

School Progress Index (SPI) Tutorial

What is the School Progress Index?

4. What are the Indicators for SPI and why were they chosen?

The indicators were chosen in collaboration with Maryland stakeholder partners—parents, educators, legislators, business, and the general public. A “standard setting” meeting was held and the participants produced consensus on a set of Indicators that reflect Core Values (what Marylanders feel is important to measure in education) and will drive the identification of schools for intervention and similarly the recognition of schools making exceptional progress and achieving at high levels. Selected components and derivatives from the traditional Adequate Yearly Progress data set are incorporated into a school appraisal instrument that more comprehensively reflects the Core Values Marylanders have regarding their schools. Achievement, Gap Reduction, Growth and College and Career Readiness are the four Indicators identified for the SPI.

The identified Indicators begin with student performance. Certainly, the goal and purpose of each Maryland school is to assure that students receive the best education possible and can demonstrate the acquisition of the skills and knowledge they have acquired. Maryland assessments, built under the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) continue to be the benchmarks by which student performance is measured, with proficiency standards (advanced, proficient, basic). These assessments provide an accurate measure of student achievement in critical grade level mathematics and reading/English content. Indicator data is principally concerned with the distance a school is from each of its annual performance targets.

If all students are achieving at high levels, then the performance of the school is deemed acceptable and the school assessed as successfully achieving its targets and goals. However, within every school, the spectrum of student performance mirrors an array of student social, developmental, and medical conditions. Standards are set to represent the minimal expectations all students will need to meet if they are to be prepared adequately for the next school year’s academic challenges and to eventually be prepared for college and career.

Particularly for students receiving special services (English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty as measured via the Free and Reduced Price Meals Program) and for some students in some traditionally low-performing racial subgroups, the assessment standards and thus the annual performance targets may be challenging to achieve. Consequently, the school's instructional program must include features designed for the primary purpose of accelerating the year- to-year performance growth of low-performing students so that the annual targets are achieved assuring the student can be ready for college or career upon graduation.

Meanwhile, students who are not performing at the standards levels often need extraordinary intervention to fuel their performance acceleration, regardless of the overall condition of the school. Recognizing that greater incentive and accountability is needed to assure that kind of acceleration, Maryland constituents indicated a need for direct measurements of the acceleration of individual student performance and for the closing of gaps for student subgroups. Consequently, the Maryland School Progress Index incorporates two additional related, but separate Indicators—Gap Reduction and Annual Individual Student Growth. The Standard Setting Committee made further recommendations for the weights of gap and growth.

Maryland's School Progress Index (Grades 9-12) includes College and Career Readiness indicators because they are important early predictors of whether a student will be positioned for successful first steps in college and a career. The approved College- and Career-Readiness (20%) component includes:

60% Cohort Graduation Rate

40% College and Career Preparation

The college and career preparation includes :

- Advanced placement (AP) exam performance (schools receive credit for students who receive a 3 or better on any AP exam)OR, International Baccalaureate exam performance (schools receive credit for students who receive a 4 or better);

Or

- Career Concentrators (schools received credit for a student enrolled in the 3rd year of a CTE Program)

Or

- College enrollment (schools receive credit for students that enroll in a 2- or 4-year credit bearing, public or private, in or out of State, institution).

The following are the four Indicators included in SPI for K-12 schools. However, elementary, middle and high schools will each be assessed on only three of the four Core Values as indicated in the descriptions below:

Achievement is an Indicator used in elementary, middle, and high schools for calculating their SPI. Based on a percentage of the “all students” group scoring proficient or advanced on the Maryland School Assessments (MSA and Alt-MSA) in mathematics, reading, and science for elementary and middle schools and on the High School Assessments (HSA) in Algebra, Biology, and English for high schools. Annual targets set for each content area are based on the reducing the number of students not scoring proficient on the assessment in half by 2017.

Growth is an Indicator used in elementary and middle schools for calculating their SPI. Growth is based on the percentage of the “all students” group and in specific subgroups demonstrating growth in performance over the previous year. Annual targets set for each content area separately are based on the percent of students that would yield a 50% reduction in the percentage of students by 2017 demonstrating less than one year’s growth from the prior year for the “all students” group.

Gap Reduction is an Indicator used in elementary, middle, and high schools for calculating their SPI. Gap reduction is defined as a decrease in the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups. The calculations include an adjustment for reductions resulting from declines in performance of highest-performing subgroup. A school cannot close its gap by decreasing the progress of the highest performing subgroup.

College and Career Readiness is an Indicator only used in high schools only for calculating their SPI. It includes cohort graduation rate, and college and career preparation (Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate, CTE concentrators, and College Enrollment).