



DEPARTMENT OF

EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO



CONSOLIDATED STATE PLAN

2024 – 2029

THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT
OF 1965, AS AMENDED BY THE EVERY STUDENT
SUCCEEDS ACT

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<p>By signing this document, I assure that:</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.</p> <p>The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304. Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers.</p>	
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Signature of Authorized SEA Representative 	Date: March 24 th , 2025
Governor (Printed Name) Hon. Jenniffer González Colón	Date SEA provided plan to the Governor under ESEA section 8540:
Signature of Governor 	Date: 24/march/2025

Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

Instructions: *Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the SEA includes in its consolidated State plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated State plan but is eligible and wishes to receive funds under the program(s), it must submit individual program plans for those programs that meet all statutory and regulatory requirements with its consolidated State plan in a single submission.*

Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated State Plan.

or

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below that the SEA includes in its consolidated State plan:

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (McKinney-Vento Act)

Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below for the programs included in its consolidated State plan. Consistent with ESEA section 8302, the Secretary has determined that the following requirements are necessary for consideration of a consolidated State plan. An SEA may add descriptions or other information but may not omit any of the required descriptions or information for each included program.

In alignment with the MISSION of the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE)

PRDE's Mission

To guarantee free and non-sectarian education that develops the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of all students to prepare them to successfully perform in a globalized labor market and competently and creatively meet the challenges of the modern world, becoming independent, lifelong learners, respectful of the law and the natural environment, and capable of

This plan aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Improve students' academic performance in core subjects through innovative and differentiated teaching strategies.
2. Reduce the academic achievement gap among different student subgroups, with a particular focus on economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and Spanish learners.
3. Increase the high school graduation rate, ensuring that more students complete their education with the necessary skills for higher education or the workforce.

4. Strengthen Spanish language instruction and English learning as essential tools for access to global opportunities.
5. Implement assessments and progress measures aligned with high-performance standards, ensuring effective monitoring of student and school progress.
6. Develop contextualized teaching strategies that foster meaningful learning and the practical application of acquired knowledge.
7. Promote the integration of technology in the teaching-learning process to enhance student engagement and personalized education.
8. Provide continuous support to teachers and educational staff through professional development and access to high-quality instructional resources.
9. Strengthening family and community engagement in the educational process, promoting strategic partnerships to improve student academic outcomes.
10. Ensure that all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to high-quality education and opportunities for success.

This plan aims to transform Puerto Rico's educational system into a model of excellence, justice, and innovation, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to the common good of society.

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Meaningful Consultation

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) recognizes that meaningful stakeholder engagement is essential for the development and successful implementation of the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan. Throughout this process, PRDE actively sought input from diverse stakeholders to ensure that decisions regarding education policies reflect the needs and priorities of the school community.

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Process

To facilitate broad participation, PRDE engaged with multiple groups at different stages of plan development. Three committees were established to provide feedback, expertise, and recommendations:

1. PRDE ESSA Committee – Comprised of representatives from:
 - Office of the Secretary of Planning
 - Undersecretary of Academic Affairs
 - Federal Affairs Office
 - Data Governance Office
 - Assessment and Accountability Team
2. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – A group of national and local experts in educational assessment, accountability, and data analysis, which met in December 2024 to review sections related to long-term goals, accountability, and equitable access to educators.
3. Stakeholder Committee – Included school directors, teachers, parents, community organizations, higher education institutions, and other key education stakeholders who participated in consultations.

PRDE acknowledges the contributions of its vendor partners for their support in facilitating data-driven decision-making and stakeholder engagement processes.

The ESSA Stakeholder Committee, in alignment with ESSA’s section 299.13 (b) and 299.15 (a), was responsible for:

- Developing new strategies aligned to ESSA requirements.
- Gathering and analyzing stakeholder feedback across the island.
- Drafting the PRDE ESSA State Plan based on data and input.

Workgroup sessions occurred on a weekly basis, with some subcommittees meeting more frequently to discuss key components of the plan.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Feedback

As part of its commitment to transparency and inclusion, PRDE ensured that multiple channels were available for public consultation:

- Meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in December 2024 to review key accountability indicators.
- Publication of the Draft ESSA Plan on PRDE’s website, allowing for public review and comment.
- PRDE disseminated multiple public announcements through official communication channels. These announcements invited all stakeholders to review the plan and participate in the survey to provide feedback.
- Dissemination of surveys to school personnel, parents, community organizations, and other interested parties to gather feedback on PRDE’s proposed strategies for improving public education.

Presentation of CRECE Long-Term Goals and Growth Adjustment to the TAC

As part of the December 16-17, 2024, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) presented updates to the State Consolidated Plan, including the proposed adjustments to CRECE’s long-term goals and the modification of the growth percentage from 12% to 4%.

Summary of the Proposed Changes

- The adjustment of the long-term growth goal from 12% to 4% was proposed, based on historical performance data trends.
- The analysis considered historical student performance data in Spanish, Mathematics, and English, recognizing that annual growth beyond 2% per year is highly challenging.
- Modifications were made to the calculation of key indicators, including:
 - Academic achievement (40%) in Mathematics and Spanish.
 - Graduation rate and growth measurements.
 - Limited Spanish Proficiency (LSP): Adjustment from 20% to 15%, with the introduction of a promotion rate within the school quality indicator.
 - School Quality: Introduction of the promotion rate metric, increasing its weight from 20% to 25%.

TAC's Feedback and Recommendations

The TAC carefully reviewed the proposed long-term goals and provided valuable feedback regarding their feasibility, methodology, and potential impact. The committee acknowledged that the revised goals are ambitious yet reasonable, particularly considering the historical student performance data and systemic challenges.

Key observations and recommendations from TAC included:

- **Data-Driven Justification:** TAC commended PRDE for using historical trends and empirical data to set realistic targets. They highlighted the importance of continuously monitoring the growth trajectory of student performance and adjusting goals if necessary to ensure alignment with statewide educational progress.
- **Feasibility of the 4% Growth Adjustment:** TAC members agreed that the adjustment from 12% to 4% is more attainable, given that historical data

indicate that a yearly increase beyond 2% is highly challenging. However, they emphasized the need to implement targeted interventions and instructional support to maximize student learning outcomes.

- **Equity Considerations:** The committee discussed the potential impact on subgroups, including English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. TAC recommended ensuring that these adjustments do not negatively affect accountability measures for these student populations.
- **Improvements in Data Collection and Transparency:** TAC suggested enhancing data reporting mechanisms to ensure clarity in how progress toward these goals is measured and communicated to stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and the general public.
- **Intervention Strategies and Support Systems:** Recognizing that historical performance trends indicate slow and steady progress, TAC recommended that PRDE continue developing evidence-based interventions to support schools in meeting the revised growth targets. This includes professional development for educators, curriculum enhancements, and targeted student interventions.

Ultimately, TAC expressed support for the revised long-term goals and the methodology used to establish them, while urging PRDE to maintain a flexible approach that allows for adjustments based on ongoing student performance trends.

By incorporating TAC's recommendations, PRDE remains committed to ensuring realistic, achievable, and evidence-based goals under ESSA while continuously striving to improve student outcomes.

Survey Process

To ensure broad stakeholder input, PRDE developed a survey targeted at different members of the educational community. Participants included:

- School Directors
- Students
- Teachers
- Parents and Guardians
- Administrative and Support Staff
- Regional and Central Office Personnel
- Higher Education Representatives
- Community Organizations and Non-Profit Representatives
- General Public Members

The survey results were collected, analyzed, and incorporated into the final plan by the PRDE ESSA Committee. PRDE used this data to ensure that its accountability framework, academic goals, and interventions align with the priorities of Puerto Rico's education stakeholders.

Commitment to Ongoing Engagement

PRDE understands that stakeholder engagement must be a continuous process. As a result, it will:

- Continue consulting with its TAC and Stakeholder Committee to ensure ESSA plan implementation is responsive to student and community needs.
- Maintain open lines of communication through surveys, public meetings, and direct engagement with school leaders.
- Regularly review feedback and adjust strategies to ensure they are achieving the intended impact on Puerto Rico's educational system.

Through this structured and transparent process, PRDE ensures that education stakeholders remain an active part of decision-making, reinforcing commitment to meaningful consultation and inclusive policymaking under ESSA.

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback from Survey Administration

As part of the consultation process for the development of the Puerto Rico Consolidated State Plan, the PRDE conducted a stakeholder survey to gather feedback on key elements of the plan. This survey was published through official communications and on PRDE's ESSA website, inviting the general public to review the draft plan and submit their opinions. The responses collected provide valuable insights into stakeholder perspectives on long-term goals, academic achievement gap reduction, graduation rate targets, and strategies for supporting Spanish Learners (SLs).

The following section presents an analysis of the survey results, highlighting the perspectives of various stakeholders on key aspects of the **Puerto Rico Consolidated State Plan**. These responses provide essential insights into the priorities, concerns, and recommendations from educators, administrators, parents, students, and community members, shaping the development and refinement of the plan.

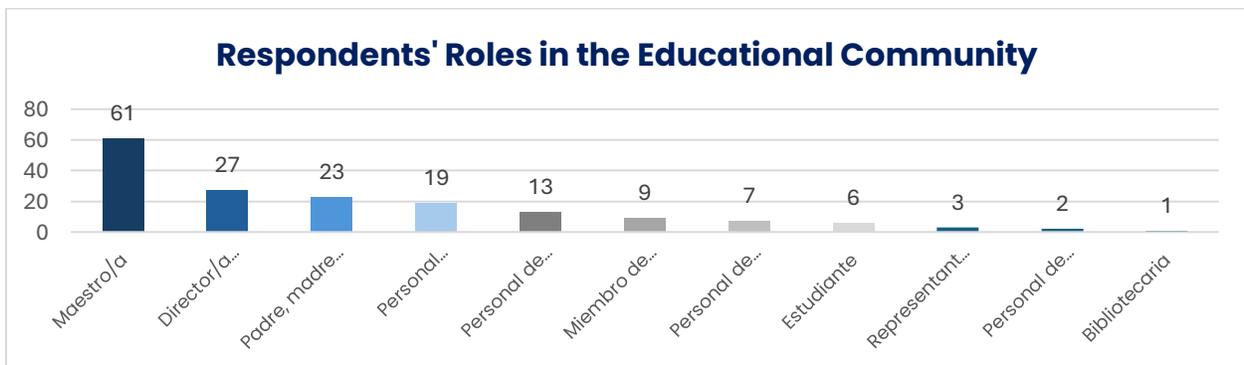
Survey question 1: *Which of the following best describes your role within the educational community?*

The survey collected responses from various members of the educational community, including teachers, school directors, parents, administrative staff, and regional or central office personnel. The results show that:

- The majority of respondents (61 participants, 39%) identified as teachers (Maestro/a), highlighting their significant role in the educational community.
- School directors (Director/a escolar) accounted for 27 participants (17%), indicating substantial representation from leadership positions.
- Parents, guardians, or caretakers (Padre, madre o encargado/a de un estudiante) represented 23 respondents (15%), showcasing family involvement in the survey.
- Administrative or support staff (Personal administrativo o de apoyo escolar) made up 19 participants (12%), reflecting the presence of non-teaching personnel.
- Central office personnel (Personal de nivel central) accounted for 13 respondents (8%), illustrating participation from decision-makers at the central level.

This data underscores the broad engagement of stakeholders in the consultation process, with a predominance of teachers and school directors, ensuring that classroom and administrative perspectives are well represented.

Survey Results Visualization:



Survey question 2: *Do you agree that the long-term goals of the Puerto Rico Department of Education should be established for a five-year period?*

The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents support the establishment of long-term educational goals within a five-year timeframe:

- 135 respondents (66%) fully agree with the five-year goal-setting period, suggesting strong confidence in the timeframe as a reasonable period for achieving measurable educational progress.
- 60 respondents (29%) are partially in agreement, indicating that while they recognize the value of a structured planning period, they may have concerns about specific aspects of implementation, flexibility, or the feasibility of achieving targets within this period.
- 11 respondents (5%) disagree with the proposed five-year period, possibly advocating for a shorter or more extended timeline based on their perspective on educational planning and policy effectiveness.

The overall results suggest broad acceptance of the five-year planning period, with some reservations from a minority of respondents regarding its practicality or impact. This feedback highlights the importance of continuous evaluation and flexibility in the implementation of long-term educational strategies.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes, I agree / Partially agree / No, I disagree.

Survey question 3: *In the previous plan, the academic achievement gap reduction goal was set at 12% annually. In the revised version, the Puerto Rico Department of Education has established a new goal of reducing the gap by 4% annually in Spanish, English, and Mathematics. Do you consider this new goal appropriate for closing the student achievement gap?*

The survey results indicate a mixed but generally positive reception to the revised 4% annual achievement gap reduction goal:

- 139 respondents (63%) believe the goal is adequate, suggesting that most stakeholders consider a 4% reduction per year to be realistic and achievable given historical trends and educational system capabilities.
- 44 respondents (20%) think the goal should be higher, indicating that a segment of stakeholders feel that a more ambitious target is necessary to effectively close the achievement gap at a faster pace.
- 23 respondents (10%) believe the goal should be lower, potentially expressing concerns about the feasibility of sustaining a 4% annual reduction or advocating for a more gradual, evidence-based approach.

The results highlight broad acceptance of the new goal while also underscoring the need for strategic interventions to ensure its successful implementation.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes, it is adequate / No, it should be higher / No, it should be lower.

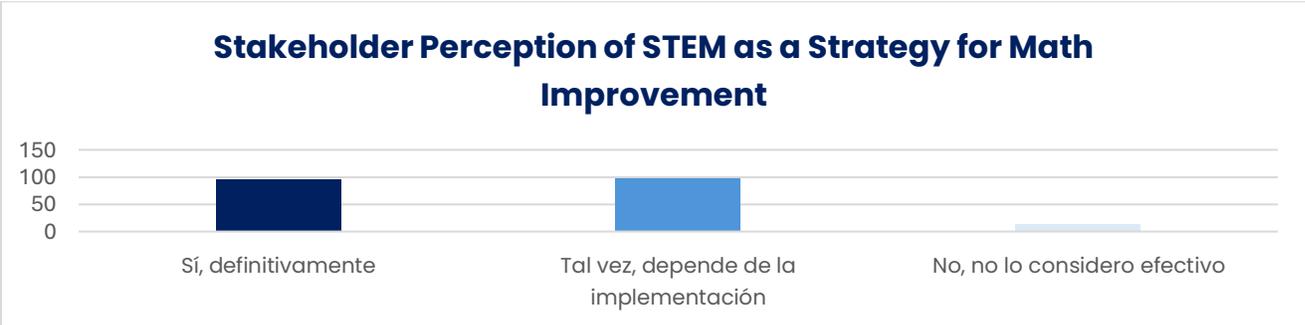
Survey question 4: To improve mathematics learning, the Puerto Rico Department of Education proposes innovative strategies such as STEM. Do you believe this strategy will contribute to improving academic performance?

The survey results indicate a generally positive perception of STEM-based strategies for improving mathematics learning outcomes, with responses distributed as follows:

- 95 respondents (44%) answered "Yes, definitely", indicating strong confidence in STEM's potential to enhance student learning and academic performance in mathematics.
- 98 respondents (46%) selected "Maybe, depends on implementation", suggesting that while many see STEM as a promising approach, successful implementation will be a key factor in determining its impact.
- 13 respondents (6%) do not consider STEM to be an effective strategy, possibly expressing skepticism about its effectiveness or advocating for alternative approaches to mathematics instruction.

These results suggest that most stakeholders view STEM initiatives positively, but a significant number emphasize the importance of proper execution to ensure meaningful improvements in student achievement.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes, definitely / Maybe, depends on implementation / No, I do not consider it effective.

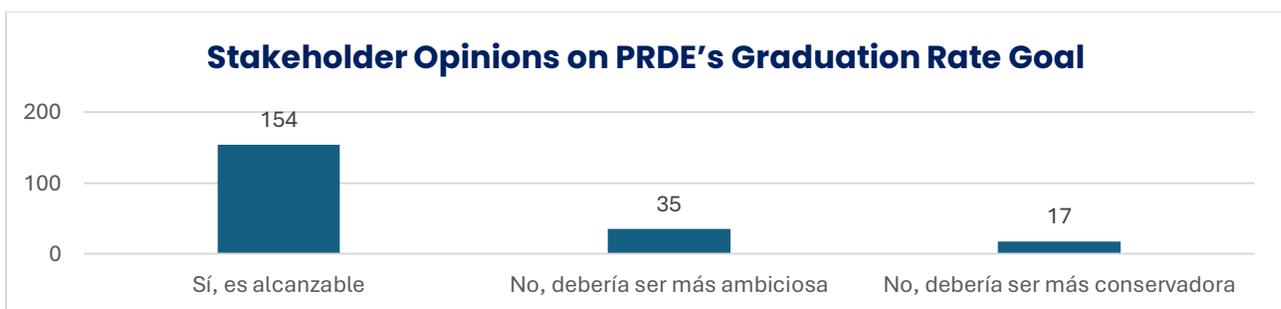
Survey question 5: *The Puerto Rico Department of Education proposes increasing the graduation rate by 1.5% annually over the next five years. Do you agree with this goal?*

The majority of respondents expressed strong support for the 1.5% annual graduation rate increase, while others suggested adjustments:

- 154 respondents (70%) believe the goal is achievable, indicating confidence in the feasibility of increasing the graduation rate at this pace.
- 35 respondents (16%) think the goal should be more ambitious, implying that a faster increase is necessary to ensure meaningful progress in graduation rates.
- 17 respondents (8%) believe the goal should be more conservative, possibly due to concerns about whether this target is realistic given current educational conditions.

Overall, the results reflect broad approval of this initiative, though some stakeholders believe a higher or lower target may be more appropriate based on long-term trends and available resources.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes, it is achievable / No, it should be more ambitious / No, it should be more conservative.

Survey question 6: *The Puerto Rico Department of Education has established that Spanish learners should achieve Spanish proficiency at a rate of 2% annually. Do you agree with this progress rate?*

Stakeholder responses indicate general support for this target, with some advocating for a more ambitious approach:

- 136 respondents (66%) support the 2% annual progress rate, suggesting confidence in this as a reasonable and attainable benchmark.
- 49 respondents (24%) believe the target should be higher, indicating a desire for more aggressive measures to accelerate Spanish language proficiency.
- 21 respondents (10%) feel the goal should be lower, likely due to concerns about student learning pace or instructional limitations.

These results suggest a strong consensus in favor of the 2% goal, with a substantial minority advocating for a more rigorous target. PRDE may consider evaluating the effectiveness of this target and adjusting support structures accordingly.

Survey Results Visualization:



Nota: Las categorías son: Sí / No, debería ser más altos / No, debería ser más bajo.

Survey question 7: *The Puerto Rico Department of Education currently implements a total Spanish immersion model for Spanish learners. Do you agree with this strategy?*

The responses reveal a divided perspective on the effectiveness of total Spanish immersion, with significant support for bilingual alternatives:

- 114 respondents (55%) believe total Spanish immersion is the best strategy, indicating strong support for full linguistic integration.
- 67 respondents (32%) believe bilingual strategies should be implemented, suggesting that a dual-language approach could be more effective for student success.
- 25 respondents (12%) are unsure, which may indicate a lack of information or mixed views on the effectiveness of the current approach.

