



Research Brief

Adequate Yearly Progress

Question: What are some ways to help high schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress?

Summary of Findings: With the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and its many facets, an area of major concern for most schools is how to make Adequate Yearly Progress. The definition for AYP has been written about in numerous articles and can be accessed from the reference page at the conclusion of this brief. What very early research is indicating is that more elementary schools and middle schools are making AYP in both reading and math, than seems to be happening in high schools. There are no guaranteed methods or strategies that will help every school make AYP. However, there are suggestions from research that can assist with helping a school make AYP.

Major Conclusions

- It was suggested by Wagner (Secondary School Change), that the needs of high school students are very different in this the Information Age. Because of those differences, he strongly advocated that high schools need rigor, relevance, and relationships.
Rigor and relevance were defined as an instructional program providing deep curricula, that is meaningful and highly pertinent to the students' lives. By this it was meant that it should not be more of the same lecture-based approach that will cover even more content. Relationships were explained as the importance of students developing communication, problem-solving and reasoning skills while learning how to work collaboratively. Wagner referenced a "merit badge" approach that is being used in the inner city of New York where 90% of their students are graduating and out of that group, more than 90% are going on to some form of higher education. (A more in-depth description of these concepts are in *Making the Grade: Reinventing America's Schools*).
- Use both qualitative and quantitative data to formulate policy and curriculum.
- Develop a shared vision of what students should know and be able to do.
- Establish what good teaching is, how it looks at your site, and how it can be more deeply developed.
- Define standards of quality for performance assessments.
- Monitor and evaluate student progress regularly and make appropriate changes.
- Model effective instructional techniques at all meetings, including staff, professional development, and parents.
- Create a "house" or "school within a school" organization so that a small group of teachers and students can work together, be known well by each other, which has a flexible schedule that will meet the needs of the curricula, not a prescribed bell system.
- Build in common planning time for the teachers.
- Implement a staff development program that directly relates to the teachers and their needs with a focus on one to two major areas so that depth can be provided.
- Institute a career pathways option so that students can explore different areas of interest as well as contribute time to the community.



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- Observe regularly in classrooms by those who know what effective instruction looks like and provide immediate feedback and follow-up.
- Educate parents in the needs of the students, how the instructional program is meeting those needs, and how they can support their child.

Online Resources:

- **Accountability Conflicts Vex Schools**
The conflict between schools meeting their state's standards and making AYP are described in this article.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/03/10/26account.h23.html>
- **A Critical Fork in the Road**
Alternatives to standardized tests as the primary measure of students' knowledge are presented.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2001/04/11/30wagner.h20.html>
- **Adequate Yearly Progress**
This provides a complete overview of AYP.
<http://www.edweek.org/rc/issues/adequate-yearly-progress/index.html?querystring=AYP>
- **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) & School Improvement**
A description of AYP and some misconceptions about it are detailed in this article.
<http://www.aft.org/topics/nclb/ayp.htm>
- **Beyond Testing: The 7 Disciplines for Strengthening Instruction**
A description of seven components for improving and strengthening the instructional program that are being piloted in different districts and states is presented.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2003/11/12/11wagner.h23.html>
- **Boston Rallies to Help Students Pass Tests**
A brief description of what Boston's community did to pull together to help their high school seniors pass the state exam is provided.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/11/06/10boston.h22.html>
- **Data Show Schools Making Progress on Federal Goals**
This article describes how some states have reported data that seem to indicate progress because more school districts appeared to make AYP. Some growth was seen because of a change in the descriptions of what AYP constitutes.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/09/08/02ayp.h24.html>



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- **More School Districts Feeling the Effects of the 'No Child' Law**
An overview of a report done by the Center on Education Policy in regards to NCLB is described in this article.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/02/04/21cep.h23.html?print=1>
- **Making the Grade: Reinventing America's Schools**
A review of this book and how schools, in particular what high schools, can do to better meet the needs of students is provided.
http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/206
- **Secondary School Change**
The importance of rigor, relevance, and relationships and their role in the high school curriculum are described.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2002/11/27/13wagner.h22.html>
- **State Reports on Progress Vary Widely**
An overview on the concerns regarding how districts can make AYP is provided.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2003/09/03/01ayp.h23.html>
- **Taking Root**
The article provides a brief overview of how different states are attempting to meet the requirements of NCLB.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/12/08/15nclb-1.h24.html>
- **Urban Students Show Reading, Math Gains on State Assessments**
A brief description is given of some gains made on reading and math tests, along with several ideas of what districts have done to support their teachers and students in these content areas.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/03/31/29urban.h23.html>

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