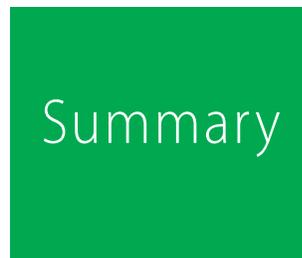




Subgroups and adequate yearly progress in Mid-Atlantic Region schools



Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education



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Summary

September 2007

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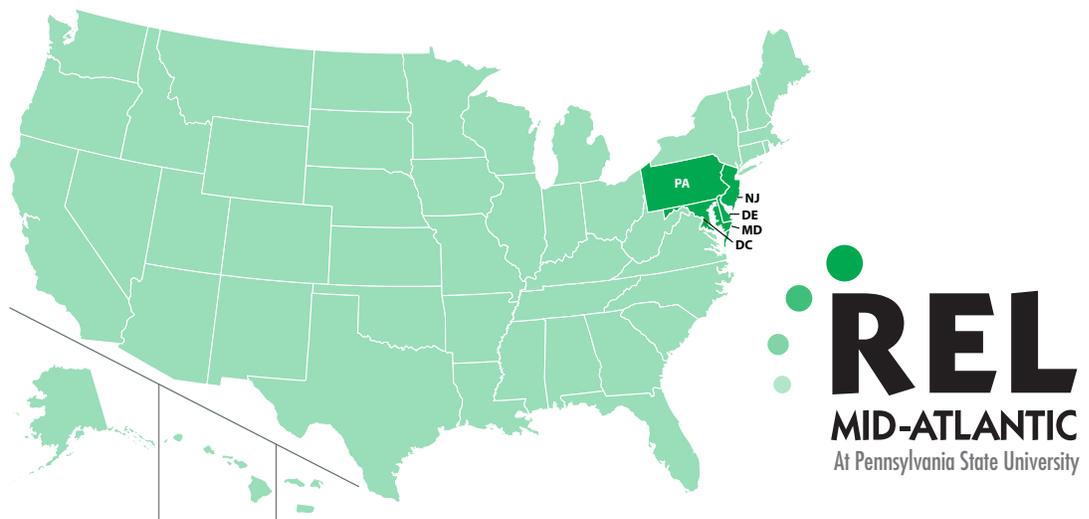
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This report is available on the regional educational laboratory web site at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

Summary

Subgroups and adequate yearly progress in Mid-Atlantic Region schools

This report examines to what extent Mid-Atlantic Region schools are achieving adequate yearly progress targets for No Child Left Behind subgroups. It provides education leaders with easily accessible data on what standards Mid-Atlantic Region states set for adequate yearly progress, how major No Child Left Behind subgroups perform against these standards, and how subgroup performance influences schools' adequate yearly progress determinations.

In a survey of 30 Mid-Atlantic Region education leaders, improving the achievement of No Child Left Behind subgroups—low-income students, students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, and students in major racial and ethnic groups—was the top priority for leaders from Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey, despite concerns about the accuracy and validity of test data (Crone, 2004; Kober, 2002). And all Mid-Atlantic Region states report difficulty in raising the achievement of black and Hispanic students to targets.

This report responds to these concerns. Its principal research question: to what extent are Mid-Atlantic Region schools achieving adequate yearly progress targets for No Child Left Behind subgroups? It provides education leaders with easily accessible data on what standards Mid-Atlantic Region states set for adequate yearly progress, how subgroups perform against these standards, and how subgroup performance influences schools' adequate yearly progress

determinations. The report finds large differences in policies and results across states.

In Delaware a school is required to report an adequate yearly progress determination for any subgroup with 40 or more students enrolled. Annual measurable objectives for the proportion of students achieving proficiency in 2005/06 were 62 percent for reading and 41 percent for math. Thirteen percent of Delaware schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to the performance of one subgroup.

In Maryland a school is required to report an adequate yearly progress determination for any subgroup with five or more students enrolled. Annual measurable objectives for student proficiency in 2005/06 were 57 percent for reading and 41 percent for math. Eight percent of Maryland schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to one subgroup.

In New Jersey a school is required to report an adequate yearly progress determination for any subgroup with 20 or more students enrolled, except for students with disabilities, where the minimum size is 35. New Jersey uses confidence intervals for determining adequate yearly progress and “safe harbor” status. Annual measurable objectives for student proficiency in 2005/06 were 75 percent in grades 3–5, 66 percent in grades 6–8, and 79 percent in grade 11 for reading, and 62 percent in grades 3–5, 49 percent in grades 6–8, and 64 percent in grade 11 for math. Ten percent

of New Jersey schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to one subgroup.

In Pennsylvania a school is required to report an adequate yearly progress determination for any subgroup with 40 or more students enrolled. For schools with subgroups of fewer than 40 students, the state department of education uses two or three years of data, if available, in making adequate yearly progress calculations and considers the use of a confidence interval. Annual measurable objectives for student proficiency in 2005/06 were 54 percent for reading and 45 percent for math. Eight percent of Pennsylvania schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to one subgroup.

In the District of Columbia a school is required to report an adequate yearly progress determination for any subgroup with 25 or more students enrolled. Annual measurable objectives for student proficiency in 2005/06 were 50 percent for elementary reading, 37 percent for secondary reading, 57 percent for elementary math, and 42 percent for secondary math. Eight percent of District of Columbia schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to one subgroup.

Examining the Mid-Atlantic Region as a whole, the report finds five patterns:

- Disparities across states in minimum group sizes, annual measurable objectives, and tests make state-to-state comparisons of subgroup achievement inappropriate. More appropriate is using these data to determine the magnitude of the problem a state is experiencing or may experience in the coming years.
- When schools did not make adequate yearly progress, the reason was generally the performance of multiple subgroups, partly because economically

disadvantaged students are also sometimes members of other subgroups.

- The students with disabilities subgroup represents a relatively low share of enrollment across the region, but in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania more schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to this subgroup than to any other.
- The performance of the economically disadvantaged subgroup was the second most frequent reason for schools in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia to not make adequate yearly progress due solely to one subgroup.
- Fewer schools did not make adequate yearly progress due solely to the performance of limited English proficiency students than to that of any other nonrace or nonethnicity subgroup, except in Maryland, perhaps partly due to Maryland's reporting practices.

Detailed state data confirm the challenges to raising the performance of economically disadvantaged students and those with disabilities. And as the annual measurable objectives approach 100 percent proficiency, they will become even more difficult to reach.

The report therefore makes two recommendations. First, the unbalanced distribution of students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students across schools and the stigma from viewing schools not making adequate yearly progress as "failing" make it reasonable for policymakers to consider other definitions of adequate yearly progress. Value-added or growth modeling approaches are possible alternatives. Second, school policymakers should look beyond pass/fail categorizations to investigate how the achievement of students in each No Child Left Behind subgroup compares with that of subgroups in similar schools.