These findings suggest that while total immersion has majority support, a considerable portion of stakeholders advocate for alternative methods, highlighting the need for ongoing evaluation of language acquisition strategies.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes, it is the best strategy / No, bilingual strategies should be implemented / Not sure.

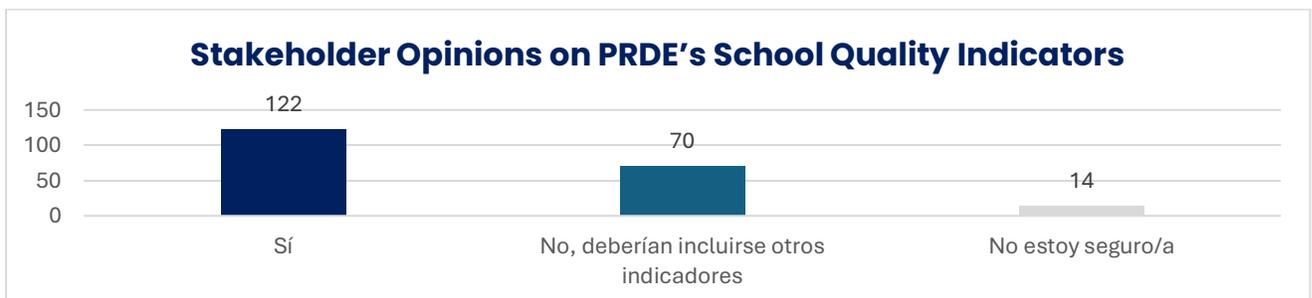
Survey question 8: *The Puerto Rico Department of Education has identified factors such as student attendance, state assessment participation, university admission test results (PAA), English proficiency, and promotion as school quality indicators. Do you agree with the use of these indicators?*

The results show a high level of support for these school quality indicators, with some stakeholders suggesting additional measures:

- 122 respondents (59%) agree that these indicators are appropriate and relevant for assessing school quality.
- 70 respondents (34%) believe additional indicators should be included, suggesting that the evaluation framework could be expanded to incorporate more comprehensive measures.
- 14 respondents (7%) are unsure, possibly due to limited familiarity with these indicators or uncertainty regarding their effectiveness.

This data suggests that most stakeholders accept the current framework, but a significant portion sees room for improvement, reinforcing the importance of periodic reviews and adjustments to the evaluation criteria.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes / No, other indicators should be included / Not sure.

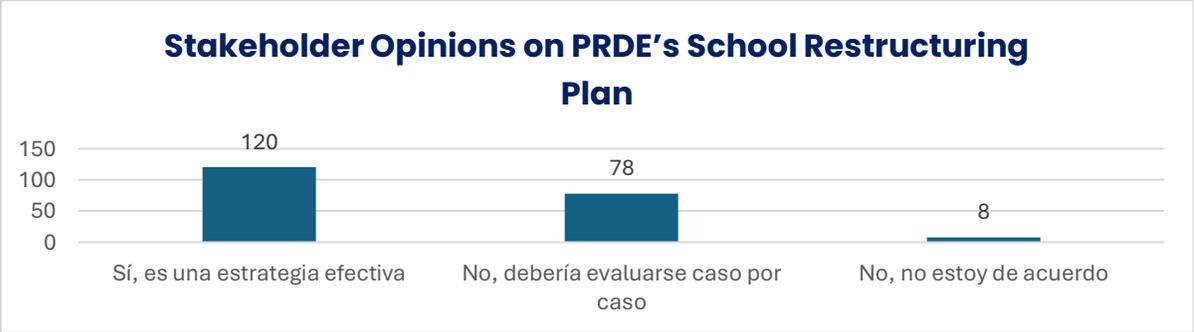
Survey question 9: *The Puerto Rico Department of Education has proposed the comprehensive restructuring of low-performing and low-enrollment schools. Do you agree with this measure?*

Stakeholder responses indicate mixed but generally positive opinions on the proposed restructuring plan:

- 120 respondents (58%) believe this is an effective strategy, supporting the need for significant changes in underperforming schools.
- 78 respondents (38%) think each case should be evaluated individually, suggesting a preference for context-specific solutions rather than broad restructuring.
- 8 respondents (4%) disagree entirely, possibly due to concerns about the potential impact on students, communities, or school staff.

These results highlight the majority support for restructuring, but also a strong call for individualized approaches to ensure that interventions are tailored to each school’s unique challenges.

Survey Results Visualization:



Note: The categories are: Yes, it is an effective strategy / No, it should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis / No, I do not agree.

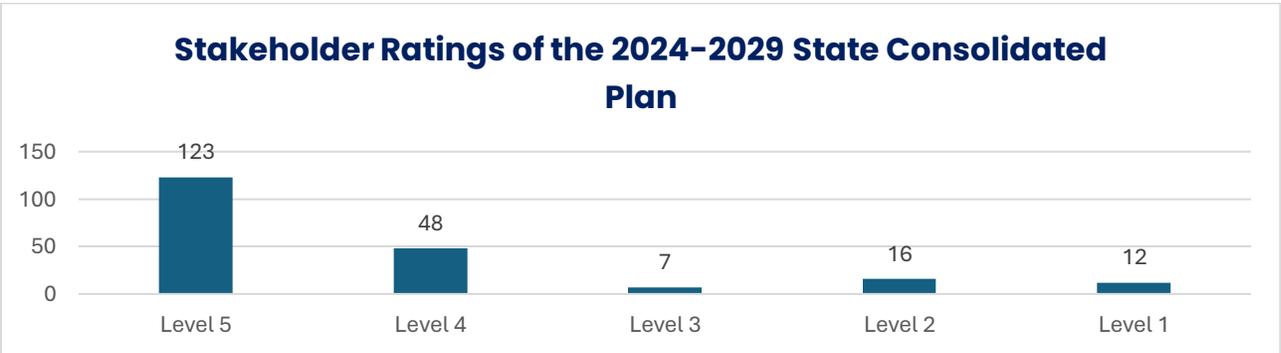
Survey question 10: *On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the 2024-2029 State Consolidated Plan in terms of clarity, feasibility, and alignment with the needs of the education system?*

The survey results indicate strong positive feedback for the 2024-2029 State Consolidated Plan, with most respondents rating it at the highest level:

- 123 respondents (59%) rated the plan at Level 5, suggesting that the majority of stakeholders view it as clear, feasible, and well-aligned with the needs of the education system.
- 48 respondents (23%) selected Level 4, indicating that while they find the plan strong, there may be some areas needing minor refinement.
- 7 respondents (3%) rated it at Level 3, suggesting a more neutral stance, possibly reflecting concerns about specific aspects of the plan’s feasibility or execution.
- 16 respondents (8%) gave it a Level 2 rating, indicating some dissatisfaction with its clarity or effectiveness.
- 12 respondents (6%) rated the plan at Level 1, expressing a significant lack of confidence in its feasibility or alignment with the education system’s needs.

With an **average** rating of **4.23**, the overall results suggest that stakeholders largely view the plan favorably, with some areas for improvement. Further engagement with lower-scoring respondents could provide insights into potential refinements.

Survey Results Visualization:



Survey question 11: What aspects of the plan do you think could be improved?

As part of the consultation process for the 2024–2029 State Consolidated Plan, stakeholders were invited to provide open-ended feedback on areas for improvement. This qualitative input is crucial for identifying opportunities to enhance the plan’s effectiveness, feasibility, and alignment with the needs of Puerto Rico’s education system.

The responses gathered highlight key themes such as equitable resource distribution, curriculum adjustments, increased parental and community involvement, improvements in school infrastructure, and enhanced teacher support. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of transparent accountability measures, innovative instructional strategies, and student-centered interventions to ensure long-term success.

This feedback will serve as a valuable reference for future refinements and ongoing implementation efforts, ensuring that the plan remains responsive to the evolving needs of educators, students, and communities across Puerto Rico.

Implications of Stakeholder Feedback

Based on these survey results, PRDE made the following considerations:

1. Maintaining the five-year long-term goal framework.
2. Increasing efforts to close the academic achievement gap by ensuring schools have the necessary support to reach the 4% reduction target.
3. Continuing with the 1.5% annual graduation rate increase target, as most stakeholders found it reasonable.
4. Strengthening language support for Spanish Learners while considering stakeholder feedback on the potential benefits of bilingual strategies.
5. Reviewing the indicators to F

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)

1. Challenging State Academic Standards and Assessments (ESEA section 1111(b)(1) and (2) and 34 CFR §§ 200.1-200.8.)

In 2022, the Department of Education conducted a comprehensive review of the academic curriculum, marking a milestone in the educational transformation of Puerto Rico. This review addressed the need to mitigate learning and academic performance gaps that had deepened due to emergencies such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria, earthquakes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the last curriculum review in 2014, significant gaps in the vertical and horizontal alignment of skills were identified, affecting continuity between grade levels and the transition from high school to university. As part of this process, curriculum formats were standardized, and expectations for rigor and scope were strengthened, ensuring that each educational stage aligned with the cognitive and human development of students.

The review, based on Article 9.05 of Law 85-2018, state education act, not only met the requirements of the peer review process of the U.S. Department of Education but also aligned the curriculum with advanced academic standards to promote equal opportunities and student proficiency. The latter, as one of the key indicators of the accountability system, has been central to evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

Since its adoption, the implementation of the new curriculum has been continuously monitored through academic support provided by each regional education office. Progress indicators for priority academic skills and innovative pedagogical strategies have been incorporated to align with students' current needs and the challenges of a globalized environment. The Department

continues to work closely with teachers to ensure the curriculum's effective application by providing training and resources to support its integration into classrooms. Additionally, clear goals have been established to enhance student proficiency, address academic gaps, and promote meaningful learning.

This ongoing process ensures that the educational system remains compliant with federal standards while fostering a comprehensive and equitable education. It aims to shape citizens who are committed to Puerto Rico's collective well-being and equipped with the competencies needed to address the challenges of today's world. Moving forward to a more comprehensive annual assessment the PRDE also revised the standardized test in order to be aligned with the new needs and system reality. In the next section there is a more detailed description of this evaluation tool.

Assessment: CRECE PR and CRECE PR ALTERNA

The Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE) administers an annual assessment in compliance with Title I, Part A of the 'ESSA Act,' as amended. The design of the CRECE tests is based on and derived from the official curriculum of Academic Services (2022), which underwent a thorough review during the 2021-22 school year. Additionally, it aligns with the critical elements outlined in the U.S. Department of Education's States Guide to the Assessment Peer Review Process. The administration of these tests enables the PRDE to collect valuable information that demonstrates students' performance levels. Therefore, it is essential that the instruction provided by teachers follows the progression and sequence established in the curricular maps, including the sequential calendar and lessons, for the core subjects of Spanish, English, Mathematics, and Science.

The psychometric evidence establishes that PRDE’s standards and expectations have been translated into blueprints that guided the development of the CRECE and CRECE ALTERNA assessments. These blueprints identify the indicators within each standard and highlight the levels of emphasis included in the assessments, as well as the corresponding weight each has on the overall evaluation of student academic achievement. They outline the distribution of the content to be assessed across the grades, assigning weights based on the priorities established by teachers for teaching and learning.

The blueprints also specify the distribution of skills and expectations deemed most relevant for evaluation as essential knowledge for students in each grade and content area covered by the tests. For the first time ever, these blueprints were shared with teachers in March of 2017. Since then, teachers have received ongoing professional development to ensure they understand the blueprints and can effectively incorporate them into lesson planning.

Transition from META-PR to CRECE: Strengthening Puerto Rico’s Statewide Assessment System

The transition from META-PR (Medición y Evaluación para la Transformación Académica de Puerto Rico) to CRECE (Cernimiento, Revisión y Evaluación Continua de Estudiante) represents a comprehensive and transformative shift in Puerto Rico’s state-wide assessment system, designed to align with the 2022 Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations. This multi-year process began in the 2022-2023 school year with the implementation of the new curriculum, which introduced updated academic priorities and learning goals. During this phase, the state assessment system underwent significant alignment efforts, including the development of new test specifications, the revision of the item bank, the creation of new test items, and the construction of a revised assessment framework. Teachers played a critical role in this

transition, as they adapted their instructional practices to the new curriculum while revisiting the 2015–2016 Performance Level Descriptors to ensure continuity and a smooth alignment of teaching and assessment practices.

In the 2023–2024 school year, the transition advanced further with the publication and dissemination of updated test specifications and performance level descriptors, which provided educators with clear guidelines for the revised assessment. A fully aligned version of the state assessment, now reflecting the 2022 Content Standards, was developed during this phase. Teachers continued to focus on accelerating student learning, ensuring that their instruction addressed the content and skills outlined in the 2023–2024 Performance Level Descriptors. By the 2024 school year, the transition will culminate in the operationalization of CRECE, which will assess students in grades 3–8 and 10, replacing the previous focus on grade 11. This new assessment will be fully grounded in the 2022 Content Standards, featuring updated test specifications, performance descriptors, and a new scoring system with cohort points tailored to the revised standards.

The transition also includes a parallel process for META-PR Alterna, the assessment system for students with special needs. By 2024, the CRECE Alterna assessment will align with the 2022 Content Standards, ensuring that all students, regardless of their learning needs, are evaluated under the updated framework. Key changes in this transition include the shift from the 2014 to the 2022 Content Standards, the expansion of the operational test to include grade 10, and the establishment of new cohort points for scoring and reporting results. These changes aim to provide a more accurate and meaningful measure of student performance, reflecting the updated educational priorities of Puerto Rico’s public school system.

For educators, this transition emphasizes the importance of aligning instruction with the new curriculum and performance descriptors, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the updated assessment. For students, CRECE represents a more relevant and rigorous evaluation of their knowledge and skills, designed to support their academic growth and readiness for future challenges. Overall, this transition underscores Puerto Rico's commitment to enhance teaching and learning and ensuring that all students could succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Test Development Process

According to the curriculum revision, in 2022, META-PR and META-PR Alternate were replaced by the CRECE and CRECEa assessments, marking a new phase in the evolution of PRDE's testing system. The results of the 2024 CRECE administration reflect the application of new standard-setting procedures. Overall, students demonstrated an increase in proficiency across all subjects. The average percentages of students showing growth in performance, regardless of their proficiency levels, were Spanish 39.6%, Mathematics 32.5%, and English 30.1%. The baseline year for assessing progress is 2024.

The TAC has advised PRDE to use these results as the new baseline for evaluating changes in academic achievement over time. PRDE recognizes that maintaining a valid and reliable assessment system is essential for receiving federal funds. Beyond compliance, the results from the assessment system are invaluable for identifying focus areas and strategies to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students and low-performing schools.

PRDE uses assessment results to identify teachers' professional development needs, plan summer programs, and determine the need for new instructional practices.

Additionally, PRDE's current assessment system, CRECE, enables the following:

- Identify students' levels of proficiency.
- Guide teaching and learning processes and informing decisions on teacher training and professional development.
- Evaluate the integration of classroom projects and innovations that promote academic improvement.
- Implement effective and relevant pedagogical decisions.
- Validate the application of concepts learned in the classroom.
- Enhance academic performance by generating ideas and interventions to support students' future learning.
- Develop effective school improvement strategies and track their impact.
- Facilitate self-assessment processes to determine progress and make informed decisions about students' learning, achievement, and growth.

2. **Eighth Grade Math Exception (ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 CFR § 200.5(b)(4)):**

i. Does the State administer an end-of-course mathematics assessment to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA?

Yes

No

Puerto Rico does not administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students. Therefore, Puerto Rico does not seek to use the exception for students in eighth grade to take such assessments as allowable under section 1111(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA. This is something that PRDE is considering as it continues to transform its academic program and offerings.

ii. If a State responds "yes" to question 2(i), does the State wish to exempt an eighth-grade student who takes the high school mathematics course associated with the end-of-course

assessment from the mathematics assessment typically administered in eighth grade under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(aa) of the ESEA and ensure that:

- a. The student instead takes the end-of-course mathematics assessment the State administers to high school students under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA;
- b. The student's performance on the high school assessment is used in the year in which the student takes the assessment for purposes of measuring academic achievement under section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i) of the ESEA and participation in assessments under section 1111(c)(4)(E) of the ESEA;
- c. In high school:
 1. The student takes a State-administered end-of-course assessment or nationally recognized high school academic assessment as defined in 34 CFR § 200.3(d) in mathematics that is more advanced than the assessment the State administers under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA;
 2. The State provides for appropriate accommodation consistent with 34 CFR § 200.6(b) and (f); and
 3. The student's performance on the more advanced mathematics assessment is used for purposes of measuring academic achievement under section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i) of the ESEA and participation in assessments under section 1111(c)(4)(E) of the ESEA.

- Yes
- No

iii. *If a State responds “yes” to question 2(ii), consistent with 34 CFR § 200.5(b)(4), describe, with regard to this exception, its strategies to provide all students in the State the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school.*

3. **Native Language Assessments (ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(F) and 34 CFR § 200.6(f)(2)(ii) and (f)(4):**

- i. *Provide its definition for “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population,” and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.*

The language of instruction in PRDE is Spanish. Therefore, instead of English Language Proficiency (ELP), students are identified as Spanish Learners (SL). English speaking students are identified as SL. PRDE defines “a language other than Spanish that is present to a significant extent in the participating student participation” as a language that is present in greater than 30% or more percent of the population. The language other than Spanish most frequently spoken by the State’s participating student population is English. For 2024–2025, the initial students’ enrollment was 235,819. The SL population is 1,000 as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) that represents 0.42% of the total population.

During the 2023–2024 academic year, most of the Second Language (SL) students, 992 out of 1,000, identified English as their primary language, representing 99.2% of the SL student population. Other languages spoken

included Arabic (0.4% with 4 students), Chinese (0.3% with 3 students), and a single student speaking a language classified under "Others," accounting for 0.1%. This distribution underscores the predominant role of English within the SL student community, while also highlighting a small yet notable diversity in language representation. These insights can guide the development of targeted support strategies to meet the needs of all SL students effectively.

Table 1: Main Languages spoken by SL students based on Home Language Survey Data

Main Languages spoken by SL students	Number of SL students (2023–2024)	% of SL student
English	992	99.2%
Chinese	3	0.3%
Arabic	4	0.4%
Others	1	0.1%
Total	1,000	100%

- ii. *Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available.*

There are no existing assessments, in languages other than Spanish, for there are no languages that constitute a large enough percentage of the island wide student population to require additional translated versions of any Puerto Rico assessment. K–3 students participating in the recently implemented Bilingual Initiative take an English proficiency test (pre and post) designed by the English Program Facilitators with the support of the CRECE–PR contractor. However, due to the demand for services by the Initiative the English Program is committed to develop a valid and reliable English proficiency measurement for all grades

impacted

- iii. Indicate the languages identified in question 3(i) for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.*

Currently, there are no other existing languages, aside from Spanish, that constitute a large enough percentage of the island-wide student population to necessitate additional translated versions of any Puerto Rico assessment. However, if the need arises, requests for translation services will be directed to the vendor to ensure equitable access to assessments for all students.

- iv. Describe how it will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population including by providing*
 - a. The State's plan and timeline for developing such assessments, including a description of how it met the requirements of 34 CFR § 200.6(f)(4).*
 - b. A description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and*
 - c. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the State has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.*

SL students do not represent a significant extended population based on the state definition. Participants in SL assessments represent less than 1,000

students: or less than 1% of our total population. In addition, the number of students included in this overall population continues to decrease as students leave the island every year. PRDE provides instruction to the SL population using a full immersion model in which all core subjects are taught in Spanish language. Accommodation and differentiated instruction are provided for both instructional and assessment purposes. Analysis of assessment results among SL students demonstrate comparable academic performance as compared to Spanish dominant students. This tendency is observed in both Math and Spanish.

