

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a Proposed Methodology for Setting Enrollment/Retention Targets

This FAQ will be regularly updated throughout the public comment period now underway for feedback on the NYSED/SUNY jointly developed proposed methodology for setting enrollment and retention targets for New York State Charter Schools. The questions below were generated from webinar attendees and direct e-mails to TargetsWebinar@suny.edu. We hope that this document helps to inform public comment, due by May 29, 2012, via e-mail to the address above or via mail to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, 41 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, New York 12207.

Q1. By setting enrollment and retention targets, are the authorizers penalizing schools for de-classifying students with disabilities and/or English language learners?

- A. Because the timing of student classification differs across schools and districts, and to ensure that schools are not penalized for declassifying students over time, the methodology employs a sampling method that identifies students as free- or reduced-price lunch students, limited English proficient students, or students with disabilities if they were ever classified as such in the NYSED student-level data files during the three most recent school years. This approach gives credit to schools and districts that enrolled classified students at any point during the most recent three school years even if they were later declassified. “

Q2. The term “outliers” was used during the webinar. Please define.

- A. The term “outliers” refers to any school with a disproportionately large or small enrollment or retention rate in any of three identified sub-categories relative to the other schools in its district. For example, identified English language learners (ELL) students may reside primarily in particular neighborhoods within a district. The one (or few) school(s) serving those neighborhoods may have a large concentration of LEP students relative to other schools in the district and would be considered outliers. Similarly, District Committees on Special Education may decide to place the population of students with disabilities within a district to one or a few schools. These schools may have large concentrations of students with disabilities relative to the other schools in the district and would be considered outliers.

Q3. When will schools receive their targets?

- A. Remember that the methodology has to be approved before targets can be set. Once the methodology is approved, authorizers will set initial targets and are working to determine if and when target adjustments during the charter term are warranted.

Q4. Will comparison of enrollment and retention rates take place at the school level, or will comparisons occur at each grade level within a school?

- A. Authorizers will compare each school building to the enrollment and retention rates of the district within which it is located. However, the district sample will be limited to students enrolled in the same grade levels served by the school.

Q5. If an individual subgroup enrollment at a school is less than thirty, is a target calculated?

- A. Yes. Statistical conventions about calculating standard errors for sample sizes less than thirty will be considered as part of authorizer practice development.

Q6. What is the source of the student-level data?

- A. The source for student-level data is the NYSED's Student Information Repository System (SIRS).

Q6. Will the authorizers apply the targets in an application for a short-term renewal or only in an application for a full 5-year renewal?

- A. Each school will receive targets regardless of the renewal period indicated in the application.