SY 2014-2015

SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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What is the need for the School Progress Report (SPR) given the State's School Performance Profile (SPP)?

The SPR differs from the SPP in ways that reflect the District's unique goals and priorities. More specifically, the SPR:

- Is constructed to be a more actionable tool;
- Places greater weight on student growth than absolute achievement;
- More fairly evaluates school performance through the inclusion of Peer and City Rankings;
- Redefines and expands upon the domains and metrics included in the SPP;
- Does not include extra credit points.

Is it fair to compare schools serving students with varying levels of entering achievement?

The State-adopted Average Growth Index (AGI) shows little to no correlation with prior test performance. This means that by assigning greater weight to the Progress domain, the District has ensured that schools with a disproportionate number of historically underperforming students can still attain strong results on the SPR.

Additionally, the peer group rankings represent a deliberate approach to comparing schools in a more equitable way.

Is it fair to compare schools serving different populations of students?

The SPR uses both city and peer group rankings to compare schools. While the city ranks compare all schools of the same grade configuration to each other, the peer group rankings indicates how a given school is performing relative to other schools serving a similar student demographic.

How are peer groups determined?

Schools were placed into peer groups composed of schools with the same grade configurations and similar student demographics. School-level characteristics used to identify peer groups include Poverty, Ethnicity, Special Education Status and Limited English Proficiency Status.

Are schools in the same peer groups each year?

Peer groups are adjusted annually based upon school-level characteristics as of October 1 of the corresponding school year.

Are charter schools included in the same peer groups as District schools?

Charter schools are included in the same peer groups as District schools. Identification of peer groups for charter schools was therefore based upon the same school-level characteristics as those for District schools.

How does the City Rank differ from the Peer Rank?

The City Rank indicates how a school's performance compares to the performance of all other schools of the same grade configuration. The Peer Rank provides additional context by ranking schools within the subset of schools of the same grade

configuration most similar in student demographics.

How are disability types accounted for in the SPR?

The absolute scoring methodology reflects the District's belief that all students, regardless of circumstance or disability, should be held to the same standards of academic excellence. The achievement scores include results from both the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment (PASA). However, in order to fairly account for large variances in student populations, each school also receives relative performance indicators in the form of peer rankings for both the overall and domain scores.

Do alternative education students contribute to neighborhood school performance?

Alternative education students are excluded from the calculation of all metrics.

How is growth measured for exams given in non-consecutive grade levels, like the Keystone Exams?

For non-consecutive exams like the Keystone Exams, AGI is calculated by subject (Algebra I, Biology, Literature). Students receive predicted scores based on the performance history of similar students, and these predicted scores are compared to students' actual scores to estimate growth. A student must be enrolled for a Full Academic Year and have results for at least two prior assessments to count towards a school's score.

What is a Floor? What is a Target?

The Floor is the score that schools must achieve in order to begin earning points for a metric. The Target is the score that schools must achieve in order to earn 100% of the points possible for a metric. Floors and Targets may differ across report types, with details available in the appendix of the SPR user guide.

Were floors and targets held constant for the 2014-2015 SPR?

With SY 2014-2015 being a baseline year for the new, more rigorous core-aligned PSSA assessments, the floors and targets were revised to account for changes in PA State Assessments and the inclusion of new metrics. The floors and targets established for the 2014-2015 SPR will remain in place for three to five years so as to track year-to-year progress over time.

What are the minimum and maximum scores on the SPR?

Overall and domain scores are equal to the percentage of possible points earned by a school. Therefore, the minimum and maximum scores are 0 percent and 100 percent, respectively.

What are the weights allocated to each domain?

Domain weights are allocated by grade configuration as follows:

Elementary, K8, and Middle Schools

Achievement	30%
Progress	40%
Climate	30%

High Schools

Achievement	30%
Progress	40%
Climate	20%
College & Career	10%

Does every report have 100 possible points?