See PR Report Card: <https://perfilescolar.dde.pr/summary>



4. **Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities** (ESEA section 1111(c) and (d)):

i. *Subgroups (ESEA section 1111(c)(2)):*

a. *List each major racial and ethnic group the State includes as a subgroup of students, consistent with ESEA section 1111(c)(2)(B).*

- Subgroups
- Puerto Rican students
- Hispanic students (other than Puerto Rican)
- White non-Hispanic students
- Other origin

These four student groups were chosen because they are the four racial/ethnic groups that are prevalent in Puerto Rico. Analysis shows that there are achievement gaps among these subgroups across multiple indicators in Puerto Rico. These racial and ethnic subgroups are consistent with the requirements for federal reporting according to the most recent federal guidance published in the Federal Register (72 Fed. Reg. 59267). It should be noted that Puerto Rico has used these same subgroups for the last 10 years; they are compliant with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Elementary and Secondary (ESEA) requirements.

PRDE reports “Other Origin” as a student subgroup, which consists of any student representing multi-racial students. The combined student group allows inclusion of the performance of these students in the accountability system in cases where no individual student group meets the minimum n-size threshold.

b. If applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students other than the statutorily required subgroups (i.e., economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners) used in the Statewide accountability system.

The PRDE uses all the statutorily required subgroups in its Island wide accountability system. No additional student subgroup is currently used by PRDE.

c. Does the State intend to include in the English learner subgroup the results of students previously identified

as English learners on the State assessments required under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) for purposes of State accountability (ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(B))? Note that a student's results may be included in the English learner subgroup for not more than four years after the student ceases to be identified as an English learner.

- Yes
- No

d. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:

- Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or
- Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or
- Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) or under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii). If this option is selected, describe how the State will choose which exception applies to a recently arrived English learner.

ii. **Minimum N-Size** (ESEA section 1111(c)(3)(A)):

a. Provide the minimum number of students that the State determines is necessary to be included to carry out the requirements of any provisions under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that require disaggregation of information by each subgroup of students for accountability purposes.

The PRDE has determined that the minimum number of students will be:

- N=10 for accountability classifications based on all students
- N=10 for reporting purposes
- N=10 for subgroup driven accountability classifications

This minimum N-size applies to all students and each subgroup of students. If any of the indicators that make up the accountability model cannot be calculated or attributed to a school or subgroup, the weight of that indicator will be redistributed among the remaining indicators. This will particularly apply to the indicators for progress of SL and graduation rate or growth. If a school or subgroup does not meet the minimum number required to calculate the indicators of school quality or academic achievement, the calculation will be omitted, and consequently, the school will be excluded from the model as applicable.

Alternate Methodology for Schools Not Meeting Minimum N-size

In alignment with ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C), PRDE ensures that all public schools are included in the State's system of Annual Meaningful Differentiation (AMD). When a school or subgroup does not meet the minimum n-size required to calculate specific indicators (e.g., Academic Achievement or School Quality/Student Success), PRDE will apply an alternate methodology to ensure accountability.

Specifically:

- If some indicators cannot be calculated, the weights of those indicators will be proportionally redistributed among the remaining indicators for which the n-size requirement is met.

- If no indicators can be calculated due to small school enrollment (e.g., schools with only grades K–3), PRDE will use an alternate methodology consisting of the following:
 - Student attendance rate,
 - Participation in required assessments (if applicable), for example, this methodology may be applied to schools serving only grades K–2, where no accountability indicators can be calculated due to limited data.
 - Any available contextual or input data, such as, but not limited to, school climate survey results.
 - PRDE will publicly report which schools are evaluated under the alternate methodology and include rationale for its application. This information will be published in the School Report Card, including both the list of applicable schools and the rationale for applying the alternate methodology.

b. Describe how the minimum number of students is statistically sound.

Puerto Rico analyzed population data to develop our accountability model. We believe that availability of data for all students provides statistical richness and eliminates sampling errors. It also assures us that every student is represented in the model and that the results are reliable and valid. It is important to note that various schools have a small number of students from various subgroups. Consequently, PRDE determined that its most pressing considerations regarding minimum n-size are: 1) the reliability of the indicators and 2) the rate of inclusion of historically underserved student groups in the accountability system. PRDE recognizes that all indicators in an accountability system are subject to variability from year to year. Higher n-sizes increase the reliability

and consistency of these indicators and help remove variability that may be outside a district's control, such as variation in student cohorts or the fact that assessment scores have an inherent standard error of measure. Puerto Rico elected to have a minimum n size of 10, for accountability purposes. This implies a single student can generate a meaningful differentiation in the performance of a 10-person group. Although the PRDE recognizes that 2 student affecting a score significantly is not ideal, that concern is outweighed by the fact that Puerto Rico's model allows for the inclusion, evaluation and attention of small subgroups of students who need additional support in our Educational

c. Describe how the minimum number of students was determined by the State, including how the State collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining such minimum number.

The minimum number was selected by PRDE after performing various statistical analyses and modeling. PRDE then consulted with stakeholders and considered the recommendations of our TAC. The following table includes what percentage of students, in total and for each subgroup statewide, would be included in the accountability system based on N-size determinations.

Table 2: Number of students included in the accountability system by subgroup at different minimum N size

Subgroup	Enrollment Total Students	N<30		N<20		N<15		N<10		N<5	
		# Students	%								
All Students	240,910	240,897	100	240,897	100	240,897	100	240,910	100	240,910	100
Puerto Rican	219,266	219,229	100	219,254	100	219,254	100	219,266	100	219,266	100
Hispanic NOT Puerto Rican	20,982	13,668	65	16,953	81	18,373	88	19,849	95	20,690	99
White NOT Hispanic	440	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	3	62	14
Other Origin	222	-	-	51	23	51	23	51	23	69	31
Economically Disadvantaged	187,948	187,909	100	187,937	100	187,937	100	187,937	100	187,946	100
Disabilities	83,741	82,823	99	83,543	100	83,649	100	83,709	100	83,735	100
Spanish Learners	829	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	2	205	25

As the table shows, a low n size is required to obtain participation in several subgroups. Puerto Rico set n=10 as the minimum subgroup size, for accountability purpose, to ensure the most inclusive representation of subgroups. The data demonstrate that for certain groups, such as White Not Hispanic, Other Origin and Spanish Learners would not have any representation at a minimum n of 20. However, this improves when the minimum n is at 10. This is because these three student subgroups each comprise less than 1% of Puerto Rico’s student population.

It is important to also note that the population characteristics of Puerto Rico differ from those in most states.

d. Describe how the State ensures that the minimum number is sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information.

There were two considerations in the determination of reporting results to ensure that no personally identifiable information is revealed. PRDE is committed to protecting the confidentiality of individual students. When a subgroup is small, the possibility that individual members could be identified with a particular set of scores by virtue of demographic characteristics is increased. Therefore, because small subgroups in any school could lead to the identification of individual students, n should be large enough to protect confidentiality. The second consideration was the fact that educators, the public and media will use any reported information to make comparisons. Again, small n's carries a large sampling error, which makes any comparison unreliable for practical purposes, and misinforms the untrained user, which is, in general, the population for which the reports are intended. Puerto Rico is determined to use a minimum group size of 10 for reporting results which is sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information. PRDE's N - size will be no larger than necessary to ensure the protection of privacy for individuals and to allow for statistically reliable results of the aggregate performance of the students who make up a subgroup. To be as inclusive as possible all students are utilized in the general school classification process. The PRDE will not use subgroups smaller than 10 when classifying schools for targeted support as this might have identified the performance of a particular student. As mentioned before, some schools have exceedingly small subgroups.

e. If the State's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for accountability purposes,

provide the State's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting.

N/A

iii. **Establishment of Long-Term Goals** (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)):

a. **Academic Achievement.** (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(aa))

1. *Describe the long-term goals for improved academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments, for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.*

Puerto Rico has persistent achievement gaps that spread across the entirety of the public-school population. PRDE understands that an excellent education can enable every child regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or disability status to master challenging academic standards. The consensus among the population is that every child regardless of background or zip-code, can achieve at the highest levels when exposed to great instruction and school leadership. Puerto Rico and the PRDE have a moral obligation to hold all students to the highest standards, and to expect that all students will rise to the academic challenges put before them. Students increase their proficiency on the annual state assessment if they demonstrate a reduction on their

achievement gap on those assessments toward higher levels of achievement from one year to the next. PRDE is collaborating with the Governor’s Office to tackle the longstanding challenges in student achievement across Puerto Rico. The school improvement outcomes set by PRDE are directly aligned with the Governor’s Plan for Puerto Rico.

The table below presents historical proficiency rates in mathematics, English, and Spanish from the 2017-18 to 2023-24 academic years, based on data from META-PR and CRECE assessments. These figures highlight trends in student achievement over time, reflecting both challenges and progress in closing proficiency gaps across subjects.

Table 3: Historic Proficiency Rate from 2017-18 to 2023-24

SUBJECTS	META-PR						CRECE
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Mathematics	32.6	30.1			20.9	23.0	32.6
English	41.0	38.9			32.7	32.7	30.1
Spanish	45.9	45.1			35.5	36.5	39.6

To ensure that all students in Puerto Rico reach their fullest academic potential, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has established long-term academic goals and targets for all student subgroups, as required by federal law. Our objective is to support the academic progress of every student while addressing achievement gaps. Specifically, PRDE aims for the lowest-performing subgroup to attain an academic proficiency rate that demonstrates significant growth by 2028-29.

By setting these long-term goals, PRDE remains committed to enhancing educational outcomes for all students. The department will continue implementing evidence-based strategies, strengthening instructional

practices, and allocating resources effectively to support students in achieving these targets.

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement in Appendix A.

See Appendix A

3. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for academic achievement take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps.

i. Baseline Data

The baseline for the long-term goals for all students and each subgroup was established using actual data from the 2023–24 academic year. The baseline represents the current island-wide proficiency rate for each subgroup in Spanish, Mathematics, and English. The following table outlines the new baseline proficiency levels for each student subgroup, serving as the starting point for measuring progress toward the 2028–29 goals.

Table 4 : Baseline for each Subgroup by Subject

Subgroup	Spanish Baseline	Mathematics Baseline	English Baseline
	(2023-24)	(2023-24)	(2023-24)
All Students	40	33	30
Puerto Rican	41	34	31
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	36	29	27
White Not Hispanic	33	32	59
Other Origin	53	45	46
Economically Disadvantaged	38	31	27
Disabilities	30	28	24
Spanish Learners	22	25	48

ii. Long term goal and timeline

PRDE is committed to reducing the achievement gap over the next five years for all students and each subgroup. Puerto Rico's goal is to ensure that the lowest-performing subgroup makes significant progress toward academic proficiency by 2028-29. The established long-term goals reflect a strategic effort to close achievement gaps and improve proficiency rates across all subjects. By setting these targets, PRDE demonstrates its dedication to educational justice and ensures that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

The following table presents the baseline proficiency levels for the 2023-24 academic year and the targeted proficiency goals for 2028-29, highlighting PRDE's commitment to closing achievement gaps and improving academic outcomes for all student subgroups.

Table 5: Baseline and Long-Term Goals for each Subgroup by Subject

Subgroup	Spanish Baseline	Spanish Goal	Mathematics Baseline	Mathematics Goal	English Baseline	English Goal
	(2023-24)	(2028-29)	(2023-24)	(2028-29)	(2023-24)	(2028-29)
All Students	40	52	33	46	30	44
Puerto Rican	41	53	34	47	31	45
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	36	49	29	43	27	42
White Not Hispanic	33	46	32	46	59	67
Other Origin	53	62	45	56	46	57
Economically Disadvantaged	38	50	31	45	27	42
Disabilities	30	44	28	42	24	39
Spanish Learners	22	37	25	40	48	58

These long-term targets represent PRDE's commitment to ensuring academic proficiency growth across all student subgroups, particularly focusing on historically underperforming groups. PRDE will implement data-driven instructional interventions, professional development initiatives, and resource reallocation strategies to help meet these ambitious goals.

Procedure for Calculating Long Term Goals for Academic Achievement

Long Term Goals for Academic Achievement (LTGA) will be 100% minus the calculated GAP for each year for every subgroup. The calculated GAP will be the current GAP reduced by 12% each year. Current GAP will be determined as the difference between 100% and the Proficiency Rate Baseline for each subgroup (i.e. Spanish Proficiency for all Students in 2017 is 49%, $GAP = 100\% - 49\% = 51\%$). The calculated GAP will be 12% less in year 1, 24% less in year 2 and so on, in order to reach a gap reduction of 60% in five years.

Long Term Goals for Academic Achievement (LTGA) is calculated as follow:

$$LTGA_t = 100 - GAP [1 - (y * t)]$$

Where,

t = long term goals years (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

and Gap = 100 – Proficiency Rate Baseline

and $y = \frac{\text{yaerly gap reduction}}{100}$

Notes: Proficiency = [(Proficient + Distinguished) / All Participants] in CRECE Results · Goals were calculated using a 4 % yearly reduction in the achievement gap.

To track progress toward the final 2028–29 goals, PRDE has developed a structured framework with yearly interim goals for each subject and subgroup. The following tables present the expected annual growth rates needed to ensure all students reach proficiency goals within the five–year period.

Table 6: Long Term Goals for Academic Achievement

Subject	Baseline (2023–24)	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	Long-Term Gain
Spanish	39.6	42	44	47	49	52	12
Mathematics	32.6	35	38	41	43	46	13
English	30.1	33	36	38	41	44	14

Table 7: Baseline and Interim Goals for Academic Achievement (Proficient) in Spanish, Puerto Rico 2023–2024 to 2028–2029

Subgroup	Baseline	Interim Goals				Goal
	(2023–24)	(2024–2025)	(2025–2026)	(2026–2027)	(2027–2028)	(2028–2029)
All Students	40	42	44	47	49	52
Puerto Rican	41	43	46	48	50	53
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	36	39	41	44	46	49
White Not Hispanic	33	36	38	41	44	46
Other Origin	53	55	57	59	60	62
Economically Disadvantaged	38	40	43	45	48	50
Disabilities	30	33	36	39	42	44
Spanish Learners	22	25	28	31	34	37

Table 8: Baseline and Interim Goals for Academic Achievement (Proficient) in Mathematics, Puerto Rico 2023–2024 to 2028–2029

Subgroup	Baseline	Interim Goals				Goal
	(2023–24)	(2024–2025)	(2025–2026)	(2026–2027)	(2027–2028)	(2028–2029)
All Students	33	35	38	41	43	46
Puerto Rican	34	37	39	42	45	47
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	29	32	34	37	40	43
White Not Hispanic	32	35	38	41	43	46
Other Origin	45	47	49	51	53	56
Economically Disadvantaged	31	34	37	39	42	45
Disabilities	28	30	33	36	39	42
Spanish Learners	25	28	31	34	37	40

Table 9: Baseline and Interim Goals for Academic Achievement (Proficient) in English, Puerto Rico 2023–2024 to 2028–2029

Subgroup	Baseline	Interim Goals				Goal
	(2023–24)	(2024–2025)	(2025–2026)	(2026–2027)	(2027–2028)	(2028–2029)
All Students	30	33	36	38	41	44
Puerto Rican	31	34	37	39	42	45
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	27	30	33	36	39	42
White Not Hispanic	59	61	63	64	66	67
Other Origin	46	48	50	52	55	57
Economically Disadvantaged	27	30	33	36	39	42
Disabilities	24	27	30	33	36	39
Spanish Learners	48	50	52	54	56	58

Currently, the rate of student growth in academic proficiency varies across subgroups. To ensure continuous progress, PRDE has set ambitious yet achievable goals to improve proficiency levels. By 2028–29, the goal is to elevate island-wide academic proficiency averages to 52% in Spanish, 46% in Mathematics, and 44% in English. To accomplish this, PRDE has undertaken a comprehensive restructuring aimed at improving academic outcomes and optimizing resource allocation. This strategic approach is designed to drive meaningful progress, ensuring that all schools are encouraged to continue advancing student performance.

Science Proficiency

While science proficiency is not used as an accountability indicator under the 2024–2029 ESSA Consolidated Plan, the Puerto Rico Department of Education PRDE remains committed to standardized science assessments to evaluate student knowledge and inform instructional strategies. Historically, PRDE has assessed science proficiency in grades 4, 8, and 11 to measure student

achievement in elementary and secondary education. These standardized assessments will continue to be implemented, ensuring that students develop essential scientific competencies before advancing to higher education and the workforce. The results from these assessments provide valuable data for curriculum refinement, professional development, and targeted interventions. Besides, PRDE recognizes the importance of science education in preparing students for success in STEM fields. The integration of science assessments aligns with PRDE's broader mission to improve academic achievement through data-driven decision-making. These assessments support STEM-related initiatives, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation among students.

PRDE has outlined key strategies in the ESSA Consolidated Plan to enhance science education, including:

- Curriculum alignment with CRECE-PR, ensuring rigorous science instruction.
- Professional development for teachers to strengthen STEM pedagogical practices.
- Technology integration to enhance hands-on and inquiry-based learning.
- Cross-disciplinary approaches integrating science with mathematics and engineering.

By maintaining science assessments as part of Puerto Rico's educational framework, PRDE ensures that students are well-prepared for STEM careers, aligning with national and global educational priorities.

The following table outlines the baseline proficiency levels in science for students in grades 4, 8, and 11, along with the interim goals set for each

academic year leading up to 2028–2029. These targets reflect PRDE’s commitment to strengthening science education through curriculum alignment, professional development, and STEM-focused instructional strategies, ensuring that students demonstrate continuous progress in scientific competencies.

Table 10: Baseline and Interim Goals for Academic Achievement (Proficient) in Sciences, Puerto Rico 2023–2024 to 2028–2029

Subject	Baseline (2023–24)	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	Long-Term Gain
Science	38	40.4	42.8	45.2	47.6	50	12

As previously mentioned, PRDE has reassessed its long-term goal measures to provide a more accurate evaluation of student performance based on actual data from the administration of its standardized test, CRECE-PR. The data indicates a small but steady increase in proficiency. Consequently, PRDE has refined its statistical formulas to more precisely measure progress and identify the improvements needed for student subgroups that are lagging behind in reaching these goals, particularly underserved and underrepresented groups.

To address these challenges, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has developed and implemented a series of system-wide school improvement strategies. These initiatives aim to support contextualized teaching, differentiated instruction, meaningful learning experiences, and accelerated learning, ensuring that education remains relevant and impactful for all students.

Contextualized Learning

Contextualized learning seeks to connect academic content with real-life and relevant situations for students, allowing them to understand how the concepts they learn in the classroom apply to their everyday environment. This strategy not only increases motivation and interest in learning but also develops critical skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making.

In the context of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE), contextualized learning includes integrating cultural, social, and economic themes that students recognize in their communities. Additionally, this strategy fosters connections between different disciplines, integrating subjects such as science, social studies, and language to provide a holistic view of learning. This reinforces the idea that knowledge is not compartmentalized but interconnected in the real world.

Differentiated Instruction

The Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE) has official documents that establish differentiated strategies to address the specific needs of diverse student groups, including Spanish learners and those in the Special Education Program. These documents serve as a guide for teachers to implement differentiated pedagogical practices in their classrooms, adapting to the abilities and learning styles of each student.

