

Target Group Outcomes Guide January 2021

Important note: [2019 Wisconsin Act 185](#) prohibits the release of school and district accountability report cards in the 2020-21 school year. This means the **Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) will not issue school or district report cards for 2019-20** (the report cards that would have been publicly released in November). Though there will be no 2019-20 report cards, OEA is releasing accountability “**preview reports**” directly to schools and districts via SAFE in January/February of 2021. These preview reports use data from prior years (i.e., 2018-19 assessment results) to demonstrate the report card calculation and data changes. They are for informational purposes only.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the Target Group Outcomes priority area, which replaces the Closing Gaps priority area in the preview reports and in future report cards.

Background

The Closing Gaps priority area is focused on closing statewide achievement gaps for students from traditionally marginalized populations. Over the last few years, some issues with this priority area became clear. Scores for small schools could see large fluctuations year-to-year, with score swings largely influenced by changes in student population rather than changes in student performance. Additionally, OEA heard from school and district staff that while gap closure is an important focus the calculations were overly complex, making it difficult to convey a clear data story to the public.

The Target Group Outcomes priority area addresses both of these challenges while still encouraging higher achievement for all students.

- To increase stability of scores year-to-year, this priority area focuses on a **single target group of students**, comprised of students in roughly the bottom quartile (25%) of performance based on the last year’s assessment results. As a result, schools are unlikely to see large shifts in this priority area score due to changes in student population alone. It will also be much less common for a school to see changes in whether or not this priority area is scored from one year to the next.
- To make the meaning of this data clearer, the complicated scoring structure used in the Closing Gaps priority area is being replaced with a **multiple measure system**. This scoring system calculates measures familiar from other priority areas - achievement, value-added growth, students regularly attending, and attendance or graduation rates. The same calculation methods are used, but applied only to students in the target group, creating a “**mini report card**” for the group. In addition to better facilitating data storytelling, this approach further contributes to score stability by using measures known to be more reliable.

Ultimately, the purpose of these changes is to create a measure that is more reliable, inclusive, and actionable for schools and districts.

The Case for a Target Group

Target Group Outcomes examines multiple measures for a single group, composed of students in the bottom quartile (25%) of performance based on the last year's test results, along with any students who scored less than proficient on that year's DLM alternate assessment. This measure was designed with equity in mind, to inform improvement efforts that will result in positive change for learners who most need it while also improving outcomes for all students.

This change, from scoring the outcomes of demographics-based groups to the outcomes of a performance-based target group was made for three reasons:

To focus on need: A foundation of equity is that when the **most vulnerable students are supported, all students will benefit**. This premise is built into the scoring of this metric and the report card - when the performance of the bottom quartile increases, the overall performance (and scores) of all students also increases. Due to historic marginalization of students of color, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English learners, Target Group membership based on prior year performance disproportionately includes students in these groups. As a result, though the Target Group is constructed based on need, it encourages raising achievement for students from these groups just as the demographic based Closing Gaps priority area did.

For more equitable inclusion: Historically, student groups at a school that did not have at least 20 students (e.g., 17 Black students, 19 Hispanic/Latino students) were not included in the Closing Gaps measure and student groups that hovered around 20 from year-to-year could jump in and out of cell size (and scores), causing large and distracting score fluctuations. The performance-based Target Group approach allows for the **inclusion of students who are in most need of support, regardless of the size of their demographic group**, while providing a more stable group size to measure year-to-year.

To support continuous improvement: Identifying a lowest-performing group reinforces the idea that every school has work to do to close gaps. By focusing on a Target Group that is roughly 25% of students, schools are also provided with a manageable number of students to place focus. They can 'target' their efforts to improve outcomes **for students most in need of support**, while increasing opportunities for all students.

For more information on *how* the Target Group is created, please see the *Creating the Target Group* section below.

The Case for a Multiple Measures Scoring Approach

Report Cards will always *report* trend, student group, and state comparison data, but will no longer *score* based on these data. Instead, the Target Group Outcomes priority area uses a multiple measures "mini report card" scoring approach. The target group is scored using the familiar measures of achievement, value-added growth, regular attendance, and graduation/attendance rates. Our work with stakeholders identified several factors in support of this new approach:

Clarity: Target Group Outcomes uses measures that are already on the report card, just applied specifically to a target group of students. One reason for this change is that stakeholders had great difficulty interpreting the Closing Gaps trend comparison data tables in prior report cards and understanding how assessment and graduation trends translated to scores. By shifting to a scoring approach that uses measures from other parts of the report card, stakeholders can more easily interpret and - importantly - act upon these results.

