



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Public Law 221 (P.L. 221)

1. What is P.L. 221?

Public Law 221 (P.L.221) is Indiana’s comprehensive accountability system for K-12 education. Passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 1999-prior to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001-the law aimed to establish major educational reform and accountability statewide. To measure progress, P.L.221 places Indiana schools (both public and accredited non-public) into one of five categories based upon student performance and improvement data from the state’s ISTEP+ and End-of-Course Assessments (ECAs).

- A (Exemplary Progress)
- B (Commendable Progress)
- C (Academic Progress)
- D (Academic Watch – Priority)
- F (Academic Probation – High Priority)

2. How are the P.L. 221 categories determined?

The Indiana State Board of Education first adopted category placements for the state’s public and accredited non-public schools beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. Thresholds for category placements changed as of 2009-2010 and category placements changed to reflect letter grades (A-F) as of 2010-2011 (511 IAC 6.2-6-5). Category placements are based on three factors:

1. **Performance:** percentage of all students who pass the state’s English and math ISTEP+ (also ISTAR or IMAST) tests (for grades 3-8) and English 10 and Algebra I ECAs (also ISTAR) (for the class of 2013).
2. **Improvement:** improvement in the passing percentage of students passing ISTEP+ and ECAs (also ISTAR or IMAST) over a three-year period
3. **Adequate Yearly Progress status:** schools that do not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind Act for two consecutive years in the same subject area or in the “other” indicator can place no higher than the “C (Academic Progress)” category.

PERFORMANCE (% passing ISTEP+ or ECA)	IMPROVEMENT (Average passing percentage improvement over three years)				
	A (Exemplary Progress)	B (Commendable Progress)	C (Academic Progress)	D (Academic Watch – Priority)	F (Academic Probation – High Priority)
≥90%					
≥80%	≥1%	<1%			
≥70%	≥3%	≥2%	≥1%	<1%	
≥60%	≥4%	≥3%	≥2%	<2%	<0%
≥50%	≥5%	≥4%	≥3%	<3%	<1%
<50%		≥5%	≥4%	≥3%	<3%





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3. Which students are included in the performance calculations for P.L. 221?

For performance calculations for students in grades 3-8, students are assigned to the school at which they took the ISTEP+ exam in spring 2011. If a student took the ISTEP+ at two schools (one in the first window and one in the second window), the student is assigned to the school at which the student was last enrolled.

For high schools, students in the class of 2013 were identified (students who entered high school for the first time in 2009-2010 and were in their second year of high school in 2010-2011, with an expected graduation year of 2013). Those students were assigned to the high school at which they took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in 2010-2011. For students who took the Algebra I or English 10 exam in a prior year and passed, students were assigned to the high school at which they were enrolled latest in 2010-2011. If a student took the Algebra I or English 10 exam in 2010-2011 at multiple schools (e.g., took Algebra I in the fall window at one school and then in the spring window at another school), the student was assigned to the school at which the student was last enrolled in 2010-2011.

4. How is the performance percentage calculated?

For students in grades 3-8, the total number of students passing English/Language Arts and Math assessments is divided by the total number of students taking English/Language Arts and Math assessments. For example, if a school had 100 students take the E/LA assessment, with 50 of those students passing, and had 100 students take the Math assessment, with 50 of those students passing, the school's performance percentage would be $(50 + 50) / (100 + 100) = 50\%$.

For students in the class of 2013 (those who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2009-2010 and were in their second year of high school in 2010-2011), the total number of students passing the English 10 ECA and the Algebra I ECA is divided by the total number of students taking the English 10 ECA and Algebra I ECA. For example, if a school had 50 students take the English 10 ECA, with 50 of those students passing, and had 80 students take the Algebra I ECA, with 60 of those students passing, the school's performance percentage would be $(50 + 60) / (50 + 80) = 85\%$. See questions 6 and 7 for information about how students who took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year are counted.

5. Are students with undetermined scores included in the numerator or denominator for performance percentages?

No. Undetermined scores are not included in either the numerator or denominator for performance percentages.

