

MYTH BUSTERS

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**Kansas
PTA®**

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Advocacy

Making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

FACTS: Adequate yearly progress

(AYP) is the process established by federal law to judge whether our public schools are on track to help students achieve, as measured by state assessments. The limited 'failure' of some schools to make AYP does not mean our public school system is failing. If for example, 290 students among 325 tested pass the state standards (89% of an entire student group), the school could still "fail to make AYP". By law, the target goal is to get 100% of students to standards by the spring of 2014. The line between 'success' and 'failure' to make AYP this current school year, requires about 90% of all student groups to meet state standards in math and reading, and have an average attendance rate of 90%, and a graduation rate of 80%, or growth toward the target goals must be at least 3% to 5% annually.¹

MYTH: Kansas public schools are "failing" because some fail to make AYP.

FACT 1. AYP is federal law. AYP is a requirement of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and a central part of the law's accountability component initiated in 2001. AYP is based on the premise that **all** students will achieve a defined set of standards by the 2013-2014 school year, including historically underachieving student groups:

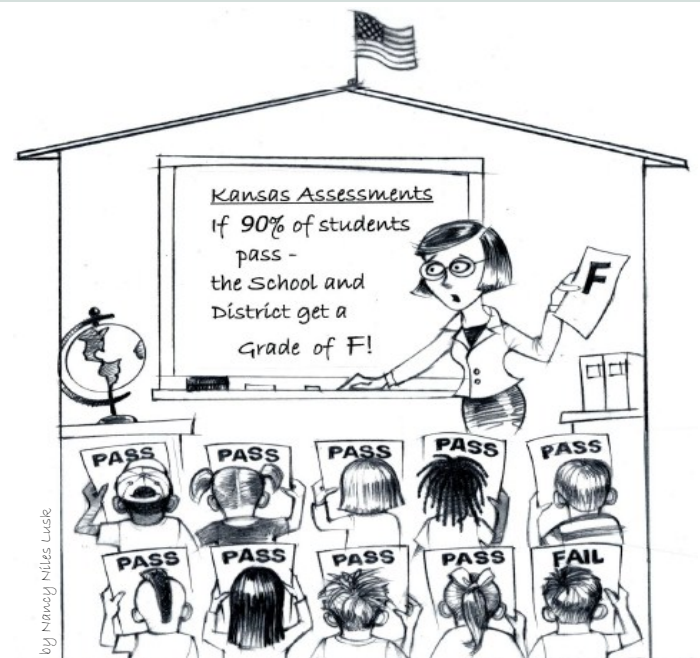
- low income families
- youth with disabilities
- English language learners
- racial/ethnic groups.¹

FACT 2. Failure to make AYP does not mean our public school system is failing. If just 5 youth in one of the smaller student groups scores below standards on the math assessment, for example, while the remaining student groups and student body as a whole achieve all the standards, the school can still "Fail to Meet AYP" and possibly the district. Despite successfully helping over 90% of its youth achieve state standards, such school communities have been labeled a 'failure'.²

FACT 3. AYP annual targets are always rising, as are the standards. "Annual targets" refers to the percentage of students who must meet Kansas standards in order for a school to make AYP. When first mandated, the 2002 annual target was about 50% of students and has risen incrementally each year to the 100% target in 2014.³ In addition, Kansas standards are also rising with the recent adoption of the **Common Core State Standards**. More kids are expected to reach an even higher bar.

FACT 4. Most schools and districts are making AYP. In 2011, 84% of public schools (1,148 of 1,367) representing 73% of districts (211 of 289) made AYP.⁴

FACT 5. Standardized test scores should be interpreted with caution. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is not explicitly aligned with the Kansas standards as are the Kansas State Assessments. NAEP statistics are often strategically selected by public school opponents in an



attempt to portray the illusion of failure (see KS PTA Myth Busters Issue 4). While these two rigorous tests are highly correlated, they are constructed differently each for their own unique purpose. The tests, for example, emphasize different aspects of reading and math competencies. More importantly, these two assessments by law established different standards, also referred to as "cut scores". For these methodological differences alone, NAEP scores should be interpreted with caution. In fact, NAEP itself isn't sure what the cut scores (basic, proficient) measure.

"The [National Academy of Sciences] Panel concluded that "NAEP's current achievement-level setting procedures remain fundamentally flawed. The judgment tasks are difficult and confusing; raters' judgments of different item types are internally inconsistent; appropriate validity evidence for the cut scores is lacking; and the process has produced unreasonable results"... A proven alternative to the current process has not yet been identified.⁵

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Publication of the
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Debbie Lawson debbie@burlislawson.com
Nancy Niles Lusk nnlusk@kc.rr.com
Mary Sinclair, PhD msinclair1@kc.rr.com

- 1 KSDE (2011). Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). 2011-2012 Fact Sheet. See also The Center for Public Education (2006). A guide to the No Child Left Behind Act. Standards-based reform and a short history.
- 2 KSDE (2011). *K-12 Reports. Report Card 2010-11: School Adequately Yearly Progress.*
- 3 KSDE (2012). Kansas Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Revised Guidance for 2011-2012.
- 4 KSDE (2011). Public Schools and District Not Making AYP.
- 5 NCES (2009). *NAEP Technical Documents.*