

School and district reconfigurations and accountability determinations

Overview

Each year a number of Massachusetts schools open, close, merge, split, and otherwise change the grades they serve, the typical student populations they serve, and/or their teaching staffs. With less frequency, districts may merge or be newly created. This document describes the various types of changes that occur and details the general approach the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) takes to generate valid and timely accountability reports of student performance in reconfigured schools and districts.

Intent

ESE has developed a set of general business rules to guide accountability reporting decisions for reconfigured schools and districts, with the aim of:

- Reporting accountability data for as many schools and districts as possible
- Appropriately representing the past and present performance of an organization, while avoiding over-complicated and/or artificial data work where possible
- Avoiding the incentive or opportunity for schools or districts to evade accountability reporting

Accountability measures

The following accountability measures may be recalculated if a school or district undergoes a reconfiguration:

- Progress and Performance Index (PPI) (1-99)
 - Annual PPI: requires two years of data, not necessarily consecutive
 - Cumulative PPI: requires at least three annual PPIs/four years of data, not necessarily consecutive, and must include data for most recent year
- Accountability and assistance level (1-5)
 - Requires a cumulative PPI: at least three annual PPIs/four years of data, not necessarily consecutive, and must include data for most recent year

Data sources

ESE uses the following data sources in order to make decisions about how or whether to recalculate baseline data and generate new accountability targets for reconfigured schools and districts:

- Student Information Management Systems (SIMS) enrollment data
 - Collected in October, March, and June of each school year
- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results
 - Available each summer
- Charter and innovation school approvals
 - Available in mid-winter and other times throughout year
- Public school information change forms
 - Submitted by districts throughout year
- Informal reports
 - Submitted by districts or collected by ESE staff throughout year

Reconfiguration scenarios and business rules

Reconfiguration category	Example(s) of change	Treatment of Progress and Performance Index (PPI)	Treatment of Accountability & Assistance Level	Rationale
New schools				
New (new code)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth/Horace Mann charter or innovation school established (<i>Not a conversion school</i>) Virtual school/district established Regional vocational technological school/district established Additional district school established due to influx of new students, return of dropouts, etc. (<i>Note that this rarely occurs</i>) 	Annual PPI assigned after two years of assessment data; cumulative PPI assigned after four years of assessment data	Level assigned after four years of assessment data	No valid way to establish baseline data; truly a new organization
New (new code)	Existing Horace Mann charter or innovation school converts to a district school	School inherits baseline data from former charter or innovation school (<i>See 50% rule in Notes section</i>)	Level assigned after 1 st year of assessment data in new school, except in the case of schools in Levels 4 & 5 which retain their existing level	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of level determination in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new population
New (new or same code)	Horace Mann charter or innovation school established (<i>Conversion from existing district school</i>)	School inherits baseline data from prior school; for many-to-1 conversions, use district baseline (<i>See 50% rule in Notes section</i>)	Level assigned after 1 st year of assessment data in new school, except in the case of schools in Levels 4 & 5 which retain their existing level	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration
Expanding schools				
Expanding EES (new code)	Existing early elementary school (EES) adds one or more tested grades (<i>e.g., K-2 to K-3</i>)	Annual PPI assigned after two years of assessment data; cumulative PPI assigned after four years of assessment data	Level assigned after four years of assessment data	No valid way to establish baseline data
Expanding school (same code)	Existing school adds one grade per year (<i>Except for expanding EES; see above</i>)	School maintains existing baseline data	School maintains existing Level	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration
Split schools				
Split (new code)	District or innovation school established, enrolling students from 1 or more existing schools	School inherits baseline data from prior school; for many-to-1 splits, district baseline is used (<i>See 50% rule in Notes section</i>)	Level assigned after 1 st year of assessment data in new school, except in the case of schools in Levels 4 & 5, in which existing level is assigned to all “new” schools	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration
Split (new or same code)	Existing district school serving fewer tested grades	School inherits baseline data from prior school; for many-to-1 splits, district baseline is used (<i>See 50% rule in Notes</i>)	Level assigned after 1 st year of assessment data with new grades (new code) except Level 4 & 5; Level retained	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new

Reconfiguration category	Example(s) of change	Treatment of Progress and Performance Index (PPI)	Treatment of Accountability & Assistance Level	Rationale
		<i>section</i>)	in existing school (same code)	configuration
Split (new code)	Existing school splits, creating a school with no tested grades	No PPI due to insufficient data	No Level due to insufficient data	No valid way to calculate PPI or assign a Level
Merging schools				
Merger (new or same code)	Merger of 2+ schools from one or more districts, serving same or different grades	School inherits baseline data from prior schools (<i>See 50% rule in Notes section</i>)	Level assigned after 1 st year of assessment data in new school, except in the case of schools in Levels 4 & 5, which retain their existing level	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration
Merger (new code)	Merger of 2 or more schools serving same or different grades resulting in a new single-school district	Schools inherit district baseline data (<i>See 50% rule in Notes section</i>)	Level assigned after first year of assessment data as single-school district, except for schools in Levels 4 & 5, which retain their existing level	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration
Merger (new code)	Merger of 2 or more districts	District inherits baseline data from prior districts; PPI assigned after first year	Level assigned in first year based on existing Levels of schools	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration
Other				
Data invalidation (same code)	Existing school has data invalidated in current year for English language arts (ELA), mathematics, or science in one or more tested grades	No annual or cumulative PPI calculated, unless the only subject with invalidated data was science	School inherits Level from prior year	Cumulative PPI can only be calculated with valid ELA and mathematics data in current year; school held accountable using Level from prior year
Rezone (same code)	Change in attendance areas or populations served by school but no change in grades served	School maintains existing baseline data	School maintains existing Level	Valid way to establish baseline data: 40% of accountability calculations in 1 st year and 70% in 2 nd year driven by new configuration

Notes:

- In this document, use of the term “conversion” indicates a determination made by ESE based on key factors (e.g., proposed student population, enrollment pattern, and grade configuration) and does not necessarily imply a formal legal use of the term.
- 50% rule: ESE will reconfigure baseline data only if the number of tested grades changes by 50% or more, except in the case of a school adding a single tested grade (no reconfigured baseline data).
- For split schools, the resulting school serving the majority of grades will retain level of the previous school unless a new school code is assigned, and the school with the new code will be assigned a Level after the first year of assessment data. For many-to-many splits, ESE will assign district-level baselines using appropriate grades.
- For mergers, Level 1, 2, or 3 schools that merge will retain the Level of the school serving the majority of grades unless a new school code is assigned. In mergers that include a Level 4 or 5 school, the highest Level will be assigned. For many-to-1 or many-to-many mergers, ESE will assign district-level baselines using appropriate grades. For 1-to-1 mergers, ESE will re-aggregate student-level data in appropriate grades.
- If a Level 4 or 5 school splits and becomes two or more schools, ESE will assign the Level 4 or 5 classification to each of the resulting schools.