

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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What is the purpose of the School Progress Report (SPR), and how is it different from the State's Future Ready Index (FRI)?

The SPR is the School District of Philadelphia's tool for understanding school performance across multiple dimensions, from academic achievement to college and career readiness.

The SPR differs from the State's FRI in ways that reflect the District's unique goals and priorities. The SPR:

- Is designed to be a more actionable tool;
- Places greater weight on student growth than absolute achievement; and
- Redefines and expands upon the domains and metrics included in the FRI.

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

The SPR includes information from the State-adopted Average Growth Index (AGI) as a way to understand whether students in a school are making progress, regardless of the level at which they were performing when they first entered the building. By assigning greater weight to the Progress domain, the District has also ensured that schools can attain strong results on the SPR regardless of the incoming performance of the students they serve.

Additionally, the three-year trend on the cover page provides insight into how a particular

school has performed with similar students over time.

Why have peer and city ranks been removed from the SPR?

Removing peer and city ranks increases focus on how a particular school has performed over time – whether the school has improved student outcomes – as opposed to how it is performing relative to other schools.

Users can still identify comparison schools using the demographic data available on [School Profiles](#) or the [Open Data](#) webpage. Users can also view the SPR peer groups in the Appendix of the [SPR User Guide](#).

Schools with the highest overall score for their report type are designated as City Leaders on the cover of their individual reports.

How are students with special needs accounted for in the SPR?

The District holds its schools accountable for providing academic excellence to all students. The achievement scores include results from both the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment (PASA).

Are students enrolled in alternative education programs included in the SPR?

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.

What is a floor? What is a target?

On the SPR, a floor is the minimum score a school must achieve in order to begin earning points for a given metric. The target is the score a school must achieve in order to earn all possible points for that metric. Floors and targets may differ across report types; details are available in the appendix of the [SPR User Guide](#).

Were floors and targets held constant for the 2017-2018 SPR?

For all metrics, floors and targets are the same as they were in the SY 2016-2017 SPR.

How are SPR metric points calculated?

Schools earn points for SPR metrics based on where they fall relative to the floor and target for that metric.

SPR metric points are calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Metric points earned} = (\text{Score} - \text{Floor}) / (\text{Target} - \text{Floor}) \times \text{Points Possible}$$

For example, for the ACCESS Proficiency metric, the floor is 5% and the target is 15%. There are 1.5 possible points for this metric. If 12% of English learners at a school met the ACCESS Proficiency benchmark, the school would earn:

$$\text{Percent of points: } (12\% - 5\%) / (15\% - 5\%) = 70\%$$

$$\text{Points earned: } 70\% \times 1.5 = \mathbf{1.05} \text{ out of 1.5}$$

What is the relationship between scores and the tier a school is placed into?

Tiers are based on the percent of points earned (out of points possible) for a metric, domain, or overall score.

- A tier of **Model** indicates that a school has earned 75% or more of possible points;
- A tier of **Reinforce** indicates that a school has earned 50-74% of possible points;
- A tier of **Watch** indicates that a school has earned 25-49% of possible points;
- A tier of **Intervene** indicates that a school has earned less than 25% of possible points.

Does every report have 100 possible points?

No; the number of possible points varies by school based 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 SY 2017-2018.

What are the minimum and maximum scores on the SPR?

Overall and domain scores are the percentage of possible points earned by a school (i.e., number of points earned divided by the number of possible points). Therefore, the minimum and maximum scores are 0% and 100%, respectively.

For example, a school that is eligible for 95.5 points and earns 42 points receives an overall SPR score of 44% (42.0/95.5).

What are the weights allocated to each domain?

The SPR is comprised of four scored domains: 1) Achievement, 2) Progress, 3)

Climate, and 4) College and Career. Together, performance in these domains make up a school's overall SPR score, but their weights in the overall score differ. 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%

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

For non-consecutive exams like the Keystone Exams, AGI is calculated by subject (Algebra I, Biology, and 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 (i.e., continuously enrolled from October 1 through the end of the testing window) and have results for at least two prior assessments to count towards a school's score.

For fourth-grade science, the state considers having data from the third-grade PSSA ELA assessment and the third-grade PSSA Math assessment sufficient to produce a predicted score.

More details on how student growth is calculated is available from [the state's PVAAS website](#).

Is there more information on how each metric is calculated?

In addition to the metric definitions provided in the SPR User Guide, business rules for each calculation have been posted on the [District Performance Office's 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 SPR differ from similar information shared elsewhere?

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

- **Sample.** The SPR sometimes reflects a different sample of students than other data sources, such as the FRI or a school's internal information system. For example, the PSSA metrics on the SPR reflect the performance of students who were enrolled for a Full Academic Year; 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 SPR. For example, the First-Fall College Matriculation Rate displayed on the SY 2017-2018 SPR reflects the Fall 2018 enrollment of students who graduated in SY 2017-2018. However, the matriculation rate displayed on the FRI "lags" a year – that is, the matriculation rate on the SY 2017-2018 FRI reflects the enrollment of students who graduated in SY 2016-2017.
- **Definition.** Metrics on the SPR may be calculated slightly differently than similar metrics available elsewhere. For example, the attendance metric on the SPR reflects

the percentage of students attending 95% or more of instructional days, while an attendance calculation posted by a partner agency may reflect another calculation, like Average Daily Attendance.

How has the SPR changed from prior years?

The SY 2017-18 SPR has evolved in the following ways:

- Introduction of unscored metrics that display PSSA results by grade level to provide more insight about school performance; and
- Transition to examining growth for the lowest-performing 33% of students in a school to align with state data availability.

Why do some schools have two SPRs?

The SPR 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 outcomes for students may be evaluated separately.

For example, a school serving grades 5-12 receives both a Middle School report for grades 5-8 and a High School report for grades 9-12.

Why don't some schools have an SPR?

Alternative education schools and schools that serve a single grade level within a grade configuration do not receive an SPR. For example, YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School met all requirements to receive an SPR 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 SPR.

Which charter schools participated in the SPR?

This year's release includes approximately 99% of all eligible charter schools that were in operation in SY 2017-2018 – 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 and supportive view of school progress reflected in the SPR.

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 credit metric for off-track students and AGI metrics measuring growth for the lowest performing 33% of students emphasize the importance of demonstrating progress among students who may be falling behind. Equity is also reflected in the ACCESS proficiency and growth metrics.

How are survey metrics scored?

The SPR contains five survey metrics that use data from the SY 2017-2018 District-Wide Parent & Guardian Survey and the SY 2017-2018 District-Wide Student Survey:

- 1) Parent/Guardian Survey: Participation Rate
- 2) Parent/Guardian Survey: Climate Rating
- 3) Student Survey: Climate Rating
- 4) Student Survey: College and Career Rating
- 5) 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. A separate parent/guardian response is required for each student enrolled at the school.

For the Parent/Guardian Climate Rating and the student survey metrics, 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 10%.

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%.

Meeting the minimum participation threshold does not guarantee points for these metrics.

The ratings are presented as the percent of most positive responses.

Which questions are included in the survey metrics?

The survey metrics are developed by the [Office of Research and Evaluation](#), which administers the [District-Wide Survey](#). While the specific questions included in a metric may change over time, the metrics generally include all questions from the relevant domain (e.g., Climate) that contain clear positive and negative options, such as “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree.”

More information on the surveys, including responses to individual survey items, is available [online](#).