

Understanding Paired Goals and Improvement Scores for 2026 State Classifications

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Two key features of the newest iteration of the AQuESTT Classification System are the implementation of paired goals and improvement scores. This document hopes to shed light on how paired goals and improvement scores are used to determine an indicator's classification level. Complete scoring rules will be provided in the 2026 AQuESTT Classification Business Rules at aquestt.com/resources.

What is a paired goal?

- Definition: A paired goal is the use of two measurement points to determine an indicator's classification level. The indicator classification level will be the higher of the two measurement point classification levels.
- For example, if a district had a combined graduation rate of 78% (classification level of 2) and met the improvement goal of 5% over last year's rate (classification level of 3), the district would receive a 3 for the Combined Graduation Rate Indicator Classification Level.

Indicator	Score Range	Classification Level
Combined Graduation Rate		3
• Combined Graduation Rate	76% to 83.99%	2
• Graduation Rate Improvement	≥ 5% improvement	3

Which indicators use paired goals?

- Seven indicators use paired goals to determine classification levels:

Indicators	District	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Combined Graduation Rate	Yes	-	-	Yes
Postsecondary Readiness	Yes	-	-	Yes
Science Proficiency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
English Language Proficiency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chronic Absenteeism Reduction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student Discipline	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

How is an Improvement classification level determined?

- A school/district's Improvement classification level is generally based on the year-to-year improvement of the indicator performance rates and is measured using a simple improvement scoring methodology.
- **Step 1:** Is the current year's postsecondary readiness rate higher than the previous year's rate? If yes, move to step 2; if no, Improvement score is 1.
- **Step 2:** Does the current year's postsecondary readiness rate meet or exceed the improvement goal? If yes, improvement score is 3; if no, improvement score is 2.

Calculating the Improvement Goal: Last Year's Rate + (Last Year's Rate x 0.05)

Which Indicators use Improvement Goals in this manner?

- Seven indicators utilize the simple improvement method identified above:
 - Combined Graduation Rate,
 - Postsecondary Readiness,
 - Science Proficiency,
 - Participation, and
 - Student Discipline.

What about the other indicators?

- Status and Growth are stand-alone indicator scores and have their own scoring rules.
- Proficiency Improvement is a stand-alone indicator score that uses a similar process as above, but uses the Proficiency Improvement trendline slope rather than the year-to-year change proficiency rate (status). There is an opportunity to earn a classification level of 4 for Proficiency Improvement.
- Progress toward English Language Proficiency uses the legacy calculation process outlined in the 2026 AQuESTT Classification Business Rules. There are four classification levels for this measurement.
- Chronic Absenteeism Reduction uses a combination of the simple improvement method described above in combination with the Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Score, based on the school/district's reduction compared to their 10-year, 50% reduction goal. Meeting the reduction goal earns a school a classification level of 4.