6. Are students in the class of 2013 who took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and failed and did not retest in 2010-2011 included in the numerator and denominator for performance percentages?

No. Students who took Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and failed and did not retake the test in 2010-2011 are not included in the numerator or denominator for high school performance percentages.





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7. Are students in the class of 2013 who took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and passed included in the numerator and denominator for performance percentages?

Yes. Students in the class of 2013 who took Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and passed are included in the numerator and denominator for performance percentages. These students would be assigned to the high school in which they were enrolled latest in 2010-2011.

8. Which students are included in the improvement calculations for P.L. 221?

To calculate improvement, only students who were enrolled in the school for 126 days during 2010-2011 are included. If a student was enrolled for 126 days at a particular school in 2010-2011, the student is assigned to that school for improvement. If the student was enrolled at 126 total days at several schools within one school corporation, the student is assigned to that school corporation. Even if a student was enrolled for 126 days in 2010-2011, the student must have ISTEP+ test results for both the current year (2011) and the prior year (spring 2010) in order to be included in improvement, or, for students in the class of 2013, ECA results for both the current year (2010-2011, or an Algebra I or English 10 ECA passing record from a prior year) and the spring 2009 ISTEP+ (when the class of 2013 was tested as 8th graders).

Students in grades 3-8 who were enrolled in school for 126 days during 2010-2011 as reported on the DOE-AT (attendance) report were included in improvement calculations, as long as those students also had ISTEP+ results for the prior year.

Students in the class of 2013 (students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2009-2010) who were enrolled in school for 126 days during 2010-2011 as reported on the DOE-AT (attendance) report were included in improvement calculations for high schools as long as those students had ISTEP+ results for spring 2009.

9. How does the state determine whether an elementary or middle school made improvement under P.L. 221?

For students in grades 3-8, the combined spring 2011 ISTEP+ passing percentage [(students passing E/LA plus students passing Math) divided by (students taking E/LA + students taking Math)] is calculated for the 126-day students. Then, the combined spring 2010 ISTEP+ passing percentage for that cohort of 126-day students is calculated. The improvement calculation for 2011 is the spring 2011 combined passing percentage minus the spring 2010 combined passing percentage.

The final improvement calculation used for P.L. 221 category placements is the higher of the 2011 improvement calculation or the three-year average of 2011 improvement, 2010 P.L. 221 improvement, and 2008 P.L. 221 improvement. For example, if a school's 2011 improvement calculation was 5.0 (the 126-day student cohort's combined ISTEP+ passing percentage was 65% in 2011 vs. 60% in 2010) and its P.L. 221 improvement calculation for 2010 was 2.5 (representing a gain of 2.5 percentage points from fall 2008 to spring 2010), and its P.L. 221 improvement calculation for 2008 was 2.0 (representing a gain of 2.0 percentage points from fall 2007 to fall 2008), the school's 3-year average would be $((5.0 + 2.5 + 2.0)/3) = 3.2$. Because





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its current year (2011) improvement calculation (5.0) is higher than its 3-year average (3.2), the current year (2011) is used.

10. How does the state determine whether a high school made improvement under P.L. 221?

For high schools, the combined 2011 ECA passing percentage for the class of 2013 [(students passing Algebra I ECA plus students passing English 10 ECA) divided by (students taking Algebra I ECA plus students taking ECA English 10)] is calculated for the 126-day students. Then, because this cohort of students (students who were in their second year of high school in 2010-2011) did not test as 9th graders in 2009-2010, the combined spring 2009 ISTEP+ E/LA and Math performance of this cohort of students is calculated. This would be the ISTEP+ performance of the 126-day cohort of students in the class of 2013 from when they were tested as 8th graders. The 2011 improvement calculation is the 2010-2011 ECA combined passing percentage minus the spring 2009 ISTEP+ combined passing percentage for this cohort of students.

