

# Hanlon's Razor

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*What works is work!*

## **AYP Stats Meeting Annual Growth Targets**

Hitting a moving target is not easy. But that is the nature of meeting AYP. The last couple of years we have been increasingly successful in meeting AYP targets; that may lead you to believe that you should keep on doing what you are currently doing. It's hard to argue with success, but this year may prove that if you have not redoubled your efforts, developed and implemented a plan and stayed laser focused, then meeting AYP targets might prove to be very, very tough.

To meet AYP middle school targets for ELA and math in the 2007-08 school year will require a 25 to 30% increase in the number of students meeting proficiency. That's right, a 25 to 30% increase. Last year to meet AYP targets in ELA, 39% of the students needed to be proficient, this year to meet AYP 51% of that student population will need to be proficient. In math, last year's target was 43%, this year's target is 54%.

Meeting these annual growth targets on tests is important; however a good, full, well-rounded and rigorous education should not be sacrificed to increase performance on tests that might not support that.

High schools will have to demonstrate a 17% increase in the student population being proficient. In math, the target moved from 52% to 61% in the 2007-08 school year. In ELA, it moves from 78 to 82%.

I would like to see schools strive for a goal of 55% of the student population (sophomores) passing the HSPE in math on their first attempt. That percentage I believe is both reasonable and attainable. Assuming a normal population, I don't believe students in the first three stanines (23% of the population) would pass this test on the first attempt. Most of the 4 stanine students (17%) would probably need extra help and additional attempts to pass. As we know, there are a number of 5 stanine students that just don't try. So, based on these stats, I think 55% passing rate on the first attempt would be a good goal.

Now how do you reach that? I suggest using the resources provided by the state, district, CPD, and RPDP would be a good start.

The state has provided funding for remediation/tutoring and the superintendent has added to that. CPD and the RPDP have developed and provided copies of practice proficiency exams that teachers should administer, grade, identify deficiencies and students needing assistance, then develop a plan to improve the proficiency rate of the school and individual students. Some of the regions are implementing the Proficiency Camp Model to increase proficiency rates.

Practice questions have been developed and distributed as have posters identifying questions with low p-values that are easy to teach and learn. Additionally, Long term Memory Reviews (LTMR) can be downloaded off the [www.rpdp.net](http://www.rpdp.net) that teachers can use daily to address areas of deficiency identified statewide.

CPD provides training for teachers on how to prepare their students for the proficiency.

The long-term review in the Components of an Effective Lesson should also be employed on an almost every day basis as a strategy to address student deficiencies. Additionally, based on student performance, teachers might include a cumulative question on daily homework assignments to address the standards tested on the HSPE in mathematics.

I would also suggest re-administering the practice exam or a different form of the test a couple of weeks before the actual test date to re-evaluate where greater emphasis has to be placed leading up to the test.

Teaching or reviewing test-taking strategies should also result in increased student performance. The RPDP provides training and has a testing taking strategies booklet that classroom teachers can use with their students.

And finally, some teachers may consider using the three or four days prior to the exam as a mini camp to better prepare their students for this important test.

Teachers should work together to plan for improving student achievement, common instruction, and assessments. Teachers who share knowledge, resources and strategies, identify needs, determine interventions, and plan ahead to respond to individual student skill concerns experience more success in the classroom. Teachers can make a difference and teachers working together can make an even greater difference to the overall success in the school.

I know that many of you don't like to be identified or categorized as not meeting AYP or be seen as a failing school. I believe Lauren has made a great point by indicating that if you don't like that labeling for your school, think how individual students might feel if they are characterized as a failure or a drop out.

While focus is clearly needed to reach these targets, that does not mean that teachers or students should be long faced or dread coming to school. Everyone should be positive and encouraged to smile and enjoy their chosen profession.