Limitations of trend comparison scoring: Scoring based on comparison trends can be volatile, as small changes in rates can sometimes lead to large changes in scoring that are not reflective of actual performance changes. Another problem inherent to trend-based comparison scoring is that if the statewide comparison decreases, a school’s score could increase even if that school’s performance has not changed. The new multi-measures approach is a more stable and reliable scoring system that captures student performance regardless of changes in comparison data.

More well rounded scoring: This shift to a multi-measure scoring approach has the added benefit of providing a more comprehensive look at the performance of students at a school who are in most need of support. For example, measuring growth for the target group is important in prioritizing both high achievement and improvement in performance, especially for historically lowest-performing groups of students. By incorporating regular attendance (the inverse of absenteeism) into this priority area, schools can get credit for improving attendance rates for the lowest performing students, an improvement that often foreshadows academic improvement.

Scoring Components

Target groups are scored using the familiar measures of achievement, value-added growth, regular attendance, and graduation/attendance rates. These scores are calculated using the same methodologies as the analogous “all students” scores (Table 1). The only difference is that within the Target Group Outcomes priority area these calculations **only apply to students in the Target Group**. Note that students in the Target Group continue to be included in “all students” calculations for the Achievement, Growth, and On-Track to Graduation priority areas in addition to being scored separately in the Target Group Outcomes priority area.

Table 1: Target Group Outcomes Scoring Components Calculations

Target Group Outcomes Scoring Component	Calculation
Achievement	Multi-year weighted average of ELA and mathematics points-based proficiency rates
Growth	Value-added growth measure
Students Regularly Attending	Multi-year weighted average of student-level attendance rates below 90% (absenteeism), subtracted from one (students regularly attending).
Graduation or Attendance	Graduation is calculated using the average between four-year and seven-year cohort graduation rates. Attendance is calculated by dividing the number of actual days attended by the number of total days attended by students in the target group.

For more information on priority area calculations, please visit the [accountability resources page](#).

These methodologies have demonstrated reliability in school and district performance over time. In addition, familiarity with these measures allows stakeholders to interpret the results easily and use what they learn to inform continuous improvement.

Creating the Target Group

The target group is determined by prior performance rather than demographic association. It is roughly the bottom quartile of performers using last year’s state assessment results, though additional business rules may result in a group that is more than 25% of the school or district’s

tested population. To determine the students who will be included in the Target Group Outcomes priority area, follow the steps described below and demonstrated in Figure 1.

1. Look at Forward, Aspire, and ACT **assessment results from the *prior year***. For example, 2021-22 assessment results will be used to determine which students to include in 2022-23 target groups. It does not matter if the student was not at the school when taking the assessment in the prior year. For example, 9th graders can be included in a high school's target group based upon their 8th grade Forward results. **Students who did not take the state assessment in the prior year are not included in the target group.**

2a. Convert ELA and mathematics scaled scores on state assessments to scores to standardized scores that can be compared across grades. Use of a z-score allows for scores for students in different grades to be compared. A score from the 8th grade Forward assessment is on a different scale than a score from the 10th grade Aspire assessment. Z-scores are used to standardize these scores:

$$Z\text{-score} = (\text{student scale score} - \text{mean scale score for grade}) / \text{std dev of scale scores for grade}$$

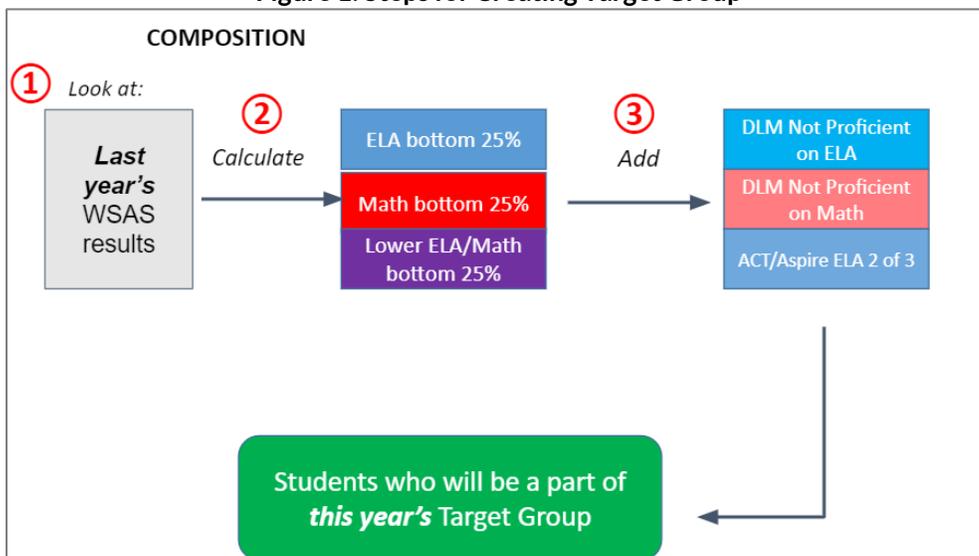
2b. Percentile rank z-scores to identify students in the bottom quartile (25%) for assignment to the target group. If the bottom quartile contains fewer than 20 students, keep adding students to the target group until the minimum cell size of 20 is met, up until 50% of students. In other words, at least 20 students are required in order to have a target group score, but the target group will not comprise the majority of full academic year (FAY) tested students. For example:

