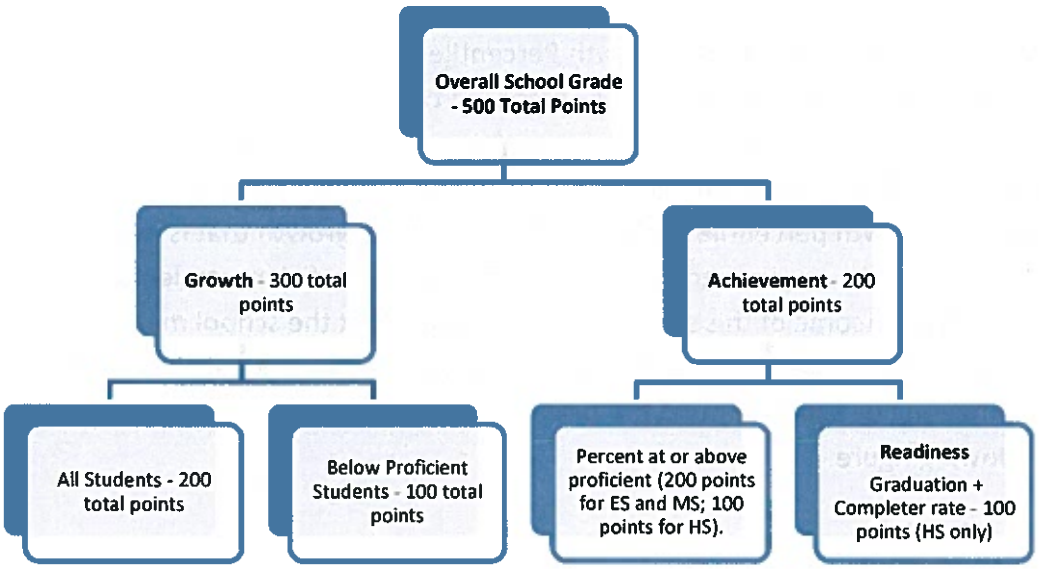
Executive Summary of Proposed Utah Letter Grade Accountability System

Rationale

The state of Utah is developing a new accountability system that provides a straightforward determination of school performance expressed as a letter grade (A-F). This new system supports the design principles conveyed in SB59 by valuing performance on Criterion-Referenced Tests or adaptive tests, prioritizing individual student growth toward meaningful achievement targets, promoting equity for low performing students, and incentivizing attainment of college and career readiness. The system is designed to establish high standards for performance yet provide every school an opportunity to demonstrate success, including those that serve traditionally low performing students.

Components

To advance these objectives and principles, the proposed accountability system is centered on three components: achievement, growth, and readiness. The structure of the proposed system is depicted below.

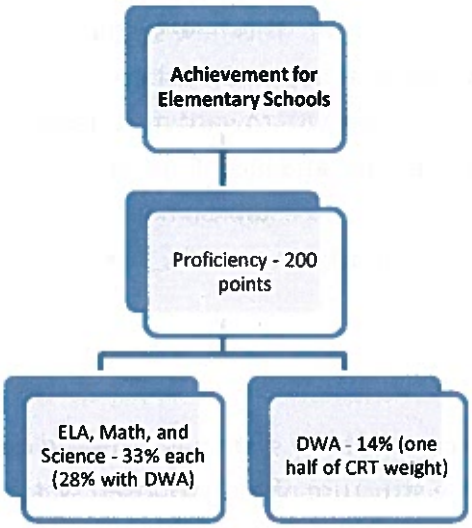


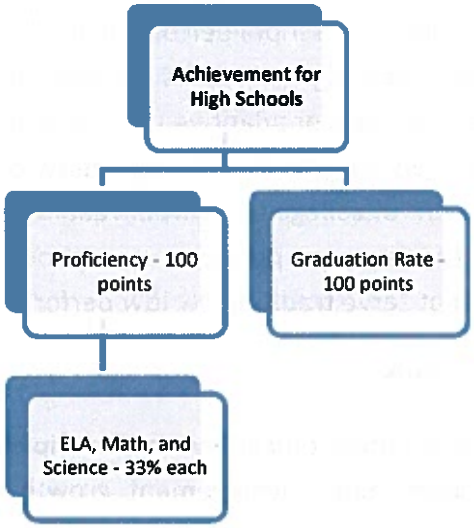
Achievement

Achievement is measured as the percent of students scoring at or above proficient for all ELA, math and science Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) and the writing test (DWA) in applicable grades. In grades with no writing test, each content area is weighted equally (one third). When the writing test is included, it counts for one half of the weight of one CRT content area (approximately 28% for each CRT and 14% for the DWA). The weighted percent proficient is scaled such that a maximum of 200 points are attainable.

Readiness accounts for 100 of the 200 points for high schools in the achievement component. It is calculated by multiplying the graduation rate with completers by 100 (e.g. .70 x 100= 70).

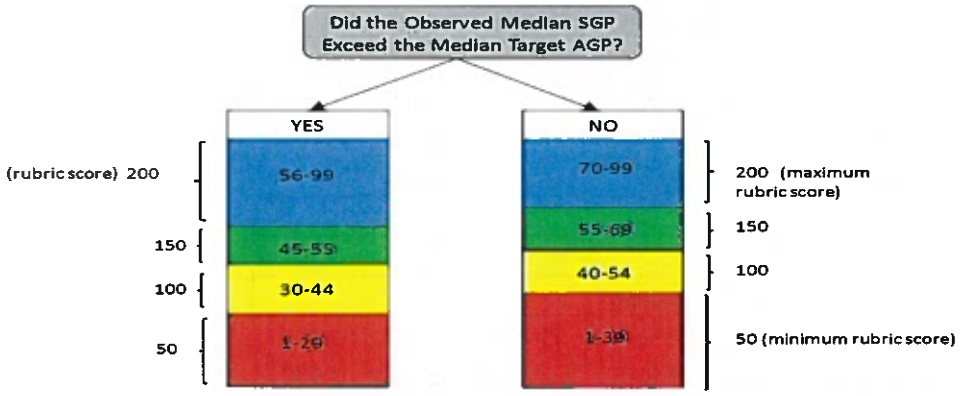
The structure and elements in the achievement component are depicted below.