In the documents related to Special Education students, multiple strategies are offered to personalize teaching, such as the use of graphic organizers, dramatized activities, and technological tools. These practices help students develop linguistic, mathematical, and socioemotional skills.

Contribution to Academic Performance:

- Differentiated strategies allow students with special needs to actively participate in learning, promoting better understanding and retention of concepts.
- They facilitate inclusion by providing alternative means for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- The document addressing strategies for students with limited Spanish proficiency proposes the use of visual and manipulative tools, word walls, and cooperative activities to improve comprehension and the use of academic language. These strategies aim to strengthen linguistic skills applied to all subjects.
- Students with limited Spanish proficiency can better understand abstract concepts when presented visually and concretely.
- Collaborative activities foster peer learning, helping students improve their linguistic and academic competence in a supportive environment.

Teacher Responsibility in Differentiation

- It is crucial to highlight that teachers are responsible for applying these differentiated strategies in their classrooms. The documents provided by the PRDE not only offer clear guidelines but also suggest specific activities to address the individual needs of each student. These documents detail activities ranging from individualized instruction to small-group teaching, ensuring that each student receives the necessary support to achieve their academic goals.

In summary, these official PRDE documents reinforce the importance of differentiated instruction, establishing a framework for teachers to adapt their teaching and promote the academic success of all students, regardless of their abilities or linguistic backgrounds.

Meaningful Learning

- Meaningful learning is based on the premise that students acquire deeper and more lasting knowledge when they actively participate in their own learning process. This strategy, promoted by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE), encourages research, creativity, and problem-solving through interdisciplinary projects that integrate areas such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), social studies, and art.

In this context, students become active agents of their learning by addressing complex and relevant topics for their environment. Contextualized teaching uses the social and cultural environment of the student as a pedagogical resource. The PRDE encourages teachers to use familiar contexts to activate students' prior knowledge, facilitating the understanding of new linguistic and literary concepts. This practice fosters the connection between academic content and everyday life, making learning more relevant and meaningful.

The PRDE emphasizes that subjects, particularly Spanish and mathematics, which are fundamental as key indicators in the accountability system, cannot be taught in isolation from the social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts of the student. Mathematics and Spanish gain meaning when taught in ways that allow students to apply them in real and relevant situations. These practices not only develop fundamental skills in both mathematics and Spanish but also foster key competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and informed decision-making.

Benefits of Meaningful Learning in the PRDE

- **Improved Knowledge Retention:** Students are more likely to remember and apply concepts when they relate to their experiences and prior knowledge.
- **Development of Key Competencies:** Skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to solve complex problems are promoted.
- **Increased Motivation and Participation:** By connecting learning with real-world contexts, students show greater interest and commitment to their studies.
- **Preparation for Real Life:** Students not only acquire theoretical knowledge but also develop practical skills they can apply in their daily and future lives.

Some examples of these projects include:

- **Solving Environmental Problems:** Students research and design strategies to address challenges in their community, such as waste management or natural resource conservation.
- **Exploring Local History:** Through historical research, students gather data and present their findings using technological tools, such as digital narratives or creative exhibitions.
- **Developing Technological Tools:** They create applications or devices that respond to specific needs of their school or community environment, strengthening their technological and innovative skills.

These projects not only strengthen academic performance but also develop essential 21st-century competencies, such as collaboration, effective communication, and autonomy. Additionally, by involving students in activities that have a tangible impact on their communities, a sense of belonging and social responsibility is fostered, aligning with the values and

goals established by the PRDE for the comprehensive development of its students.

Problem-Bases Learning (PBL)

It is an innovative educational strategy that emphasizes active learning through the exploration of real-world problems. It shifts the focus from traditional teacher-centered instruction to a student-centered approach, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and self-directed learning. Here's why PBL is important as an educational strategy:

1. Promote Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
 - PBL challenges students to analyze complex, real-world problems, identify key issues, and develop viable solutions.
 - It encourages students to think critically, evaluate evidence, and apply knowledge across disciplines.
2. Enhance Engagement and Motivation
 - By focusing on relevant, real-world scenarios, PBL makes learning more meaningful and engaging for students.
 - Students are more motivated when they see the direct application of their learning to practical situations.
3. Encourages Self-Directed Learning
 - PBL requires students to take ownership of their learning by researching, analyzing, and synthesizing information independently.
 - This fosters lifelong learning skills and prepares students for the demands of higher education and the workforce.
4. Develop Collaboration and Communication Skills
 - PBL often involves group work, where students collaborate to solve problems, share ideas, and present solutions.
 - This helps students develop teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills, which are essential in professional settings.

5. Integrates Knowledge Across Disciplines

- PBL encourages interdisciplinary learning, as real-world problems often require knowledge from multiple subject areas.
- This helps students make connections between different fields and understand the holistic nature of problem-solving.

6. Prepares Students for Real-World Challenges

- PBL mirrors the complexities of real-life situations, preparing students to tackle challenges they may encounter in their careers and personal lives.
- It equips students with practical skills such as decision-making, adaptability, and resilience.

The Puerto Rico educational system faces significant challenges, but it also has immense potential for growth and transformation. By adopting innovative strategies like Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Puerto Rico could create a more engaging, relevant, and effective educational experience for its students. PBL aligns with the needs of 21st-century learners and could empower Puerto Rican students to become critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and leaders in their communities. With the right support and resources, PBL could play a key role in revitalizing Puerto Rico's educational system and preparing its students for a brighter future.

Teaching to Accelerate Learning

The Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE) is committed to providing a learning environment that accelerates the academic and personal development of each student. This is achieved through the implementation of pedagogical strategies that not only address the individual needs of students but also enhance their progress in key areas of the curriculum. Based on a student-centered approach and collaboration among families, teachers, and

the community, the PRDE seeks to ensure that all students achieve optimal levels of performance and integral development.

The Role of Accelerated Teaching in Education

Accelerated teaching is based on identifying and leveraging students' strengths while effectively addressing areas for improvement. This approach allows students, regardless of their starting point, to progress at a pace that supports their academic success.

Key Components of Accelerated Teaching:

- **Continuous and Formative Assessment:** Periodic assessments allow teachers to identify individual learning needs and adjust their strategies accordingly.
- **Contextualization of Learning:** Connecting academic topics with students' real lives facilitates understanding and retention of concepts, thereby accelerating the learning process.
- **Personalized Interventions:** Based on concrete data, teachers design activities that address the specific needs of each student, whether through tutoring, small groups, or adaptive technological tools.
- **Active Family Involvement:** Families play a crucial role in the accelerated learning process, providing a supportive environment and reinforcing concepts learned in school.

STEM approach in all academic areas

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) approach is an interdisciplinary educational model that seeks to develop skills in these areas through hands-on learning, problem solving and innovation. It aims to prepare students to meet real-world challenges by integrating scientific and technological knowledge, fostering critical thinking, creativity and

collaboration. This approach is key in modern education as it drives competitiveness in an increasingly digital and technological world.

The STEM approach applies to all areas of knowledge because it promotes essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and evidence-based decision making, which are fundamental to any discipline. Although STEM focuses on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, its principles can be applied in education, economics, health, the arts, humanities and more, as the use of logic, experimentation and innovation cut across any field. Moreover, in an increasingly digital and interconnected world, integrating STEM across all areas allows for the development of interdisciplinary solutions to global challenges.

The STEM focus will be expanded with the integration of the arts (STEAM) and reading (STREAM). This is critical to developing more well-rounded and balanced learning for students. The arts foster creativity, expression and innovative thinking, and essential skills for problem solving in science and technology. Reading, on the other hand, strengthens comprehension, communication and critical thinking, key elements for interpreting information and formulating ideas in any discipline. By extending STEM to STEAM and STREAM, a more humanistic and inclusive approach is promoted, preparing students not only for technological innovation, but also for effective communication and creative thinking in solving real-world problems.

In conclusion, accelerated teaching, supported by effective pedagogical strategies and a collaborative approach between school and family, is essential for the academic and personal success of students. The PRDE continues to work to ensure that each student receives the necessary support to reach their full potential.

Initiatives of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico

Below are the key initiatives implemented by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE) with the aim of improving academic achievement, increasing proficiency levels in fundamental areas, reducing school dropout rates, and fostering the integral development of students. These strategies seek to ensure that every student, regardless of their context, reaches their maximum academic and personal potential. Below is a detailed description of how these initiatives contributing to strengthening the educational system on the island, promoting both performance and proficiency in essential subjects.

Curriculum Revision

In 2022, the Department of Education conducted a comprehensive review of the academic curriculum, marking a milestone in Puerto Rico's educational transformation. This review responded to the need to mitigate learning gaps and academic performance disparities that had deepened due to emergencies such as Hurricanes Irma and María, earthquakes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the last curriculum review in 2014, significant misalignments in the vertical and horizontal alignment of skills had been identified, affecting continuity between grades and the transition from high school to university. As part of this process, curriculum formats were standardized, and expectations for rigor and scope were strengthened, ensuring that each educational stage corresponds to the cognitive and human development of students.

The review, grounded in Article 9.05 of Law 85-2018, not only met the requirements of the federal Department of Education's peer review process but also aligned the curriculum with advanced academic standards to promote equity and student proficiency. The latter, as one of the key indicators

of the accountability system, has been central to evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

Since its adoption, continuous monitoring of the new curriculum's implementation has been carried out through academic support in each regional education office. Progress indicators for priority academic skills and innovative pedagogical strategies have been incorporated, aligned with the current needs of students and the challenges of the global environment. The Department continues to work closely with teachers to ensure effective application, providing training and resources to support the integration of the revised curriculum into classrooms. Additionally, clear goals have been established to improve student proficiency, specifically addressing academic delays and promoting meaningful learning.

This ongoing process ensures that the educational system not only remains compliant with federal standards but also fosters a comprehensive and equitable education, forming citizens committed to the collective well-being of Puerto Rico and equipped with the competencies needed to face today's challenges.

Connect with Learning and GROW (Conecta con el aprendizaje y CRECE)

The "Connect with Learning and GROW" initiative aims to foster a meaningful connection between students and educational content to improve academic performance and promote personal growth. This initiative aligns with the accountability method of the state consolidated plan, which uses proficiency as a key indicator of educational success.

To achieve these objectives, it is essential for educators to know and understand the curriculum. This includes the use of standards and expectations manuals, essential competencies, and curricular frameworks.

These resources provide a common structure for teaching and learning, ensuring that students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for academic and personal success, regardless of their school or socioeconomic context.

Lesson planning is another crucial component of this initiative. Teachers must anticipate the activities and resources needed to achieve specific learning objectives. This involves streamlining tasks, preparing materials, and reviewing content, ensuring the effective use of instructional time. Proper planning allows teachers to articulate their pedagogical methodologies with the particular conditions of each task, providing greater connection and coherence in the educational process.

Following the progression of learning established by subject and grade is essential to ensure a coherent and continuous educational experience. Concepts must be built systematically, helping students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for their integral development. This not only ensures academic success during the school year but also provides a solid foundation for students,⁷ personal and professional growth.

The implementation of evidence-based strategies is fundamental to connecting students with learning. Contextualized teaching uses the environment as a pedagogical resource, relating knowledge to the student's real context. This promotes learning beyond the classroom, examining situations from other contexts and analyzing their contradictions and encounters. Differentiated instruction, on the other hand, responds to student diversity, adapting teaching to their different needs and learning styles. Meaningful learning considers what the student already knows, establishing a relationship with what they need to learn and ensuring that new meanings are produced in the student.

The benefits of this initiative for students are numerous. Teaching values helps prevent negative behaviors such as bullying, empowering students to make positive and respectful decisions in their daily lives. Additionally, it promotes the holistic and integral development of students, fostering their ethical and moral growth and forming responsible and committed citizens. Teaching values also contributes to character development, helping students build positive skills and attitudes that guide them in their personal, academic, and professional lives. Finally, it fosters a positive coexistence environment where students learn to value and accept differences.

In summary, the "Connect with Learning and GROW" initiative is designed to improve students' academic performance and increase their proficiency. By connecting emotionally and cognitively with learning, students show greater interest and motivation, translating into a deep understanding and practical application of the knowledge acquired. This, in turn, contributes to the growth of proficiency, a key indicator of the accountability method of the state consolidated plan. By implementing these strategies and pedagogical approaches, educators can ensure that students not only acquire the necessary knowledge but also develop the skills and attitudes needed for their integral success.

DE Read Project (Proyecto DE Leer)

The DE Proyecto DE Leer focuses on improving students' reading comprehension, one of the fundamental pillars for academic success in all areas of knowledge. This project dedicates one day a week to schools for students to engage exclusively in reading-related activities. Additionally, all students receive electronic devices with access to a digital library.

Impact on Academic Achievement

- **Development of Reading Comprehension:** Students improve their ability to interpret texts, which is essential in subjects such as science, social studies, and mathematics, where understanding complex concepts is key.
- **Promotion of Reading Habits:** Establishing a weekly reading routine helps create a habit that translates into better critical analysis and reasoning skills.
- **Reduction of Achievement Gaps:** By providing equal access to digital resources, the project ensures that students in rural areas or with fewer resources can also benefit, closing the digital and academic gap.

NEExt Project: Extended School

The NEExt initiative extends the school day to include extracurricular activities that complement academic learning. Participating schools offer workshops in art, music, sports, and vocational training, as well as academic tutoring to reinforce key areas.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- **Comprehensive Learning:** Extracurricular activities develop soft skills such as creativity, collaboration, and time management, which are essential for academic success.
- **Reinforcement in Academic Areas:** Specific tutoring helps students improve in subjects where they face difficulties, reflected in better grades and understanding of topics.
- **Reduction of School Dropout Rates:** By offering a more attractive and dynamic school environment, students feel more motivated to attend and participate actively.

ATEMA: Application of Technology in Mathematics Education

The ATEMA project integrates technological tools such as Khan Academy into mathematics education for grades 4 to 8. Through mentoring and training, teachers learn to use these platforms to personalize teaching and monitor student progress.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- **Personalization of Learning:** Technology allows each student to progress at their own pace, ensuring no one falls behind in learning fundamental mathematical concepts.
- **Real-Time Monitoring and Adjustments:** Teachers can quickly identify areas of difficulty and adapt their strategies, increasing teaching effectiveness.
- **Improvement in Mathematics Performance:** By using interactive and gamified resources, students find the subject more engaging, leading to increased performance in this critical area.

Educational Summer (Verano Educativo)

The Educational Summer program offers three learning modalities: recreational, remedial, and entrepreneurial, with the goal of keeping students active during school vacations. This program not only seeks to reinforce academic learning but also to develop practical and creative skills.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- **Mitigation of Learning Loss:** By keeping students engaged in educational activities during the summer, the program prevents the learning regression that commonly occurs during this period.
- **Academic Reinforcement in Key Areas:** Remedial sessions help students solidify knowledge in areas where they have difficulties, better preparing them for the next school year.

- Promotion of Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial activities stimulate creativity and innovation, skills that also improve performance in school projects and problem-solving.

Guide for Families

The Guide for Families provides information and practical tools for parents to support their children's learning at home. It includes suggestions on how to establish routines, supervise homework, and communicate effectively with teachers. Additionally, it offers an overview of academic services.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- Active Family Involvement: Collaboration between parents and teachers creates a supportive environment that improves student performance and behavior.

Essential Competencies Manuals for Families

These manuals are available for children aged 0 to 36 months up to fifth grade. They provide the content, application exercises, and intrafamily reflection activities for each study unit in each subject of the grade, according to the 2022 Official Curriculum.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- Reinforcement of Learning at Home: By providing concrete activities and strategies, families can complement school teaching, helping students consolidate what they have learned.

Socioemotional Guide

This guide focuses on the development of essential socioemotional skills for student well-being. It provides exercises for managing stress, improving self-esteem, and strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- Emotional and Academic Well-Being: Emotionally healthy students are more likely to concentrate, participate, and perform better in their studies.
- Effective Stress Management: Strategies for managing stress allow students to face challenging academic situations, such as exams or projects, with greater confidence and calmness.

Teaching Plans from PK to 12th Grade

The PRDE has developed digital teaching plans that ensure the continuity of learning in hybrid or remote environments. These plans include interactive resources aligned with the official curriculum.

Impact on Academic Achievement:

- Continuity of Learning: In case of interruptions, such as natural disasters or pandemics, students can continue learning without losing momentum.
- Flexibility and Accessibility: Students can access materials at any time and place, facilitating review and deeper exploration of studied topics.

Data Use to Improve Academic Achievement

The Department of Education of Puerto Rico (PRDE) emphasizes the strategic use of data to identify students' areas of need and tailor interventions to improve academic outcomes. By leveraging data-driven decision-making, teachers and administrators can pinpoint specific challenges, monitor progress, and implement targeted strategies to support student success.

Key Components of Data Use:

1. Assessment and Data Collection:
 - a. Teachers regularly administer formative and summative assessments to gather data on student performance.

- b. Standardized tests, classroom assessments, and diagnostic tools provide insights into students' strengths and weaknesses across subjects.
- 2. Data Analysis:
 - a. Teachers and school leaders analyze assessment data to identify trends, gaps, and areas where students are struggling.
 - b. Data is disaggregated by subgroups (e.g., English learners, special education students) to ensure equitable support for all learners.
- 3. Identifying Areas of Need:
 - a. Based on data analysis, teachers identify specific academic areas where students require additional support, such as reading comprehension, mathematical problem-solving, or language proficiency.
 - b. Individualized learning plans are developed for students who need targeted interventions.
- 4. Targeted Interventions:
 - a. Teachers implement evidence-based strategies, such as small-group instruction, one-on-one tutoring, or the use of adaptive learning technologies, to address identified needs.
 - b. Progress is monitored through ongoing assessments to ensure interventions are effective.
- 5. Professional Development:
 - a. Teachers receive training on data analysis and interpretation to enhance their ability to use data effectively in the classroom.
 - b. Workshops and resources are provided to help educators integrate data-driven practices into their teaching.
- 6. Collaboration and Communication:
 - a. Data is shared among teachers, administrators, and families to create a collaborative approach to student support.

- b. Regular meetings are held to review student progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Impact of Data Use on Academic Achievement:

- **Personalized Learning:** Data allows teachers to tailor instruction to meet the unique needs of each student, ensuring no one is left behind.
- **Early Intervention:** By identifying challenges early, teachers can address learning gaps before they widen, improving long-term outcomes.
- **Accountability:** Data-driven practices ensure that resources and efforts are focused on areas that will have the greatest impact on student achievement.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regular data analysis fosters a culture of reflection and growth, enabling schools to refine their approaches and achieve better results over time.

Enhancing Data-Driven Decision Making in Education

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) recognizes that effective use of data is fundamental to improving student outcomes and ensuring that instructional decisions are informed by evidence. To support this effort, PRDE has developed the *Guide for the Effective Use of Data*, a comprehensive resource that empowers educators, school administrators, and district leaders to leverage data systematically and strategically.

The guide provides a structured framework for data collection, interpretation, and application, ensuring that schools adopt best practices in data governance and instructional decision-making. Key components of the guide include:

- **Establishing Data Teams:** Schools and regional offices are encouraged to form multidisciplinary data teams responsible for analyzing student performance trends and identifying actionable strategies.