- 100 tested students = 25 students in target group (25%).
- 60 tested students = 20 students in the target group in order to meet cell size (33%).
- 30 tested FAY students = 20 students in the target group would exceed 50%. The target group is limited to the bottom quartile (25%) and therefore not scored at the school level. Note that students in this school's bottom quartile will be included in the district-level target group.

3. Some students have test results without scaled scores from the prior year. These students may still be included in the target group:

- a. Add students who scored less than proficient on the DLM. The DLM does not provide scale scores, so these students cannot be included in the percentile rankings.
- b. Add students who only completed 2 out of 3 components of the ELA content area on the ACT with writing or Aspire assessments, as these students also do not have scaled scores to be included in the rankings.

Figure 1: Steps for Creating Target Group

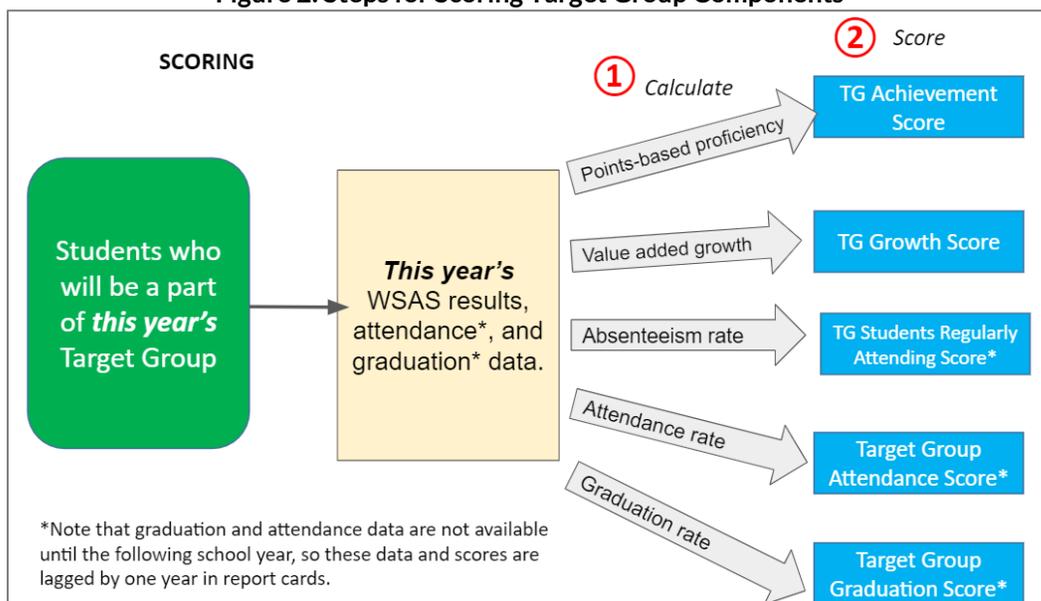


Scoring the Target Group Components

Target Group Outcomes component scores are calculated using the same methodology as the “all students” priority area scores. The only difference is that these calculations will **only apply to Target Group students** and not all students at the school. To score the target groups, continue the steps using the students identified in the previous section (Figure 2):

1. Apply the same calculations (e.g., points-based proficiency) to achievement, growth, regular attendance, and attendance/graduation as used in “all students” measures to **target group students**. These calculations use the **same source data** (i.e., most recent assessment, attendance, and graduation data) as in the “all students” measures.
2. Use these calculations to determine the scores for each component of the Target Group Outcomes priority area.

Figure 2: Steps for Scoring Target Group Components



Target Group Outcomes Priority Area Score

To determine a Target Group Outcomes priority area score, simply average the scoring components together using the weights in Table 2.¹

Table 2: Target Group Outcomes Priority Area Weighting

Target Group Outcomes Scoring Component	Weight (% of Target Group Outcomes Priority Area score) ¹
Achievement	35%
Growth	35%
Students Regularly Attending	15%
Graduation or Attendance	15%

Note that unlike in overall report card weighting, **achievement and growth are not subject to variable weighting for Target Group Outcomes**. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students at a school or district does not impact how achievement and growth are weighted in Target Group Outcomes, as it does in the overall report card weighting. For a comprehensive look at Target Group Outcomes and report card weighting scenarios, please refer to our [new online report card weighting calculator](#).