The final improvement calculation used for P.L. 221 category placements is the higher of the 2011 improvement calculation or the three-year average of 2011 improvement, 2010 P.L. 221 improvement, and 2008 P.L. 221 improvement. For example, if a school's 2011 improvement calculation was 2.0 (the 126-day class of 2013 student cohort's combined ECA passing percentage was 62% in 2011 versus a combined ISTEP+ passing percentage of 60% in spring 2009), and its P.L. 221 improvement calculation for 2010 was 5.0 (representing a gain of 5.0 percentage points from fall 2007 ISTEP+ to 2010 ECA), and its P.L. 221 improvement calculation for 2008 was 2.5 (representing a gain of 2.5 percentage points from fall 2007 ISTEP+ to fall 2008 GQE), the school's 3-year average would be $((2.0 + 5.0 + 2.5)/3) = 3.2$. Because its 3-year average (3.2) is higher than its current year (2011) improvement calculation (2.0), the 3-year average is used.

11. Are undetermined scores included in looking at improvement percentages? In other words, do undetermined scores count as did not pass?

No. Undetermined scores do not count as did not pass when calculating pass percentages from one year to the next. Only valid test results count in calculating the pass percentages from spring 2011 to spring 2010 (or, for high school students, from 10-11 ECA or prior year passing Algebra I or English 10 records to spring 2009 ISTEP+).

12. Are students in the class of 2013 who took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and failed included in the numerator and denominator for improvement percentages?

No. Students who took Algebra I ECA in a prior year and failed and did not retake the test in 2010-2011 are not included in the numerator or denominator for high school improvement percentages, even if they were enrolled in school for 126 days in 2010-2011. However, students who took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year, failed, and the retook the ECA in 2010-2011 and passed are included, and are counted as passing.

13. Are students in the class of 2013 who took the Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and passed included in the numerator and denominator for improvement percentages?





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Yes. Students in the class of 2013 who were enrolled in 10-11 for 126 days, took Algebra I or English 10 ECA in a prior year and passed are included in the numerator and denominator for improvement percentages. These students would be assigned to the high school in which they were enrolled for 126 days in 2010-2011.

14. Is there a cap on the percentage of students who can be considered proficient on IMAST and ISTAR like there is for AYP?

No. For P.L. 221, there is no 3% cap for inclusion as proficient on IMAST and ISTAR. Students who take ISTAR or IMAST and meet the criteria described throughout this document are included in PL221 performance and improvement calculations.

15. How exactly do category placements for schools work?

Using the chart provided in question 2, a school can identify exactly how its P.L. 221 category was determined. An example calculation is given here:

In spring 2011, Elementary School A tested 150 students on ISTEP+ English/Language Arts and 150 students on ISTEP+ Math. 100 students passed E/LA, and 125 students passed Math. Elementary School A's performance percentage is $(100 + 125) / (150 + 150) = 75\%$.

PERFORMANCE (% passing ISTEP+ or ECA)	IMPROVEMENT (Average passing percentage improvement over three years)				
	A (Exemplary Progress)	B (Commendable Progress)	C (Academic Progress)	D (Academic Watch – Priority)	F (Academic Probation – High Priority)
≥90%					
≥80%	≥1%	<1%			
≥70%	≥3%	≥2%	≥1%	<1%	
≥60%	≥4%	≥3%	≥2%	<2%	<0%
≥50%	≥5%	≥4%	≥3%	<3%	<1%
<50%		≥5%	≥4%	≥3%	<3%

Elementary School A is in the ≥70% category for performance. Next, Elementary School A's improvement is calculated, using the higher of current year (2011) improvement, or 3-year average improvement (2011, 2010, and 2008).

Elementary School A reported 140 students in grades 3-8 who were enrolled for 126 days in 2010-2011. Of those 140, 100 students had test results for spring 2011 ISTEP+ E/LA and spring 2010 ISTEP+ E/LA, and 95 had test results for spring 2011 ISTEP+ Math and spring 2010 ISTEP+ Math. For the 100 students with E/LA results in both spring 2011 and spring 2010, 95 passed in spring 2011 and 90 passed in spring 2010. For the 95 students with Math results in both spring 2011 and spring 2010, 85 passed in spring 2011 and 80 passed in spring 2010.