- **Data Literacy for Educators:** Professional development initiatives focus on building educators' capacity to interpret and use data effectively to differentiate instruction and close achievement gaps.
- **Accountability and Continuous Improvement:** The guide outlines protocols for data-driven monitoring, allowing schools to measure progress toward long-term goals and make informed adjustments to instructional practices.
- **Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement:** A key priority is ensuring that data is accessible and understandable to all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and policymakers.

By institutionalizing a data-driven culture, PRDE seeks to foster greater accountability, equity, and efficiency in the education system, ensuring that every decision contributes to meaningful student progress.

Summary of Data Use to Improve Academic Achievement

The strategic use of data is a cornerstone of the PRDE's efforts to enhance academic achievement. By systematically collecting, analyzing, and acting on data, teachers can identify students' areas of need and implement targeted interventions to address learning gaps. This data-driven approach ensures that instruction is personalized, equitable, and effective, enabling all students to reach their full potential. Through ongoing assessment, professional development, and collaboration, PRDE fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where data serves as a powerful tool for driving student success.

The primary objective is to achieve measurable improvements in students' academic performance, particularly in mathematics, where a minimum 13% increase in proficiency is targeted by the 2028-2029 academic year through the implementation of innovative strategies. Based on CRECE assessment results, baseline proficiency levels in 2023-2024 were established as follows:

Spanish (39.6%), Mathematics (32.6%), and English (30.1%). Goals for proficiency gains were calculated using a 4% annual reduction in the achievement gap, resulting in expected proficiency levels for 2028–2029 of 52% in Spanish (12% total gain), 46% in Mathematics (13% total gain), and 44% in English (14% total gain).

This progressive approach sets annual benchmarks to ensure steady progress: Spanish proficiency is expected to grow to 42% in 2024–2025 and reach 52% by 2028–2029, Mathematics proficiency is anticipated to rise to 35% in 2024–2025 and reach 46% by the same year, and English proficiency is projected to grow to 33% in 2024–2025 and achieve 44% by 2028–2029. This plan emphasizes a commitment to narrowing the achievement gap, driving targeted interventions, and fostering academic excellence across all core's subject areas.

Integrating technology into the classroom has been shown to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Studies indicate that students often find technology-enhanced learning more interesting and enjoyable, which can make challenging subjects more accessible. For instance, research has demonstrated that digital game-based learning can significantly improve students' performance in STEM education.

To monitor the effectiveness of such initiatives, it's essential to collect and analyze implementation data. This approach allows educational institutions to assess progress toward long-term academic goals. Developing periodic assessments for students to complete before and after participating in technology-enhanced activities provides measurable insights into the impact of these strategies. Such assessments can inform data-driven decisions to optimize teaching methods and learning experiences.

Virtual Academy: Expanding Access to Digital Education

Puerto Rico Virtual Academy is a key initiative aimed at providing high-quality virtual education without geographical barriers. This virtual school is not only an alternative for students who face challenges attending in-person classes—whether due to work obligations, health conditions, mobility limitations, or inadequate school infrastructure, as is currently the case in some areas of southwest Puerto Rico—but also for:

- Parents who choose homeschooling for their children.
- Students wish to accelerate their coursework by taking additional classes.
- Students in need of academic reinforcement alongside their in-person education.

Puerto Rico Virtual Academy will contribute to democratizing access to education and preparing students for the demands of an increasingly digital and globalized world. The program will also include:

- Virtual academic advising and counseling services guide students in their educational pathways.
- Online tutoring and personal support, ensuring that students receive the assistance they need to succeed academically.

Key Benefits of AI in Virtual Learning

- **Personalized Learning Paths:** AI-powered platforms analyze student progress and adapt content to provide individualized learning experiences, ensuring students receive support tailored to their needs.
- **Automated Assessments & Feedback:** AI-enhanced evaluation tools offer instant feedback, allowing educators to track student performance in real time and implement targeted interventions.

- Virtual Tutoring & Academic Support: AI chatbots and intelligent tutoring systems provide on-demand assistance, helping students grasp complex concepts outside of traditional class hours.
- Language & Accessibility Support: AI tools such as speech recognition, real-time translation, and adaptive reading assistants ensure that students—including Spanish Learners (SLs) and those with disabilities—receive equal access to virtual education.
- Data-Driven Decision Making: AI-driven analytics help educators identify trends, challenges, and areas for improvement, optimizing instructional strategies within the Virtual Academy.

Artificial Intelligence: Transforming Digital Education

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) is committed to expanding access to high-quality digital education through its Digital Educational Materials Platform (MED). MED is our learning management system, which is aligned to the essential competencies of the 2022 curriculum. In addition, as part of this effort, the DEPR has established regulations that will guide the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in our information systems, the work of faculty and staff, and the work of our students in order to enhance capabilities. We see the use of AI as a powerful tool to enhance face-to-face or virtual learning experiences, personalize instruction, provide better curricular adaptations, and optimize face-to-face and digital education strategies through.

To guide the ethical and effective use of AI in education, PRDE has developed the " **Artificial Intelligence in the Educational System Guide**", which establishes best practices for AI integration in digital learning environments. This aligns with PRDE's objectives of innovation, educational equity, and student-centered learning.

The PRDE remains committed to leveraging the integration of AI-based information and communication technologies to improve the accessibility, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of face-to-face and virtual education. This is to ensure that all students in Puerto Rico benefit from technology-enhanced learning and technology-enhanced learning to improve the quality of digital education. By integrating this initiative into the education system, Puerto Rico aims to expand learning opportunities, increase student engagement, and reduce dropout rates, ensuring that all students have access to a flexible, high-quality education, regardless of their circumstances.

b. Graduation Rate. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(bb))

1. Describe the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has established long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), with subgroup-specific targets that reflect a uniform annual rate of improvement applied across all groups. Because subgroups begin at different baseline levels, this approach results in varied absolute gains over time, effectively prioritizing accelerated growth for historically lower-performing groups, such as students with disabilities and Spanish Learners (SLs). These goals reflect PRDE's commitment to ensuring that more students successfully complete high school while addressing achievement gaps among student subgroups

and are aligned with the baseline and interim goals presented in the table on page 82.

(i) Baseline Data

The baseline graduation rate for all students and subgroups is derived from the 2023–2024 PRDE Report Card. This baseline represents the current graduation rates of students across various demographic and academic subgroups, serving as the reference point for measuring progress toward the 2028–2029 long-term goals.

(ii) Timeline for Meeting Long-Term Goals

PRDE has established a multi-year framework to track progress toward its graduation rate goals. Schools will be evaluated annually against the state’s long-term targets and subgroup-specific targets, ensuring continuous monitoring and accountability. By the 2028–2029 school year, PRDE aims for all subgroups to demonstrate meaningful growth, with historically lower-performing groups showing accelerated progress to close graduation gaps.

(iii) Ambition of Long-Term Goals

The long-term goals are designed to be both ambitious and achievable, considering historical graduation trends and educational challenges in Puerto Rico. Applying a consistent annual rate of increase across all subgroups aligns with evidence-based improvement strategies and provides schools with measurable, realistic benchmarks for success. Because subgroups start at different baseline levels, this approach leads to differentiated progress over time, helping to drive greater gains among historically lower-performing groups. PRDE will implement targeted interventions, including early warning systems, dropout prevention programs, and academic support initiatives, to ensure sustained improvements in graduation rates

By tracking graduation rates at the school, district, and state levels, PRDE ensures that all student subgroups, including economically disadvantaged

students, students with disabilities, and Spanish Learners (SLs), receive the necessary support to succeed. This strategic approach aims to increase overall graduation rates while narrowing achievement gaps, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes for all students in Puerto Rico.

Table 10 presents the historic graduation rates from the 2017-18 to 2023-24 academic years, showing fluctuations in overall student graduation rates as well as trends among specific subgroups. While the graduation rate for all students has remained relatively stable around 74-78%, notable variations exist among subgroups, particularly among White Not Hispanic and Spanish Learners, who have experienced significant changes over the years.

Table 11: Historic Graduation Rate from 2017-18 to 2023-24

Group	(2017-2018)	(2018-2019)	(2019-2020)	(2021-2022)	(2022-2023)	(2023-2024)
All Students	74	77	78	76	75	76
Puerto Rican	74	77	78	76	75	76
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	60	70	71	68	66	76
White Not Hispanic	74	60	58	63	41	82
Other Origin	72	77	77	75	74	76
Economically Disadvantaged	71	68	77	70	69	69
Disabilities	57	54	65	75	68	68
Spanish Learners	58	56	67	74	52	63

Similar to academic achievement goals, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to establish long-term graduation rate goals that apply uniformly to all high schools. To develop new long-term graduation rate targets, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) analyzed current baseline data and recent progress trends.

The baseline for long-term graduation rate goals was determined using actual statewide Adjusted Graduation Rate (AGR) data for the 2023-24 academic

year. This baseline serves as the foundation for setting annual improvement targets through 2028–2029, ensuring steady progress toward increased graduation rates for all student subgroups.

The following table presents the baseline, interim annual goals, and final long-term graduation rate targets for each subgroup:

Table 12: Baseline and Interim Goals for Adjusted Graduation Rate (AGR), Puerto Rico for the addendum validity period

Subgroup	Baseline	Interim Goals				Goal
	(2023–24)	(2024–2025)	(2025–2026)	(2026–2027)	(2027–2028)	(2028–2029)
All Students	76	77.5	79	80.5	82	83.5
Puerto Rican	76	77.5	79	80.5	82	83.5
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	76	77.5	79	80.5	82	83.5
White Not Hispanic	76	77.5	79	80.5	82	83.5
Other Origin	82	82.5	83	83.5	84	84.5
Economically Disadvantaged	76	77.5	79	80.5	82	83.5
Disabilities	68	70.5	73	75.5	78	80.5
Spanish Learners	63	66.5	70	73.5	77	80.5

2. If applicable, describe the long-term goals for each extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, including (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious; and (iv) how the long-term goals are more rigorous than the long-term goal set for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

This section is not applicable, because PRDE doesn't have an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

The general formula for the first four-year cohort will be:

$$GR = \frac{\text{Number of cohort member who earned a regular HS diploma in academic SY 2023–2024 through summer}}{\text{Total Number of first time 9th graders in 2023–2024 plus students who transfer in minus who transfer out in SY 2020–2021, 2021–2022, 2022–2023, 2023–2024}}$$

*-Total number of students in the four-year cohort includes dropout students.
-The applicable codes for “transfer out”, to be subtracted in the denominator are:*

T2: Students who left to enroll in a public school in the same district

T3: Students who left to enroll in a public school in another district

T4: Students who left to enroll in a private school, that awards a recognized diploma, in the same district

T5: Students who left to enroll in a private school, that awards a recognized diploma, in another district

T7: Students who emigrate to the US or to another country

B10: Deceased students

3. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in Appendix A.

The interim progress measurements toward the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) and any extended-year adjusted

cohort graduation rate (EACGR) are outlined in Appendix A of the Consolidated Plan.

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has set differentiated annual increase targets for the graduation rate over the next five years, starting from the 2023–2024 baseline presented in the table on page 82. These targets apply to both the four-year ACGR and any extended-year ACGR, with accelerated growth rates for historically lower-performing subgroups, such as students with disabilities and Spanish Learners (SLs), to ensure sustainable improvement and gap closure across the education system.

Interim progress measurements include:

- A gradual annual increase in the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, consistent with the subgroup-specific interim goals in the table on page 82.
- Ongoing evaluation based on PRDE’s Report Card to track improvements.
- Comparison of school-level and subgroup results against state-level long-term goals.

These measurements allow for continuous tracking of graduation rate improvements, ensuring that implemented strategies effectively enhance student retention and success.

4. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate consider the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide graduation rate gaps.

The long-term goals and interim progress measurements set by PRDE are designed to reduce statewide graduation rate gaps among different student subgroups. Several key considerations support significant progress in achieving equity in graduation rates:

- Focus on Historically Disadvantaged Subgroups: PRDE has established goals based on a consistent annual rate of improvement across all subgroups; however, because subgroups such as students in special education, economically disadvantaged students, and Spanish Learners begin at different baseline levels, the approach ensures equitable progress by driving greater gains where they are most needed.
- Inclusion of Extended-Year Graduation Rate: Recognizing that some students require additional time to graduate, PRDE considers extended-year graduation rates to provide a more comprehensive and inclusive measure of success.
- Strategic Interventions to Improve Retention: PRDE has implemented programs such as:
 - NEExt Project: Extended School, which provides extracurricular activities and academic tutoring to support student engagement.
 - The Educational Summer Program, which mitigates summer learning loss and reinforces academic skills.
 - ATEMA: Application of Technology in Mathematics, which offers personalized learning in a key subject area.
 - Ongoing Assessment and Adjustments: PRDE analyzes subgroup-specific performance annually and applies targeted strategies for groups that are not meeting the expected progress.

These strategies ensure that graduation rate goals are not only attainable but also designed to reduce achievement gaps and promote educational equity across Puerto Rico’s public education system.

c. English Language Proficiency. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii))

- 1. Describe the long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the State-determined timeline for such students to achieve English language proficiency; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.*

In Puerto Rico, Spanish is the language of instruction, as well as the predominant language used in commerce and social interaction. Spanish Learners (SL) students is the group of students in Puerto Rico that is not fluent or is limited in the Spanish language in reading, writing, speaking and listening and parallels the English language learner (ELL) group in mainland states. As of August 2024, there are 1,000 identified SL students receiving language instruction services in Puerto Rico. These students are served utilizing state funds, other federal funds and funds from Title III, Part A program. It is PRDE’s expectation that the SL population achieves the same academic goals and standards as regular students while becoming proficient in the Spanish Language.

(i) Baseline Data

PRDE has established a baseline for **Spanish Learners** using state assessment results that measure language proficiency. These assessments track progress in literacy and communication skills to ensure SLs achieve fluency.

(ii) Timeline for Achieving Language Proficiency

PRDE has developed a five-year framework to guide Spanish Learners toward proficiency, with specific annual growth targets. Schools will assess student progress annually through formal assessments and classroom evaluations. By the end of SY 2024–2025, PRDE aims to increase language complexity and proficiency aligned with the State’s linguistic proficiency standards, based on our State Academic Content Standards and grade-level Expectations.

(iii) Ambition of Long-Term Goals

PRDE’s goals are both ambitious and achievable, ensuring that SLs make steady progress toward Spanish proficiency. The target growth rate is set at 2% proficiency gains per year, with 4% proficiency gains over two years, ensuring a consistent upward trajectory for Spanish Learners.

To support this progress, PRDE has implemented key intervention programs:

1. State Assessment Administration: Ongoing evaluation of SL performance.
2. Teacher and Student Resources: Dissemination of instructional materials tailored to SL needs.
3. Eligibility and Annual Testing: Systematic assessment of Spanish proficiency.
4. Family Engagement Initiatives: Parent workshops and training to support language development at home.

Table 13 outlines the specific growth targets and interventions designed to enhance Spanish proficiency among SLs:

Table 13: Spanish Learners (SL) Language Proficiency Growth Targets and Interventions

Goal	Program Interventions	Evaluation	1-year Achievement Goals	2-year Achievement Goals
<p>Increase Language Complexity to achieve proficiency (aligned to the State’s linguistic proficiency standards, based on our State Academic Content Standards and grade-level Expectations.) by the end of SY 2024-2025.</p>	<p>To improve reading and writing skills in Spanish, the SL student will participate in:</p> <p>Coordination and administration of the state assessment.</p> <p>Dissemination of program materials and resources for teachers and students.</p> <p>Administration of the eligibility test and annual test.</p> <p>Family Engagement: The program will also implement family engagement activities based on the needs assessments administered to parents and/or legal guardians of Spanish Learners.</p>	<p>Reading Pre and Post Test</p> <p>Writing Pre and post-test.</p> <p>Analysis of grades according to Spanish, mathematics and science subjects, in grades where the CRECE or another standardized test such as PA is not administered.</p> <p>Analysis of the Assessment system tests.</p>	<p>2% of students will achieve proficiency annually and test results will be aligned to the State’s linguistic proficiency standards, based on our State Academic Content Standards and grade-level Expectations.</p>	<p>4% of students in two years will achieve proficiency and results will be aligned to the State’s linguistic proficiency standards, based on our State Academic Content Standards and grade-level Expectations.</p>

Goal	Program Interventions	Evaluation	1-year Achievement Goals	2-year Achievement Goals
	The activities include workshops in the topics of need, to make sure that families are integrated in the educational experience of the Spanish Learners and continue supports at home.			

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goal for increases in the percentage of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency in Appendix A.

PRDE has established annual progress measures to track Spanish Learners' language proficiency gains and ensure alignment with long-term goals. The interim progress indicators will be presented in Appendix A.

iv. Indicators (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B))

a. Academic Achievement Indicator. Describe the Academic Achievement indicator, including a description of how the indicator (i) is based on the long-term goals; (ii) is measured by proficiency on the annual Statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments; (iii) annually measures academic achievement for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; and (iv) at the State's discretion, for each public high school in the State, includes a measure of student growth, as measured by the annual Statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments.

Puerto Rico's Accountability System and Academic Achievement Measurement

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has historically faced systemic challenges in achieving high proficiency rates and sustained academic improvement. For the 2023–2024 school year, PRDE has established a new baseline to track student growth and measure progress toward long-term goals.

From 2015–2016, proficiency rates have declined, highlighting the need for strategic interventions. In 2015–2016, student proficiency rates were:

- 50.7% in Spanish
- 45.1% in English

The adjustment of PRDE's accountability model was implemented to better align the evaluation of school performance with the realities and priorities of Puerto Rico's educational system. Puerto Rico's accountability framework assesses school performance across four key categories:

- Student Academic Achievement
- Graduation Rate
- Progress in Achieving English Proficiency
- Other Indicators of School Quality

This framework ensures a comprehensive evaluation of schools while focusing on academic improvement, language proficiency, and student success. The Academic Achievement indicator in PRDE's accountability system is based on the CRECE-PR assessment, which is aligned with the Puerto Rico Core Standards (PRCS). This assessment measures student achievement in:

- Spanish, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Mathematics in grades 3–8 and 10.
- Science in grades 4, 8, and 10.

The CRECE-PR assessment is administered annually, providing critical data on:

- Proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics.
- Grade-level and subject-specific performance.
- **Subgroup** proficiency trends.
- Overall school-level proficiency rates.

By utilizing CRECE-PR results, PRDE ensures a data-driven approach to monitoring student achievement, identifying learning gaps, and implementing effective interventions to enhance educational outcomes.

Academic Achievement Indicator

The Academic Achievement Indicator in Puerto Rico’s accountability system is designed to measure student proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics through annual statewide assessments. It is aligned with the state’s long-term goals and ensures the systematic tracking of student achievement for all students and subgroups.

(i) Alignment with Long-Term Goals

The Academic Achievement Indicator is directly linked to PRDE’s long-term goals for student proficiency. The baseline for the 2023–2024 school year was established to track progress toward 2028–2029 proficiency targets. PRDE has set annual interim goals that ensure students increase proficiency each year, aligning with the state’s commitment to closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

(ii) Measured by Proficiency on the Annual Statewide Assessments

The CRECE-PR assessment serves as Puerto Rico’s statewide measure of academic achievement and is aligned to the Puerto Rico Core Standards (PRCS). The assessment evaluates proficiency in Spanish, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Mathematics across the following grade levels:

- Grades 3–8 and 10 for Spanish, English, and Mathematics.
- Grades 4, 8, and 10 for Science.