Additional Business Rules

The previous sections describe the processes used to create and score target groups. As is the case with other priority areas, there are additional technical business rules that impact exactly which students are included and scored in each target group component. This means that the groups of students who are included in each target group scoring component can differ from each other (though the degree of overlap will likely be significant for most schools). The descriptions and Table 3 below outline these additional business rules:

ELA and Mathematics Content Areas

Just like in the priority areas, Target Group Outcomes Achievement and Growth scoring components are separated by ELA and mathematics content areas. This applies to both composition and scoring, meaning that a student could score in the bottom 25% of ELA at their school but not in the bottom 25% of mathematics. In this example, the student would be included in the Target Group Achievement and Growth for ELA but not mathematics.

Inclusion of Non-Proficient DLM and ACT/Aspire 2 of 3 students

As mentioned in the “Creating the Target Group” section above, students below proficient on the DLM or on ELA for ACT/Aspire when only 2 of 3 subjects were completed do not have scaled scores. Therefore, they cannot be included in percentile rankings. These students are subsequently added to target groups after bottom quartiles are calculated. These students cannot, however, be included in Target Group Growth, because scaled scores are required to calculate a growth score.

Bottom Quartile for Students Regularly Attending and Graduation/Attendance

For Target Group Achievement and Growth, different target groups are created and scored for ELA and mathematics content areas based on the bottom quartile of performers in these content areas. For the other Target Group scoring components, the target groups are

¹Target Group Outcomes weighting can vary based on data availability. Please see the [new online report card weighting calculator](#) for complete weighting scenarios.

determined by taking the **lower of the two content area scores** for each student and percentile ranking based on these lower scores. DLM Non-Proficient (on either ELA or mathematics) and ACT/Aspire 2 of 3 students are added to these groups after the bottom quartile of lowest scores is calculated.

Full Academic Year (FAY) Status

Just like in other priority areas, Target Group Outcomes Achievement and Growth scoring components require students to be enrolled in a school or district for a full academic year (see [WISEdash glossary](#) for complete definition of FAY) to be included in the *scoring* of these measures. The other Target Group Outcomes components do not require students to be FAY at a school to be included, though students must be enrolled in the school for at least 90 days in order to be included in the students regularly attending measure (per the definition of the measure). Note that the prior year test result used for assignment to the target group need not be FAY.

Lagged Data

Attendance, graduation, and students regularly attending data are all lagged by one year on report cards because of the timing of the WISEdata snapshots that capture these data. This applies to Target Group Outcomes scoring components as well. For example, 2022-23 report cards will have 2022-23 assessment data for Target Group achievement and growth but 2021-22 attendance, graduation, and regular attendance data for these Target Group scores.

Graduation

Only students who are eligible to graduate will be included in the Target Group Graduation scoring component. This includes 12th grade students and students who remained enrolled past 12th grade. For the students in high school for more than four years, their most recent prior assessment result will be used for percentile ranking in target group inclusion - this will usually be from their grade 11 assessment.

Table 3: Additional Considerations for Target Group Inclusion

Additional Consideration	TG Achievement	TG Growth	TG Students Regularly Attending	TG Graduation	TG Attendance
Took state assessment last year	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Took state assessment this year	✓	✓	⊖	⊖	⊖
Was FAY at school last year	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖
FAY at school this year	✓	✓	⊖	⊖	⊖
90+ days at school this year	✓	✓	✓	⊖	⊖
Eligible to graduate this year	⊖	⊖	⊖	✓	⊖

✓ = Required

⊖ = Not required

Target Group Outcomes in District Report Cards

The target groups used in Target Group Outcomes for **district report cards are composed of students from target groups at schools in the district**. In other words, it is **not** the bottom 25% of assessment performers in the district. This approach differs from other priority areas of the report card that treat all students in the district like “one big school” for calculations. As noted above, students in the bottom 25% at their school are included in the district target group, even if their school did not meet cell size for its target group.

Target Group Students in WISEdash for Districts

Target Group Outcomes is designed to help schools see their own “gaps” between target group students and their student population as a whole. Schools should strive to narrow these gaps by implementing policies and procedures that will best serve the students most in need of support while also improving opportunities for all students. In order to support schools and districts in identifying and serving their lowest-performing students, OEA is working with the DPI Data Warehouse team to identify target groups at a student level within WISEdash for Districts. This work will take place in the future. In the meantime, the Office of Educational Accountability is providing a list of students in Preview Report target groups, as a tool for school and district staff who plan and implement these policies and procedures as part of an ongoing continuous improvement cycle.

Resources

Please visit the [OEA Accountability Resources page](#) to find additional resources on Target Group Outcomes, including sample data sets. You can also contact the OEA team with questions at reportcardhelp@dpi.wi.gov.