No; the number of possible points varies by school on the applicability of specific metrics.

The points allocated to any metric that is not applicable or where there is an insufficient number of students are deducted from the total possible points.

For example, the "Graduation rate" metric applies to the High School report, but would not apply to those high schools that did not serve grade 12 in the 2014-15 school year.

How has the SPR changed from the prior year?
The SPR has evolved and improved in the following ways:
- Presentation of longitudinal information to show performance trends over a 3-year horizon ending with the most recent academic year;
- A new full-year retention rate that measures the percent of students who remained at the same school attended in the prior year;
- Modification of metrics that track student achievement on PA State assessments:
  - Consolidation of PSSA Reading and PSSA Writing proficiency rates into a single PSSA ELA proficiency rate, in accordance with PA State assessment changes
  - Consolidation of the Grade 3 PSSA ELA proficiency rate into a single Grades 3-8 proficiency rate;
- Inclusion of survey results that measure parent/guardian and student feedback and engagement;
- Inclusion of three new College & Career metrics:
  - SAT/ACT participation and performance
  - AP/IB participation and performance
  - FAFSA completion rate;
- Design changes to the report template to make the data more readily accessible and reader-friendly.

Why don't some schools have an SPR?

Alternate education schools as well as schools that serve a single grade level within a grade configuration do not receive an SPR.

Additionally, not all charter schools chose to participate in the SPR, and two were closed sometime during the 2014-2015 school year.

Why do some schools have two SPRs?
The SPR evaluates student outcomes for specific grade bands. Thus, schools serving grades 5-12 or K-12 receive both a Middle School report and High School report so that outcomes for students in grades 5-8 may be evaluated separately from those in grades 9-12.

Which charter schools participated in the SPR?
This year's release includes approximately 94% of all eligible charter schools that were in operation in the 2014-2015 school year. Charter school participants value an apples-to-apples comparison of progress across all city schools, and value the comprehensive and supportive view of school progress reflected in the SPR. Belmont Academy Charter School (grade K) and YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School (grade 12) met all requirements, but are ineligible to receive an SPR due to their limited grade span and unique school model.

How does the SPR reflect the District's commitment to equity?
Several components of the SPR indicate the degree to which students, regardless of educational need, are being served equitably by our schools. For example, a "back-on-track" credit metric and AGI metrics measuring growth for the lowest performing 20% of students emphasize the importance of

demonstrating progress among students who may be falling behind. Equity is also reflected in peer group comparisons, ACCESS proficiency and growth metrics, and survey metrics.

How are survey metrics scored?

The SPR contains four survey metrics that use data from the SY 2014-2015 District-wide Parent & Guardian Impact Survey and the SY 2014-2015 District-wide Student Impact Survey:

1) Parent/Guardian Survey: Participation Rate
2) Parent/Guardian Survey: Climate Rating
3) Student Survey: Climate Rating
4) Student Survey: Student Perception of Teacher Practice

The parent/guardian participation rate represents the percentage of parents/guardians of students in grades K-12 who complete the survey. Only one parent/guardian response is required per student.

For the parent/guardian and student climate ratings, a school receives a score of 0 if it does not meet the minimum participation threshold. The participation threshold for the parent/guardian survey is the greater of 5% of all students in grades K-12 or 25 (e.g., the participation threshold for a school that serves 100 students is 25 while the participation threshold for a school that serves 600 students is 30).

The participation threshold for the student survey is the greater of 25% of all students in grades 3-12 or 50 (e.g., the participation threshold for a school that serves 100 students in grades 3-12 is 50 while the participation threshold for a school that serves 600 students in grades 3-12 is 150). Schools that receive more than one report have separate participation thresholds for each report type. If a school meets the participation thresholds, it receives a score on a scale of 0 to 100%.

Please note that meeting the minimum participation threshold does not guarantee points for these metrics.

The ratings are presented as the percent of respondents answering favorably.