Student performance in the CRECE-PR assessments is reported in four proficiency levels, which reflect their ability to meet grade-level academic expectations.

Table 14: Performance levels in CRECE-PR

Distinguished	Proficient	Apprentice	Beginner
4	3	2	1
The student at this level exceeds the standard of the school subject and grade level.	The student at this level meets the standard of the school subject and grade level.	The student at this level partially meets the standard of the school subject and grade level.	The student at this level partially approaches the standard of the school subject and grade level.

(iii) Annual Measurement of Academic Achievement for All Students and Subgroups

The Academic Achievement Indicator ensures that proficiency levels are reported annually for:

- All students statewide.
- Each federally required student subgroup, including:

- Puerto Rican students
- Hispanic students (not Puerto Rican)
- White non-Hispanic students
- Students of Other Origin
- Economically disadvantaged students
- Students with disabilities
- Spanish Learners (SLs)

By disaggregating the data by subgroup, PRDE can identify and address achievement gaps while implementing targeted interventions to support historically underperforming groups.

Table 15: Spanish and Math Proficiency Rates by Subgroups

Subgroup	Spanish Proficiency Rate		Math Proficiency Rate	
	(2022–2023)	(2023–2024)	(2022–2023)	(2023–2024)
All Students	36.5	40.0	23.0	33.0
Puerto Rican	36.6	41.0	23.0	34.0
Hispanic Not Puerto Rican	33.2	36.0	21.8	29.0
White Not Hispanic	27.9	33.0	27.0	32.0
Other Origin	42.6	53.0	27.0	45.0
Economically Disadvantaged	34.4	38.0	22.2	31.0
Disabilities	23.7	30.0	19.6	28.0
Spanish Learners	16.7	22.0	21.8	25.0

(iv) Inclusion of Student Growth for High Schools (If Applicable)

For high schools, PRDE considers incorporating a measure of student growth based on performance trends in annual reading/language arts and mathematics assessments. While high schools are primarily evaluated based on graduation rates and proficiency levels, future adjustments to the

accountability model may include additional growth indicators that assess student progress toward postsecondary readiness.

Commitment to Data-Driven Improvement

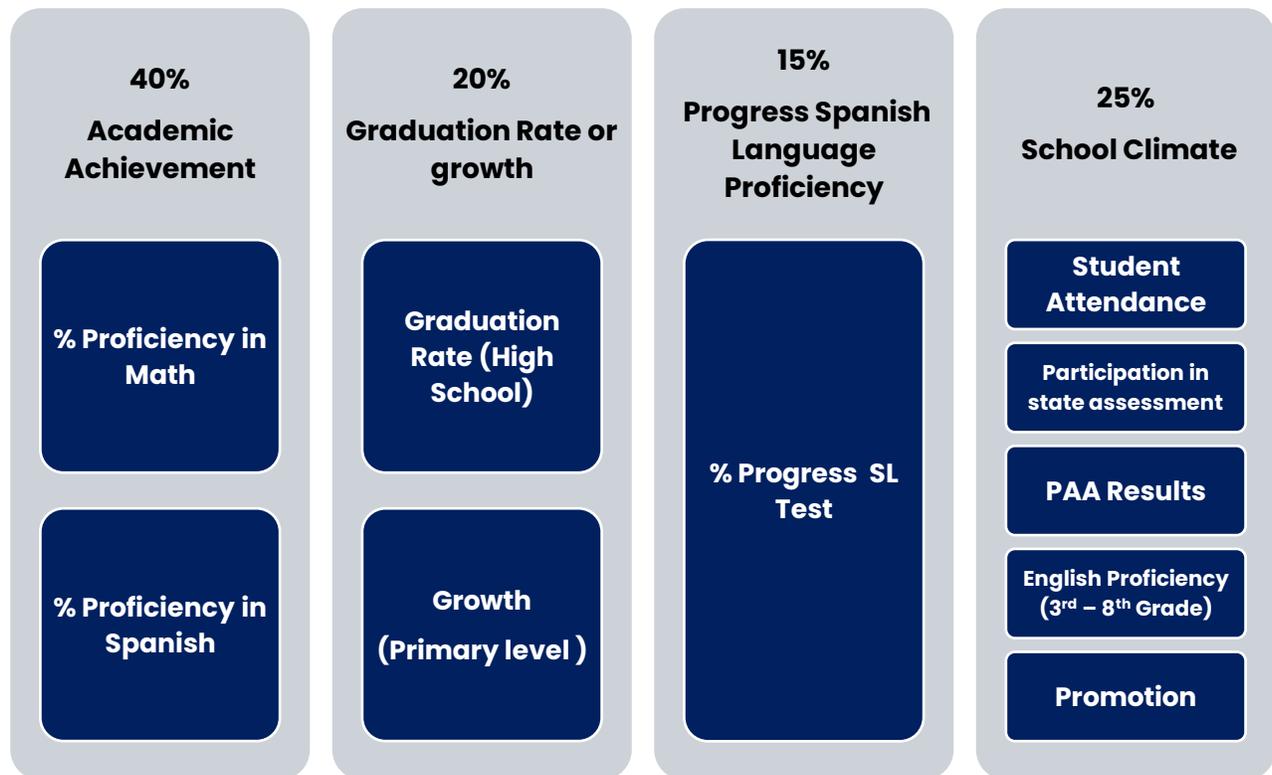
PRDE continuously monitors assessment results to inform instructional practices, guide professional development, and adjust interventions. By aligning the Academic Achievement Indicator with long-term goals and annual proficiency measures, PRDE ensures a systematic approach to improving student outcomes and overall school performance.

The framework for the Puerto Rico accountability system recognizes that school performance should be assessed within four overarching categories:

- Student Academic Achievement
- Graduation Rate
- Progress in Achieving Spanish Language Proficiency
- Other Indicators of School Quality

Each indicator is described briefly below:

PRDE's Accountability Model



Data Governance: Ensuring Security, Accuracy, and Accountability

In an era of data-driven education, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) recognizes the critical role of strong data governance in supporting effective decision-making, accountability, and student success. To ensure that all data management practices align with national and federal policies, PRDE has developed a comprehensive *Data Governance Manual*.

This manual serves as a foundational guide for educators, administrators, and data managers to uphold the highest standards in data integrity, security, and ethical use. Key principles outlined in the manual include:

- **Data Quality Assurance:** Establishing protocols to ensure that all educational data is accurate, timely, and reliable, minimizing errors in reporting and decision-making.

- Privacy and Security Measures: Compliance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and other federal regulations to protect student and staff information from unauthorized access or misuse.
- Data Access Control and Governance Structure: Defining roles and responsibilities for accessing and managing data at different levels, ensuring only authorized personnel handle sensitive information.
- Transparency and Ethical Data Use: Promoting accountability and responsible data practices so that students, parents, and educators have a clear understanding of how data is used to inform policies and interventions.
- Continuous Improvement through Data Analytics: Using predictive analytics and longitudinal data studies to track student performance trends and adjust instructional strategies accordingly.

The *Data Governance Manual* is an integral component of PRDE's commitment to leveraging data responsibly, ensuring that information is used not only to comply with federal and state regulations but also to drive meaningful educational improvements

b. Indicator for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools (Other Academic Indicator). *Describe the Other Academic indicator, including how it annually measures the performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. If the Other Academic indicator is not a measure of student growth, the description must include a demonstration that the indicator is a valid and reliable statewide academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance.*

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has established a growth model as the Other Academic Indicator for public elementary and middle schools (grades 4–8). This model is designed to track student progress longitudinally in Spanish language arts and mathematics using scores from the CRECE assessment system.

Since high school students (10th grade) do not have prior-year scores to track progress, this growth model does not apply to high schools. Instead, PRDE evaluates high school academic performance through other accountability measures.

Growth

PRDE will use a growth measure as an indicator for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools. The Department has established a growth model that tracks students' academic achievement longitudinally. PRDE growth model evaluates changes student achievement in Spanish language arts and mathematics in 4th through 8th grade using score from the current CRECE assessment systems. This growth model, which is a Transition Matrix model, does not apply to high school students (10th grade) because these students do not have scores from previous year.

PRDE has identified the following benefits of its growth model: it 1) uses database of matched students over time, 2) does not require a common (vertical) scale across grades, 3) does not require confidence intervals, 4) handles nonlinear growth, and 5) and be used with alternate assessment that do not have scale scores. This model is simple to communicate with stakeholders and is currently used by several states.

PRDE's current growth model utilizes a Transition Matrix framework to evaluate academic progress across two consecutive years in Spanish Language Arts

and Mathematics for students in grades 4 through 8. The matrix classifies student performance into eight ordinal achievement levels, ranging from Low Beginner (1.1) to High Distinguished (4.2). These levels capture both extremes (low and high) by dividing traditional performance categories—such as Beginner, apprentice, proficient and distinguished—into more granular bands that allow for detailed measurement of student progress.

This structure enables PRDE to identify not only transitions across proficiency levels (e.g., from Low Apprentice to Mid Proficient) but also within the same broader category (e.g., from Low Proficient to Mid Proficient). Each movement between levels corresponds to a qualitative descriptor of growth, such as Maintained, Improved, Significantly Improved, Regressed, or Significantly Regressed, as shown in the matrix.

Students who remain in the same sub-level (e.g., Low Beginner to Low Beginner) are marked as Maintained, while upward movement is marked as Slightly Improved, Improved, or Significantly Improved based on the magnitude of change. Downward movement is similarly categorized. The matrix also supports value point allocation, where higher points are awarded for greater improvements. Although not shown numerically in the figure, this qualitative system underlies the quantitative point structure that PRDE applies in its accountability model.

This approach:

- Captures nonlinear growth effectively.
- Does not require a vertical scale.
- Is accessible and transparent to educators and stakeholders.
- Can be used with alternate assessments.

Growth Model Approach: Transition Matrix Model

PRDE's growth model is based on a Transition Matrix Model, which evaluates student achievement changes across multiple performance levels. This model allows PRDE to measure academic progress annually, ensuring a more comprehensive view of student improvement.

Transition Matrix Model Structure

The Transition Matrix Model divides student achievement levels into four categories to ensure growth is measured within and across levels. The performance levels in CRECE-PR are:

Level	Description
Distinguished	The student at this level exceeds the standard of the school subject and grade level.
Proficient	The student at this level meets the standard of the school subject and grade level.
Apprentice	The student at this level partially meets the standard of the school subject and grade level.
Beginner	The student at this level partially approaches the standard of the school subject and grade level.

Tracking Growth in the Transition Matrix Model

The CRECE Transition Table measures student progress by tracking movement within and across performance levels. The growth scoring system is structured as follows:

- Students moving up one or more levels (e.g., from Beginner to Apprentice) earn progress points.
- Students starting at lower levels (Beginner, Apprentice) earn more points for growth when reaching higher proficiency.

- The maximum score (6 points) is assigned to students reaching "Distinguished."
- Students at "Proficient" or "Distinguished" who maintain their level earn 2 points.
- Regression in achievement levels is penalized, with significantly regressed students receiving lower scores.

CRECE Transition Table Growth Indicator Structure – Student and Group Level										
Year One	Year Two									
	Low Beginner (1.1)	High Beginner (1.2)	Low Apprentice (2.1)	Mid Apprentice (2.2)	High Apprentice (2.3)	Low Proficient (3.1)	Mid Proficient (3.2)	High Proficient (3.3)	Low Distinguished (4.1)	High Distinguished (4.2)
Low Beginner (1.1)	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved	Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved
High Beginner (1.2)	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved	Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved
Low Apprentice (2.1)	Slightly Improved	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved	Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved
Mid Apprentice (2.2)	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved	Improved	Significantly Improved	Significantly Improved
High Apprentice (2.3)	Regressed	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved	Improved	Significantly Improved
Low Proficient (3.1)	Significantly Regressed	Regressed	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved	Improved
Mid Proficient (3.2)	Significantly Regressed	Significantly Regressed	Regressed	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved	Improved
High Proficient (3.3)	Significantly Regressed	Significantly Regressed	Significantly Regressed	Regressed	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved	Slightly Improved
Low Distinguished (4.1)	Significantly Regressed	Significantly Regressed	Significantly Regressed	Significantly Regressed	Regressed	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained	Slightly Improved
High Distinguished (4.2)	Significantly Regressed	Regressed	Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Slightly Regressed	Maintained				

The color-coded growth matrix in the CRECE Transition Table provides a visual representation of student movement between performance levels, allowing educators to track trends in academic progress or decline.

Year One	Year Two									
	Low	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	Mid	High	Low	High
	Beginner	Beginner	Apprentice	Apprentice	Apprentice	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Distinguished	Distinguished
	(1.1)	(1.2)	(2.1)	(2.2)	(2.3)	(3.1)	(3.2)	(3.3)	(4.1)	(4.2)
Low Beginner (1.1)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	6	6
High Beginner (1.2)	0	0	2	3	4	5	6	6	6	6
Low Apprentice (2.1)	0	0	0	3	4	5	6	6	6	6
Mid Apprentice (2.2)	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	6	6	6
High Apprentice (2.3)	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	6	6
Low Proficient (3.1)	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	5	6
Mid Proficient (3.2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	5	6
High Proficient (3.3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	6
Low Distinguished (4.1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6
High Distinguished (4.2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

Significantly Regressed
Regressed
Slightly Regressed
Maintained
Slightly Improved
Improved
Significantly Improved

Point Assignment and Calculation for the Growth Indicator

PRDE assigns points to each student based on their change in performance level from one year to the next using the CRECE Transition Table. The second table above specifies the exact number of points awarded for each transition between Year One and Year Two levels.

For the calculation of the Growth Indicator, the denominator is the maximum number of points a school could earn, obtained by multiplying the total number of students with valid scores in both years by six (the maximum points possible per student).

A school's growth score is determined by summing all individual student points earned and dividing by the maximum possible points, then multiplying by 100 to obtain a percentage.

Why This Growth Model is Valid and Reliable?

PRDE's growth model is a statewide academic indicator that ensures meaningful differentiation in school performance by:

- **Measuring Progress Beyond Proficiency:** Recognizing schools for improving student outcomes instead of just reporting proficiency rates.
- **Tracking Growth Annually:** Ensuring consistent and reliable performance evaluations for all students and subgroups.
- **Targeting Instructional Improvement:** Helping schools identify effective teaching strategies to address learning gaps and support underperforming groups.
- **Ensuring School Accountability:** Differentiating schools based on their effectiveness in promoting student growth, not just static performance.

c. Graduation Rate. Describe the Graduation Rate indicator, including a description of (i) how the indicator is based on the long-term goals; (ii) how the indicator annually measures graduation rate for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; (iii) how the indicator is based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate; (iv) if the State, at its discretion, also includes one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, how the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is combined with that rate or rates within the indicator; and (v) if applicable, how the State includes in its four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed using an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D) and awarded a State-defined alternate diploma under ESEA section 8101(23) and (25).

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) uses the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) as the primary indicator for measuring high school completion. This indicator aligns with PRDE's long-term goals of increasing graduation rates across all student subgroups while ensuring equitable opportunities for academic success.

(i) Alignment with Long-Term Goals

PRDE has set ambitious but attainable long-term graduation rate goals, establishing differentiated annual increase targets over the next five years based on baseline data from the 2023–2024 PRDE Report Card. These goals prioritize accelerated growth for historically lower-performing subgroups, such as students with disabilities and Spanish Learners (SLs), to close graduation gaps and ensure that more students successfully complete high school.

Schools are held accountable for meeting these benchmarks as part of Puerto Rico’s statewide accountability system.

(ii) Annual Measurement for All Students and Subgroups

The graduation rate is measured annually for all students and is disaggregated into the following federally required subgroups:

- Puerto Rican students
- Hispanic (Not Puerto Rican) students
- White (Not Hispanic) students
- Other Origin students
- Economically disadvantaged students
- Students with disabilities
- Spanish Learners (SLs)

By disaggregating the data, PRDE ensures that historically underserved populations receive targeted support to improve retention and graduation outcomes.

(iii) Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR)

The ACGR is calculated by tracking a cohort of students who enter 9th grade for the first time and determining how many earn a regular high school diploma within four years. The formula used is:

GR= The general formula for the first four-year cohort will be:

$$GR = \frac{\text{Number of cohort member who earned a regular HS diploma in academic SY 2023–2024 through summer}}{\text{Total Number of first time 9th graders in 2023–2024 plus students who transfer in minus who transfer out in SY 2020–2021, 2021–2022, 2022–2023, 2023–2024}}$$

- Total number of students in the four cohort includes dropout students.
- The applicable codes for “transfer out”, to be subtracted in the denominator are:

- T2: Students who left to enroll in a public school in the same district
- T3: Students who left to enroll in a public school in another district
- T4: Students who left to enroll in a private school, that awards a recognized diploma, in the same district
- T5: Students who left to enroll in a private school, that awards a recognized diploma, in another district
- T7: Students who emigrate to the US or to another country
- B10: Deceased students

The ACGR serves as the primary graduation accountability metric, ensuring that schools are assessed based on their ability to guide students to on-time graduation.

Note: Students in Puerto Rico are not required to pass any statewide assessment in order to earn the regular high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students. However, all students must take the College Board PAA (Prueba de Aptitud Académica) as a graduation requirement. This requirement ensures participation but does not affect diploma eligibility, as passing the test is not required.

(iv) Extended-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

PRDE does not currently use an extended-year graduation rate, as it only tracks students through the standard four-year cohort model. However, if an extended-year rate is introduced in the future, PRDE will outline its methodology and how it will be combined with the four-year ACGR.

(v) Inclusion of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

d. Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) Indicator. *Describe the Progress in Achieving ELP indicator,*

including the State's definition of ELP, as measured by the State ELP assessment.

SLA program has developed standardized forms that comply with state and federal regulations to be used for the entrance and exit procedures. Students who enroll for the first time in a PRDE school or return after withdrawing from the PRDE, are provided a Home Language Survey, (HLS) Form AEI001, as part of the enrollment package, which can be completed in-person or online manner. PRDE modified the logic behind the instrument to minimize cases of misidentification of non-eligible participants. PRDE defines ELP in the following categories: Level 1: Beginner (approximately a range of 0-45 points)- A level 1 student demonstrates minimal comprehension or doesn't comprehend the four language domains (listening, speaking, writing and reading) of the Spanish language. The student is beginning to develop receptive and productive use of the Spanish language in the school context, although comprehension may be demonstrated nonverbally or through the native language, rather than Spanish. Utilizes general phrases and vocabulary. Level 2: Apprentice (approximately a range of 46-74 points)- A level 2 student demonstrates limited proficiency in the four domains of the Spanish language. The student utilizes simple phrases or sentences, and common expressions. The students also have basic fluency and with effort they can communicate effectively in the Spanish language. The students are in the process of developing the ability to communicate effectively in Spanish across a range of grade-level appropriate language demands in the school context. The student exhibits a limited range of lexical, syntactic, phonological and discourse features when addressing new and familiar topics. Level 3: Proficient (approximately a range of 75-85 points)- A level 3 student demonstrates a competent execution of the four Spanish language domain areas. The students are proficient enough in the typical use of Spanish words and utilizes concrete expressions. The students are fluent and can communicate effectively in

Spanish. Level 4: Outstanding (approximately a range of 86–100 points) A level 4 student demonstrate proficiency of the four domain areas of the Spanish language. The student expresses ideas with complex sentences and utilizes words and expressions with precise meaning.