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The 2011 passing percentage is $[(95 + 85) / (100 + 95)] = 92\%$. The 2010 passing percentage is $[(90 + 80) / (100 + 95)] = 87\%$. The school's 2011 improvement calculation is $[92\% \text{ (the 2011 passing percentage)} - 87\% \text{ (the 2010 passing percentage)}] = 5$.

In 2010, Elementary School A's improvement calculation was 4.2. In 2008, the school's improvement calculation was 3.1. Elementary School A's 3-year average improvement is $(5 + 4.2 + 3.1)/3 = 4.1$. Since Elementary School A's 2011 improvement calculation was 5.0, which is higher than its 3-year average improvement calculation, 5.0 is its improvement calculation. Looking back at the chart:

PERFORMANCE (% passing ISTEP+ or ECA)	IMPROVEMENT (Average passing percentage improvement over three years)				
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≥90%					
≥80%	≥1%	<1%			
≥70%	≥3%	≥2%	≥1%	<1%	
≥60%	≥4%	≥3%	≥2%	<2%	<0%
≥50%	≥5%	≥4%	≥3%	<3%	<1%
<50%		≥5%	≥4%	≥3%	<3%

Elementary School A's P.L. 221 rating is A (Exemplary Progress). However, if Elementary School A has missed AYP for two consecutive years, Elementary School A's performance will be capped at C (Academic Progress) (see question 19)

16. Where can I find prior year P.L. 221 improvement calculations for my school?

Both current P.L. 221 improvement calculations and prior year improvement calculations are available at <https://dc.doe.state.in.us/AYP/Authentication/PinLogin.aspx>. Schools and corporations can log in using their corporation or school ID and PIN and then click on **PL221 results** in the blue bar. Prior year improvement calculations are found in the section of the report titled **Student Improvement**, under the heading **Improvement % Determination**. Schools and corporations can also access archived P.L. 221 data at www.doe.in.gov/pl221.





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17. Were IMAST and ISTAR data included in the performance and improvement calculations for schools?

Yes. Student who took IMAST and students who took ISTAR and were reported as eligible for ISTAR for accountability were included in performance calculations if they had valid (not undetermined) test results. Students who took IMAST and students who took ISTAR and were reported as eligible for ISTAR for accountability and were enrolled for 126 days in 10-11 were included in improvement calculations.

18. How did P.L. 221 calculations change for high schools with the introduction of the ECAs for the class of 2013?

In the past, all 10th grade students who took the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) in the 10th grade during the GQE window were included in performance. Students in 10th grade who were enrolled for 126 days the year prior were included in improvement. That changed for 2010 (and beyond) P.L. 221 calculations for high schools.

For 2011 P.L. 221, much like AYP, only students who are in the class of 2013 were included in performance and improvement calculations. The class of 2013 is defined as students entering 9th grade for the first time in 2009-2010. Students in the class of 2013 were included in performance if they had a valid ECA English 10 record or a valid ECA Algebra I record from 2010-2011 OR an ECA Algebra I passing record from a prior year.

For improvement, only students in the class of 2013 who were enrolled for 126 days in 2010-2011 having valid English 10 or Algebra I test records were included. The student group's performance was compared against their 8th grade ISTEP+ performance in Math and English/Language Arts in the spring of 2009.

19. How does missing AYP affect my school's P.L. 221 rating?

A school that misses AYP for two consecutive years in same subject area or in the "other" indicator is capped at "C (Academic Progress)." Also, if a school was capped in a previous year, it must make AYP for two consecutive years in order to be uncapped.

20. Where can I find a list of my students that were included in performance or improvement?

Student lists can be accessed by authorized users in STN application center:

http://www.doe.in.gov/stn/stn_application_center.html under **Lookup>PL221**. If you don't have a login for STN application center, talk to your school corporation's STN administrator.



