as yellow in PVAAS reporting): Moderate evidence that students did not meet the standard for PA Academic Growth
- -1.00 to +1.00 (displayed as green in PVAAS reporting): Evidence that students met the standard for PA Academic Growth

- +1.00 to +1.99 (displayed as light blue in PVAAS reporting): Moderate evidence that students exceeded the standard for PA Academic Growth
- +2.00 and higher (displayed as dark blue in PVAAS reporting): Strong evidence that students exceeded the standard for PA Academic Growth

On the SPREE, schools have a target of 2.00 or higher (dark blue in PVAAS reporting) for each year. Schools that have a score at or above this level receive a rating of “Meeting” or “Meeting and Improving,” depending on the school’s prior-year performance.

Schools that improve from one “category” to another – for example, from Yellow to Green (e.g. from -1.50 to 0.25) – are identified as “Improving.” Schools that remain within the same color category are not considered to be improving.

For the 2021-2022 SPREE reports - *Because the growth metrics rely heavily on student performance from the 2020-2021 school year, when few students took state assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic PVAAS AGI metrics are not included in the 2021-2022 SPREE. PDE has also indicated that the results from the 2020-2021 school year should not be used for accountability purposes.*