Progress in Achieving Spanish Language Proficiency (SLP) Indicator

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) uses its Spanish Language Assessment (SLA) to annually evaluate the progress of K–12 Spanish Learners (SLs) across the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The SLA is administered annually to all identified SL students and is aligned with the state’s academic content standards for language proficiency. PRDE defines Spanish Language Proficiency (SLP) according to the following four performance levels:

- Level 1: Beginner (0–45 points) – Demonstrates minimal comprehension in Spanish; uses general phrases and basic vocabulary.
- Level 2: Apprentice (46–74 points) – Demonstrates limited proficiency; uses simple phrases and expressions with basic fluency.
- Level 3: Proficient (75–85 points) – Demonstrates competent use of Spanish across all domains; fluent communication in academic contexts.
- Level 4: Outstanding (86–100 points) – Demonstrates advanced proficiency with complex sentence structures and precise vocabulary.

Students who enroll for the first time in a PRDE school or return after withdrawing complete a Home Language Survey (HLS) to determine language eligibility. PRDE modified the logic of the HLS instrument to reduce misidentification of non-eligible participants.

Calculation of the Progress in SLP Indicator:

Progress is measured by comparing a student’s SLA performance across two consecutive school years. A student is considered to have made progress if they:

- Obtain a proficient or outstanding result in their initial SLA, or
- Move up at least one proficiency level (e.g., from Level 1 to Level 2), or
- Demonstrate a statistically significant gain in their composite score within the same level (e.g., moving from low Apprentice to high Apprentice).
 - Statistically significant gain is measured using the ranges shown in the following table

Level	Sublevel
Level 1: Beginner	Low: 0-22
	High: 23-45
Level 2: Apprentice	Low: 46-60
	High: 61-74
Level 3: Proficient	Low: 75-80
	High: 81-85
Level 4: Outstanding	Low: 86-93
	High: 94-100

Progress in Achieving Spanish Language Proficiency is calculated as follows:

$$Progress\ in\ Achieving\ SLP = \frac{\# \ of \ students \ who \ made \ progress}{\# \ of \ students \ with \ paired \ test + PS_{year1}}$$

- Where PS_{year1} = number of students who achieve proficiency in the first year

The Progress in SLP indicator is defined as the percentage of Spanish Learners (SLs) who demonstrate such progress during the academic year. This percentage is calculated at the school level and reported as part of the

statewide accountability system. Results are disaggregated by federally required subgroups.

Students exit the SLA program upon reaching Level 4 (“Outstanding”) or demonstrating consistent performance in Level 3 (“Proficient”) while meeting additional academic criteria outlined in PRDE guidelines.

This methodology ensures that the Progress in SLP indicator is valid, reliable, applied consistently across schools, and supports meaningful differentiation in school performance under ESEA accountability requirements.

e. **School Quality or Student Success Indicator(s)**. *Describe each School Quality or Student Success Indicator, including, for each such indicator: (i) how it allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance; (ii) that it is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide (for the grade span(s) to which it applies); and (iii) of how each such indicator annually measures performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. For any School Quality or Student Success indicator that does not apply to all grade spans, the description must include the grade spans to which it does apply. School Quality or Student Success Indicator is a composite score based on student attendance rate, participation rate, English Proficiency rate for non-high schools and College Board’s results for high schools. All students in grades 3-8 take the English as a Second Language assessment and all students in grades 11-12 take the College Board assessment.*

The School Quality or Student Success Indicator in PRDE’s accountability system is a composite index that evaluates schools beyond academic proficiency by incorporating:

- Student Attendance
- Participation in state assessment
- PAA Results
- English Proficiency (3rd – 8th Grade)
- Promotion

These indicators provide a comprehensive assessment of school performance, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation of student engagement, language development, and postsecondary preparedness.

(i) Meaningful Differentiation in School Performance

This composite index differentiates school performance by:

- Chronic absenteeism as a predictor of academic success → Schools with higher attendance rates tend to demonstrate stronger academic performance and higher student engagement.
- English language proficiency in grades 3-8 → Schools with higher rates of English proficiency offer better language acquisition support, preparing students for future academic success.
- College readiness through College Board scores → Schools with higher College Board results demonstrate stronger academic rigor and student preparation for higher education.

By combining these metrics, PRDE ensures clear differentiation among schools, identifying both high-performing institutions and schools requiring targeted interventions.

(ii) Validity, Reliability, and Statewide Comparability

PRDE has selected these indicators because they meet the criteria for validity, reliability, and statewide comparability:

- Attendance and chronic absenteeism rates → Data is collected through Student Information System (SIE), providing real-time attendance tracking and ensuring statewide consistency.
- English language proficiency (grades 3-8) → Measured through the statewide CRECE-PR assessment, aligned with Puerto Rico Core Standards (PRCS).
- College Board results (grades 11-12) → Standardized assessment applied to all public high school students, allowing for accurate comparisons across schools and districts.

Each indicator has undergone rigorous evaluation by PRDE to ensure valid and reliable measures that meaningfully differentiate school performance.

(iii) Annual Measurement for All Students and Subgroups

The School Quality or Student Success Indicator is measured annually for all students and disaggregated for each required subgroup, including:

- All Students
- Puerto Rican Students
- Hispanic Not Puerto Rican
- White Not Hispanic
- Other Origin
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Students with Disabilities
- Spanish Learners (SLs)

Each metric is reported separately for all subgroups, allowing PRDE to identify achievement gaps and implement targeted interventions.

Example of Reported Data

The following table provides an example of real data collected by PRDE to assess school quality:

Table 16: SIE Incidents and Attendance

SIE Incidents 2023 - 24		
Violence Incidents	55	57.29%
Disability-Related Incidents	32	33.33%
Suspensions	6	6.25%
Total Incidents	96	

Attendance 2023 - 24	
Students with Chronic Absenteeism	7,770

These data points highlight the need for intervention in schools with high levels of disciplinary incidents and chronic absenteeism, as these factors directly impact student performance and school quality.

Calculation of the School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) Indicator

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) calculates the School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) composite indicator by averaging the scores of the measures that are available for each school. The SQSS indicator includes up to five statewide measures:

1. Student Attendance Rate
2. Assessment Participation Rate
3. English Language Proficiency (ELP) for Primary Level grades
4. College Readiness (PAA results) for Secondary Level grades
5. Promotion Rate

Student Attendance Rate

For the 2023–2024 academic year, the minimum number of days that school must be in session is 184 days. The student attendance rate is based on the number of days the student is absent from the days school is in session. Student attendance is defined as the number of school days in session in which a student is enrolled/registered during the annual reporting period from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. If a student misses 3 or more classes in 1 day, PRDE considers student absent for the school day.

School quality or student success will be reflected in the percentage of a school's student attendance in K–12 grade levels. A student who is not present for any reason, excused, unexcused or for disciplinary action is absent unless permitted by statute or regulation. Attendance rates for the purpose of school quality or student success under ESSA will be calculated based on the percentage of all students who were present (taking into account that student who did not miss 3 or more classes of the school day) and will factor in student subgroups.

PRDE believes student attendance provides important information about a school's culture and climate. In addition, for students with low attendance are more likely to drop out of school. When reporting data for school accountability, PRDE needs to ensure that the individual student attendance is as valid and reliable as possible. Historically, Puerto Rico has had challenges with attendance rates of both teachers and students. During 2015–2016, PRDE received a total of 833 referrals for students with low attendance rates. Given this, the PRDE has decided to give high significance to attendance when assessing schools, for students with low attendance are more likely to drop out of school.

For such reasons, the PRDE will require all schools to appoint personnel to take the role of registrars. The registrars will be responsible for monitoring data entry

in SIE, determine protocols to validate the data in SIE, and generate compliance reports on data entry to the SIE. SIE local administrators will perform random and periodic school supervision visits to the school director, focused on data entry to the SIE. The PRDE will have campaigns to disseminate the need for the data entered in SIE to ensure the accuracy of the attendance data.

Currently the student is present unless indicated otherwise in the SIE. The PRDE is analyzing the option to change the default so that it is null (neither absent nor present). This allows the educator to identify who is not passing the student's attendance to the SIE and monitor the admission of absences in the system. The PRDE will determine the corrective protocol, including consequences, for those who do not comply with the data validation rules in the SIE.

Assessment participation rate

Pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(E) of ESSA, all states are required annually to measure the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students in each student subgroup. When measuring, calculating, and reporting proficiency rates, states are required to include in the denominator the greater of 95 percent of all students (and of each student subgroup) or the number of students participating in the assessments.

Full participation in the assessment program is an important means to ensure that the public education system is delivering on the promise of high academic expectations and college and career readiness for each and every student. The validity of conclusions one can derive from assessment results is partially dependent on the percentage of students who participated in the assessment. For this reason, PRDE considered the CRECE assessment participation an important element of the accountability system. The participation rate is included as a component of the School Quality or Student Success Indicator

because low participation can be influenced by lack of communication, assessment misinformation, level of understanding about the purpose of the test, adult attitudes/perceptions about standardized testing in general, concerns about too much testing/loss of instructional time, student test anxiety and other school environment factors.

Participation rate is based on the CRECE assessment. The PRDE receives the CRECE data file from the testing vendor and calculates the participation rate as the number of students who participated in the CRECE assessment divided by the number of students enrolled in the assessed grades. The subjects that are considered in the calculation are Spanish, Math and English.

Participation Rate is calculated as follow:

$$\text{Participation rate} = \frac{\# \text{ students who participated in CRECE assessment}}{\# \text{ of students enrolled in the assessed grades}}$$

English Proficiency Rate

PRDE will use the proficiency scores from the English as a Second Language portion of the CRECE assessment as a component of the School Quality or Student Success Indicator, for public elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools. PRDE will ensure consistency in the application of this indicator for all students in grades 3rd through 8th. All students in grades 3-8 take the English as a Second Language assessment. The inclusion of this indicator allows the use of testing results on an annual basis that could be used with all students and also disaggregated for each subgroup. Progress will be based on meeting the percentage of proficiencies in English content areas, by attaining an achievement gap reduction of 10% each year.

For all subgroups, the proficiency percentage will be calculated and compared with the expected outcome for each subgroup for each year as a uniform procedure across these schools.

There are numerous reasons why PRDE believes performance on the English as a Second Language assessment is an appropriate indicator for school quality or student success. Historically, PRDE has found that teaching English to students has been a challenge. Currently, the vast majority of Puerto Ricans recognize that the modern world requires the knowledge of several languages to face the economic and social challenges of a competitive and globalized market. PRDE believes it is important that all students become proficient in English in order to ensure their success in school and post school years.

Recent initiatives also support this goal. The EDUINGLÉS Intensive Program, initiated in 2021, seeks to transform curricular practices related to the teaching of English in the classroom, while also improving implementation operations and the transfer of knowledge. Professional development under EDUINGLÉS provides teachers with greater exposure to the English language during daily instruction. Based on data obtained from academic achievement results, there is clear evidence of the need to strengthen English proficiency levels among Puerto Rico's public-school students. With this purpose, the program is designed to impact approximately 90,000 students.

The EDUINGLÉS Intensive Program also supports teachers holding transitory status in English by providing them with the necessary coursework to obtain certification. From 2021 to 2025, approximately 280 English teachers have participated in this project

English Proficiency Rate as a component of school quality or student success indicator is calculated as follow:.

$$\text{Proficiency Rate} = \frac{\# \text{Proficient students in English test}}{\# \text{Participating students in English test}}$$

*The denominator includes the greater of **95 percent of all students** (or 95 percent of students in each subgroup, as the case may be) or **the number of students participating in the assessments.**

College Board’s Results as Alternate Indicators

PRDE will use College Board’s results as a component of the School Quality or Student Success Indicator, for public high schools. PRDE will ensure consistency in the application of this indicator for all students in grades 11th and 12th. The inclusion of this indicator allows the use of testing results on an annual basis that could be used with all students and also disaggregated for each subgroup.

Since 1964, the Puerto Rico Department of Education has used College Board’s PEAU tests to support students’ transition from high school to higher education institutions in Puerto Rico. “Las Pruebas de Evaluación y Admisión Universitaria” (PEAU), are more than a criterion for admission to accredited university institutions in Puerto Rico. The PEAU, like SAT, is a test that assesses reasoning ability (verbal, math) of high school students applying to college in Puerto Rico. The PEAU has been specially designed for Spanish-speaking populations and has been validated in multiple Spanish speaking countries. The PEAU is required by ALL universities in Puerto Rico and is used by prestigious public and private universities in 11 Latin American countries.

Both the PEAU and SAT share theoretical principles, format, and methodology, and the 200–800 scale. Cumulative validity evidence throughout its history has continuously shown PEAU scores as uniform, reliable and vital measures for admission processes and placement into first- or second-year college

coursework, with multiple predictive studies across institutions in PR presenting its ability to predict college performance –specifically, first year college GPA (FYGPA)– over and above high school GPA (HSGPA). Moreover, the examination of the relationships between the PEAU results with grades in the matching coursework domains in higher education have shown a strong positive relationship, suggesting that the PEAU is sensitive to instruction in Spanish, Mathematics and English. Given its rigorous test development process –which requires that all test forms are built using a to a common set of content and statistical specifications, allowing the creation of comparable tests– and the use of statistical score equating procedures that ensure that scores and subscores reported to students have the same meaning, in terms of achievement, regardless of which form a student takes, continuous use of College Board’s PEAU provides a proven and standardized mean for assessing readiness for and success in postsecondary education.

For the most recent redesign of the PEAU, which was launched in October 2017, the College Board carefully examined what the best available evidence indicated were the essential prerequisites in reading, writing, language, and mathematics for readiness for and success in post-secondary education. This evidence, along with extensive feedback from K-12 and higher education experts, was critical to shaping the design of the assessment, hereto referred as the revised PAA. It is expected that this new assessment will provide even more information about the degree of college readiness of students, and thus critical for evidenced-based educational interventions and high-stakes decision that can be undertaken the PRDE.

Calculation of the College Board Results as a component of the school quality or student success indicator

The maximum points that students can achieve in the College Board tests is 2,400. In order to calculate a score for the school, student’s’ points were

averaged. School's maximum score is 2,400 as same as for each student. College Board Results as a component of school quality indicator is calculated as a percentage, dividing the school averaged score by 2,400 (maximum score).

College Board Results as a component of the school quality indicator is calculated dividing average school score per student by 2400 (maximum score)

$$\text{College Board Results per school} = \frac{\text{School Averaged Score}}{2400}$$

Where,

$$\text{School Averaged Score} = \frac{\text{Total student's points}}{\text{Total number of students}}$$

Annually, testing results are disaggregated for all the accountability subgroups and for all students. College Board results are also calculated at school, district and island wide levels.

Each measure is scored on a standardized scale from 0 to 100. The composite SQSS score for a school is calculated as the simple average of the scores of the applicable measures available. If a school does not have data for one or more of the applicable measures (e.g., does not have the minimum n-size to be calculated), the final SQSS score is based only on the available components for that school.

This approach ensures equity across schools with different configurations and grade levels, while maintaining consistent accountability statewide.

v. Annual Meaningful Differentiation (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C))

a. Describe the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the State, consistent with the requirements

of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA, including a description of (i) how the system is based on all indicators in the State's accountability system, (ii) for all students and for each subgroup of students. Note that each state must comply with the requirements in 1111(c)(5) of the ESEA with respect to accountability for charter schools.

The PRDE has been implementing a differentiated accountability model based on the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA. PRDE's new accountability system provides increased transparency by allowing PRDE to set and track progress toward ambitious new long-term goals. PRDE's new accountability system, as defined in its ESSA plan will facilitate them, identify comprehensive and targeted schools and customize support to non-categorized Title I schools. PRDE's accountability system under ESSA is based on four elements: coherence, comprehensiveness, freedom from bias, and fairness. Each element of the system should logically relate to better school performance, and the accumulation of elements should adequately focus on interest.

b. Describe the weighting of each indicator in the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation, including how the Academic Achievement, Other Academic, Graduation Rate, and Progress in ELP indicators each receive substantial weight individually and, in the aggregate, much greater weight than the School Quality or Student Success indicator(s), in the aggregate.

PRDE accountability system assigns weights to indicators in a way that emphasizes the primacy of academic outcomes while ensuring a balanced reflection of school quality. Academic Achievement is weighted at 40%, the highest share, because proficiency in core subjects such as Math and Spanish

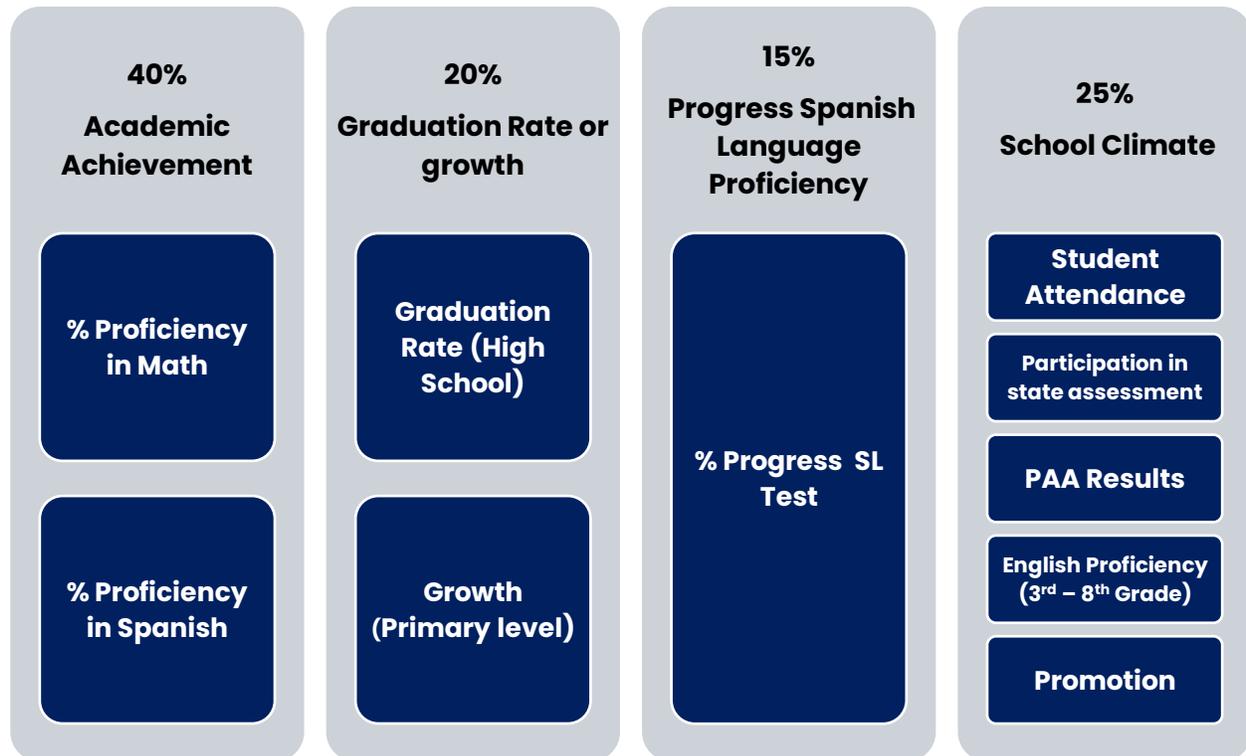
provides the strongest evidence of student learning and readiness for advanced study. The Graduation Rate or growth (20%) further reinforces long-term student success by measuring both secondary completion and early-level progress.