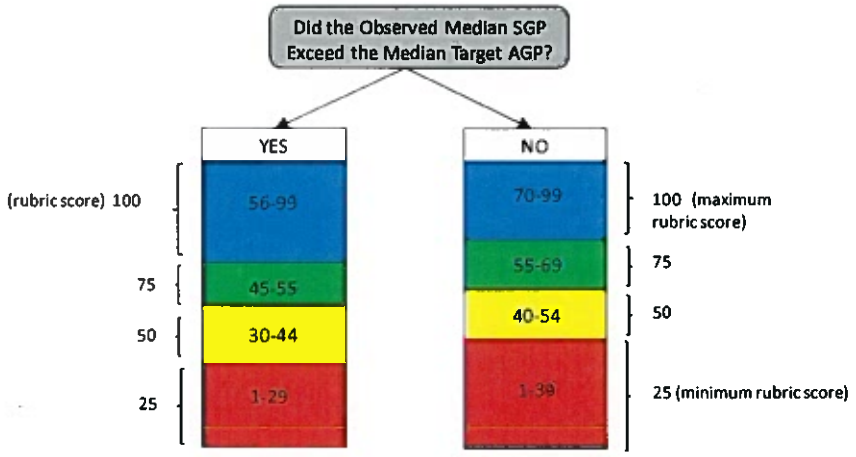
Growth

The growth component incorporates Student Growth Percentiles (SGP), which are used to describe changes in individual student performance compared to all students with the same achievement histories (academic peers). Evaluating growth is a two step process. First, for each school the median of all individual SGPs is calculated and evaluated against school growth targets termed adequate growth percentiles (AGPs). AGPs reflect the growth that is necessary for non-proficient students to be on-track to achieve proficiency and proficient students to maintain proficiency. The outcome of this step is a determination that the school met or failed to meet the median (overall) AGP target. Second, the median SGP is evaluated against a rubric that corresponds to meeting or failing to meet the target (as determined in step 1). This is illustrated in the following figure.



The rubric cut-scores set for schools that meet or exceed their median AGPs are lower than the cut-scores for schools that do not meet their median AGPs since these schools are populated with students who are either largely on track to meeting proficiency or growing at a sufficient rate to maintain their proficient status.

Similarly, this process is implemented a second time with only those students who are not proficient – these are the student for whom equity concerns are the highest and should be a priority for all schools. The rubric values differ as portrayed below.



The overall outcome for growth is an all student score with a maximum value of 200 and a non-proficient student score with a maximum value of 100 – for a total of 300 growth points available.

Overall Model

Threshold performance for each letter grade was determined for each category and each content area. The final grade is based on a sum of all points across each component. The minimum points for each grade are presented in the table below.

Elementary and Middle Schools			
Grade	Achievement *out of 200*	Growth *out of 300*	Total *out of 500*
A	166	225	391
B	146	150	296
C	126	125	251
D	91	100	191

High Schools				
Grade	Achievement *out of 100*	Readiness *out of 100*	Growth *out of 300*	Total *out of 500*
A	80	85	225	390
B	70	75	150	295
C	60	65	125	250
D	40	45	100	185

Comparison of SB 59 and Committee Recommendations

Components	SB 59	Recommendation	Comparison
Proficiency			
Assessments	Language Arts, Math, Science CRTs or Adaptive Tests, DWA	Language Arts, Math, Science CRTs or Adaptive Tests, DWA	same
CRTs or adaptive tests	Each content area weighted the same	Each content area weighted the same	same
Direct Writing Assessment	(.5 pt of one CRT)	(.5 pt of one CRT)	same
Proficiency Points	350 pts (50% of EM grade, 39% HS)	200 (50% EM) 100 (20% HS)	same/similar
Growth/Learning Gains			
Assessments	Language Arts, Math, Science CRTs or Adaptive Tests	Language Arts, Math, Science CRTs or Adaptive Tests	same
Growth Components	Calculated on previous and current years	Calculated on current and all previous years available	similar
Growth Model	Value Table using 3 proficiency levels	Student Growth Percentiles based on percentile ranks (1-99), converted via a rubric to scores ranging from 0-200.	different
Non Proficient Students	Occurs in calculation twice	Occurs in calculation twice	same
Growth Points	350 pts (50% of EM grade, 39% HS)	300 (60% EM & HS)	similar
College & Career Readiness			
Indicators	Graduation Rate & College and Career Ready indicators	Graduation Rate 2012; ACT in the future	similar
CCR Points	200 (22% of HS)	100 (20% of HS)	similar
Grade			
Total Points Elem. & Middle Schools	700	500	similar
Total Points High School	900	500	similar
School Grades	One Grade	One Overall Grade & additional grades	similar
Required Participation	95%	95%	same
Grade Requirements	A 90-100%; B 80-89%; C 70-79%; D 60-69%; F 59% and below	Elem/Middle A 391-500; B 296-390; C 251-295; D 191-250; F 190 and below. High School: A 390-500; B 295-389; C 250-294; D 185-249 pts; F 184 and below pts.	different