In addition, Progress in Spanish Language Proficiency (15%) is highlighted as a distinct indicator, acknowledging the central role of language acquisition in academic advancement and equitable access to the curriculum. Together, these three academic indicators account for 75% of the total system weight, thereby exceeding federal ESSA requirements that academic measures carry substantial weight.

To complement these measures, School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) (25%) incorporates additional non-academic but essential dimensions of student experience, such as attendance, and promotion rates. While these are assigned a smaller share relative to academic indicators, their inclusion ensures a more comprehensive view of student and school performance. This weighting structure not only ensures meaningful differentiation among schools, but also promotes fairness, transparency, and alignment with the State's mission of advancing both academic rigor and holistic student success.

PRDE has established the following weight distribution for indicators in its accountability system:

PRDE's Accountability Model



c. If the States uses a different methodology or methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in 4.v.a. above for schools for which an accountability determination cannot be made (e.g., P-2 schools), describe the different methodology or methodologies, indicating the type(s) of schools to which it applies.

In compliance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the classifications of Puerto Rico schools are Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI). These classifications are mandatory and maintained

as part of the accountability system. However, to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the improvement plans, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) proposes an adjustment in the exit criteria. Below are the classifications and entry criteria:

vi. Identification of Schools (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D))

a. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools.

Describe the State’s methodology for identifying not less than the lowest-performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I, Part A, funds in the State for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

School at the bottom 5% of the total composite score (all indicators) calculated for all students. Schools with graduation rates less than 67%. School identified as in need of TSI and ATSI for three or more consecutive years (chronically low performing). PRDE determines this by using the results of the state annual test to determine performance of schools using the pre-established indicators.

In compliance with ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I), the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools are identified for CSI status.

Due to the non-administration of META-PR (state assessment) in two consecutive years (2019–2020 and 2020–2021), PRDE received a waiver and reinstated the accountability model in 2021–2022 with adjustments. These included shifting long-term goals forward by two years, substituting the growth indicator with science proficiency for non-high schools in 2021–2022., and omitting data from the waived years when evaluating exit criteria.

Cohort 1 includes schools initially identified in 2019–2020 based on 2018–2019 data and continued in improvement status.

Cohort 2 includes schools identified for the first time in 2021–2022, maintaining their status for three years.

Cohort 3 includes schools classified in 2022–2023.

b. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools.

Describe the State’s methodology for identifying all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one third or more of their students for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

All public high schools, regardless of Title I status, with a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate below 67% are identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), as required under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(II). PRDE began identifying these schools in school year 2023–2024 based on four-year cohort graduation rate data. Identified schools remain in CSI status for a minimum of three years and are evaluated annually to determine continued eligibility or exit status, based on demonstrated improvement.

c. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools.

Describe the methodology by which the State identifies public schools in the State receiving Title I, Part A funds that have received additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C) (based on identification as a school in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)) and that have not satisfied the statewide exit criteria for such schools within a

State-determined number of years, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

The PRDE will identify ATSI schools by the end of June 2023 using 2023–2024 school year data and will remain in this classification status for a minimum of three years, period in which PRDE will identify again such schools. If the school remains in ATSI classification after three years, the school will be reclassified as CSI. The PRDE believes that this three-year span is necessary to ensure that interventions take place and become part of the school culture.

The school must demonstrate an effective sustainability plan for the progress that it has made. This plan must explain how the school will maintain a strong rate of growth and change while addressing how the school intends to ensure sustainability with reduced services, support and/or funding.

Schools that have not satisfied the exit criteria may be required to implement any one or more of the following interventions: replacing school staff, restarting the school as a Partnership school (i.e. schools with an alliance with nonprofit organizations, IHEs, etc.) or closing the school and enrolling students in higher-performing schools.

Alternative Methodology for Schools Without Sufficient Data for Annual Meaningful Differentiation

In compliance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Puerto Rico classifies its public schools into the following accountability categories: Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI), and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI). These classifications apply to all schools with sufficient data and are based on composite performance scores, graduation rates, and subgroup performance.

However, for schools that do not have sufficient data to calculate performance indicators for AMD (e.g., schools serving grades P–2 or extremely small schools), PRDE will apply an alternate methodology to ensure inclusion in the accountability system.

This alternate methodology may include:

- Maintaining the school’s previous accountability designation until sufficient data are available.
- Applying a school-specific review process to assign a provisional status.

PRDE is also exploring the future implementation of a more comprehensive framework for evaluating schools with insufficient data. This may include collecting qualitative and contextual information (e.g., surveys, absenteeism rates, staff turnover) and establishing a school-level risk index to support more nuanced and equitable classification decisions. Such actions would require formal protocols, trained personnel, and interdepartmental coordination.

These procedures ensure that all schools—including those with limited or missing data—remain part of Puerto Rico’s statewide accountability system, while upholding fairness and methodological integrity.

d. Frequency of Identification. *Provide, for each type of school identified for comprehensive support and improvement, the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. Note that these schools must be identified at least once every three years.*

The PRDE will review all schools annually. Targeted Support and Improvement Schools will be identified annually. Additional Targeted Support and Comprehensive Support Schools will be notified annually of their results as a

monitoring measure but will be reclassified every three years. Schools that have been previously classified as comprehensive support schools can be re-identified if they fail to continue their improvements after meeting the exit criteria. In addition, each school will have a Report Card that tracks progress on interim indicators as discussed above.

e. Targeted Support and Improvement. *Describe the State’s methodology for annually identifying any school with one or more “consistently underperforming” subgroups of students, based on all indicators in the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation, including the definition used by the State to determine consistent underperformance. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii))*

School with at least one subgroup, with minimum 10 students, at the bottom 10% of the total composite score (all indicators) of their subgroup. The methodology that the PRDE used to identify schools receiving Title I, Part A funds that have received targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C) is as follows: Once the Comprehensive Schools are identified, the remaining schools are evaluated based on the performance of subgroups. Schools are to be identified as in need of “targeted support and improvement” if they have one or more subgroups of students underperforming. If a school with at least one subgroup, with a minimum 10 students, is at the bottom 10% of their subgroup’s base on the composite scores, it is classified as TSI. For those schools in the elementary and middle level, composite score is based on the following indicators: - Academic achievement - Growth - Progress toward Spanish language proficiency (if applicable), and - Composite Indicator for School Quality While for high schools, the composite score are based on the following indicators: - Academic achievement - Graduation Rate - Progress toward Spanish language proficiency (if applicable), and - Composite Indicator for

School Quality The PRDE will identify TSI schools by the end of fall of the 2025–2026 school year using 2024–2025 school year data and will remain in this classification status for a minimum of three years, period in which PRDE will identify again such schools.

f. Additional Targeted Support. *Describe the State’s methodology, for identifying schools in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D), including the year in which the State will first identify such schools and the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. (ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)–(D))*

School from the pool of TSI, that is below the 5th percentile performance on the composite score (all indicators) calculated for all students. The methodology that the PRDE used to identify schools receiving Title I, Part A funds that have received additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C) is as follows: From the pool of TSI schools PRDE will identify as ATSI those schools that have at least one student subgroup, whose overall performance, based on all applicable indicators and in accordance with the weighting system described in section 4.1.D(ii), is at or below the 5th percentile of Title I schools. In other words, a school with at least one subgroup, with a minimum of 10 students, that is below the 5th percentile performance on the composite score used to identify a CSI school will be classified as ATSI. The PRDE will identify ATSI schools by the end of fall of the 2025–2026 school year using 2024–2025 school year data and will remain in this classification status for a minimum of three years, period in which PRDE will identify again such schools. If the school remains in ATSI classification after three years, the school will be reclassified as CSI.

g. Additional Statewide Categories of Schools. *If the State chooses, at its discretion, to include additional statewide categories of schools, describe those categories.*

Puerto Rico has no additional statewide categories.

vii. Annual Measurement of Achievement (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(E)(iii)): *Describe how the State factors the requirement for 95 percent student participation in statewide mathematics and reading/language arts assessments into the statewide accountability system.*

Pursuant to Section 1111(c)(4)(E) of ESSA, all states are required annually to measure the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students in each student subgroup. When measuring, calculating, and reporting proficiency rates, states are required to include in the denominator the greater of 95 percent of all students (and of each student subgroup) or the number of students participating in the assessments. PRDE maintains its student enrollment in a statewide student information system. It also calculates and report state assessment participation rates for all schools and districts and disaggregated groups. In accordance with ESSA and to maintain a valid system of school accountability, all students who are enrolled in grades three through eight and eleven are required to participate in testing. School report cards include clear and explicit reporting of student participation on state assessments and will clearly indicate on the school report card instances when the participation falls below 95 percent for all students or any subgroup. Participation rate is factored in the calculation of the statewide accountability system, because PRDE has established it as a component of the School Quality Indicator. The data used to obtain this component is the number of students participating in the CRECE-PR. Considering that participation rate is a component of the School Quality

Indicator, obtaining a low percent participation will affect the final composite score to identify CSI and TSI schools. If the school fails to meet the participation rate for two consecutive years, the PRDE will require each school to submit a plan that includes strategies for meeting participation requirements.

viii. Continued Support for School and LEA Improvement (ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A))

a. Exit Criteria for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. *Describe the statewide exit criteria, established by the State, for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement, including the number of years (not to exceed four) over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.*

High schools with a graduation rate of more than 67% for two consecutive years. No longer being identified as part of the lowest 5% of schools. A school identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), whether due to overall low performance or for not exiting ATSI status, will be eligible to exit after a period of three years only if it demonstrates measurable improvement from the point of identification. Improvement must be evidenced by an increase in the school's accountability index or, in the case of high schools, by achieving a graduation rate above 67% for two consecutive years. Additionally, the school must no longer fall within the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools. This ensures alignment with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I) of ESSA and supports continuous progress and accountability. PRDE will evaluate these criteria annually and will document the review and determination process for each school seeking exit from CSI status.

b. Exit Criteria for Schools Receiving Additional Targeted Support. *Describe the statewide exit criteria, established*

by the State, for schools to receive an additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C), including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.

To align with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) establishes the following statewide exit criteria for schools identified for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI):

- 1) The school must demonstrate measurable academic improvement in the performance of the identified subgroup(s) compared to the point of identification, based on the applicable accountability indicators (e.g., proficiency, graduation rate, SQSS).
- 2) The identified subgroup(s) must no longer be among the bottom 5% of subgroup performance statewide for two consecutive school years.
- 3) The school must not be re-identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) during those same two consecutive years.
- 4) The school must develop and implement a sustainability plan that documents the effective strategies and supports contributing to the improvement and outlines how these efforts will be maintained post-exit.

These exit criteria ensure that a school's departure from ATSI status reflects sustained academic progress and improved outcomes for the identified student subgroup(s), in compliance with ESSA requirements.

c. More Rigorous Interventions. Describe the more rigorous interventions required for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to meet the State's exit criteria within a State-

determined number of years consistent with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I) of the ESEA.

Comprehensive Restructuring

The PRDE has initiated a comprehensive data collection effort to understand the specific situations in each of our school communities. To address schools that have been chronically underperforming for years and shown a longstanding academic achievement need, PRDE has set as a goal to move students to more productive learning environment and/or combine schools that are “Excellent” so that more students can benefit from effective instructional practices. The goal of this restructuring is intended to improve academic outcomes and better align resources. All strategies selected and implemented for Comprehensive Support will be based on comprehensive needs assessment as required.

Close/consolidate ineffective schools

A large portion of our effort will include school closures like what is considered as part of a school improvement strategy for SIG schools. The PRDE school improvement effort includes efforts to close low-performing schools and consolidate schools by sending students to other, higher-performing schools, schools with the capacity to achieve positive outcomes, and schools that have sufficient enrollment to support cost-effective implementation of new academic programs. The PRDE developed this strategy based on research that has shown positive results closing schools and moving students to other schools and/or reopening the school with new staff.

Additionally, research suggests that this strategy is particularly effective in districts that face declining student enrollment. Student enrollment in Puerto Rico has been declining in recent years, approximately 20,000 students per year.

Conversion to Charter School

PRDE currently implements the Charter School Program under act 85-2018 named Public Schools Alliances provides for the identification of underperforming schools and their conversion into charter schools. An annual RFP is performed to determine eligible administrators for these schools to provide specific services for the needs of identified schools. These schools will be monitored by PRDE's Charter School office and as public schools will be subject to all assessments administered to regular schools in the PRDE.

Engage External Evaluators

PRDE will identify an external partner to conduct qualitative needs assessments and proposed corrective action plans at both the school and district levels. The PRDE will work with IHEs and other external partners to develop local, effective, and cost-efficient external evaluators and evaluation systems and will work collaboratively with the LEA/school to examine the findings of the needs assessment and provide support in the development of an appropriate and actionable improvement plan. Evaluations will consider the qualitative needs assessments will examine previous school improvement efforts/plans, programs, strategies, initiatives, instructional practices, assessments, staffing, systems development, and all factors that were intended to bring about change in that school. This will also include an assessment of the leadership capacity/competency at the school and district level.

d. Resource Allocation Review. Describe how the State will periodically review resource allocation to support school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

PRDE follows the requirements under ESEA Section 1003(h) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.100(a)(2), which prohibit reducing an LEA's Title I allocation below the previous year's level when reserving funds for school improvement. As a result, only LEAs that receive an increase in their Title I funding compared to the prior year contribute to the state's school improvement fund. This means that if PRDE receives a reduction in a subsequent Title I-A allocation the reserve for school improvement may be reduced in order to comply with the rule.

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) currently implements a structured work plan strategy to assess the effectiveness of resources allocated to schools participating in the school improvement program. This strategy ensures that federal funds are used efficiently to support schools in need of intervention and improvement.

During the 2019–2020 school year, PRDE established the *Manual for Projects Financed with Federal Funds*, which provides a comprehensive structure and procedural framework for submitting work plans. These work plans are developed to address the specific needs of individual schools and administrative regions, ensuring that allowable activities align with the overarching goals of school improvement efforts.

In the case of school improvement initiatives, work plans are submitted by each of the seven administrative regions of PRDE. These plans detail the needs of schools identified under the following federal designations:

- **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)** – Schools requiring the most intensive interventions due to low overall performance.

- **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)** – Schools with specific subgroups of students performing at levels requiring additional targeted support.
- **Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)** – Schools where specific student subgroups have consistently demonstrated underperformance.

Each work plan includes a thorough needs assessment for underperforming schools, which directly correlates with the evidence-based activities outlined in subsequent sections. The plans are designed to be dynamic and adaptive, allowing for modifications throughout the implementation process to address emerging challenges and evolving needs.

Additionally, the progress and effectiveness of the work plans are systematically evaluated through monitoring activities. These monitoring mechanisms are structured to measure key performance indicators, assess the implementation of evidence-based interventions, and ensure compliance with federal guidelines.

To maintain accountability and continuous improvement, these plans are subject to annual renewal and revision. Each work plan has a duration of one calendar year, after which a new and revised plan must be submitted. The updated work plan must incorporate a fresh needs assessment and revised activities that specifically address the ongoing and emerging challenges faced by schools requiring interventions under the school improvement program.

The implementation of school improvement plans is closely monitored by both the Office of Federal Affairs and the Subsecretary of Academic Affairs to ensure that allocated resources are being used effectively and yielding measurable improvements in student outcomes. PRDE's financial system includes an early

warning mechanism to detect delays in federally funded projects. This system helps ensure that school improvement funds are used efficiently and that potential issues in implementation are addressed promptly to maximize the use of available resources. Through this process, PRDE aims to foster sustainable school improvement strategies that directly impact student achievement and overall school performance.

e. Technical Assistance. Describe the technical assistance the State will provide to each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

Risk Management. The PRDE has designed a consolidated risk assessment procedure aligned with the internal controls recommended by the Government Accountability Office, to determine the schools and districts that require the most attention and are based on past and current performance of meeting the Title I program requirements. This process and framework will be implemented in lower performing schools over a three-year monitoring cycle. The state office will use the risk assessment to identify and monitor the progress of each school receiving Title I funds, especially those who have been challenging in the past based on the risk assessment, schools that have repeatedly struggled, have large enrollment due to consolidation of schools, and have new directors. A state designed uniform monitoring process has been established outlining the procedures and guidelines utilized to monitor the progress of the schools with lowest achievement %. Monitoring is performed by the **Technical Assistance**. Currently, the PRDE offers a variety of support to schools and Districts that includes on-site technical assistance; off-site networking sessions; guidance documents and templates to support needs assessment, improvement planning, and monitoring. Examples of these include Digital PR: Is a platform where a diversity of resources and tools are made available to schools'

teachers. By accessing <https://dedigital.dde.pr/>, teachers may reach to additional information over Planning, Team Teaching, PBL, STEM, among other initiatives implemented by the PRDE. Teachers also have access to guidelines over the process and evaluation forms that PRDE uses to measure teacher performance. The platform includes a section where teachers may access various training videos, related to reading activity ideas, staff development activities, among others. The platform also allows Teachers to upload documents and resources they want to share with their colleagues. Technical assistance. Through a collaborative effort from the Auxiliary Secretariat of Academic Affairs and the Auxiliary Secretariat of Federal Affairs personnel, technical assistance teams committees composed of representatives of Central Level, Regional LEA personnel meet monthly to coordinate oversight and support activities and identify the appropriate support needed to enable school improvement goals. PRDE has also funded SIT teams and technology teams, where these assist the School Director in the periodic review and updating of the DEE so that it is available to all PRDE officials and the School Community. Every year, the Title I Program provides technical assistance to schools in the development of their School Improvement Plan, which summarizes its objectives and goals for the school year. The plan is based on a comprehensive needs assessment that includes information on teachers' professional development priorities, need of resources and the instructional practices that are needed. Our technical assistance to Regional LEAs and schools, included a series of workshops and orientations related to DEE development, use of Title I school-wide funds and other program requirements and internal controls. Schools are to develop their DEE based on the results presented in the School Report card. Information included in the School Report Card is from prior year CRECE-PR scores having to do with academic achievement, the whole child, and teachers allowing schools to measure progress, issue progress reports, and establish priorities based on those needs to produce activities to close the gap in their DEE. **Monitoring Process** PRDE also

uses monitoring visits to identify areas where technical assistances are necessary. PRDE's monitoring process focuses on meeting program quality as well as compliance with federal requirements. Activities include Monitoring a representative sample of schools each year to ensure that these schools are receiving the support they need to meet the needs of second language learner students. Reviewing interventions to ensure the causes of their performance challenges are addressed. Analyzing progress reports on schools, including data use and teacher planning. Reviewing district implementation plans. Reviewing district-level plans to Ensure Districts meet result in systemic change in the school and improve the quality of leadership, improved teacher quality, professional development, alignment and sequencing of the curriculum, and parental involvement and school community. Providing oversight of fiscal and programmatic aspects of school improvement initiatives funded through 1003 (a) funds. Monitors send a referral to the applicable program or division, to notify needs for improvement in any specific area. The Title I Program and personnel from the regions and districts are responsible for reviewing the results from the interventions performed to the schools. With this information, PRDE can modify the services offered to the school or apply more rigorous interventions to obtain better results. The PRDE monitoring process is designed to facilitate the development of a culture of ongoing communication within schools, between schools, between schools, between schools, between schools, between districts and regions, and in the public education system of PRDE. The effective use of trained staff, monitoring tools, trained staff, and established monitoring calendars facilitate monitoring activities. The training provided for monitoring staff and the monitoring instruments used to conduct the monitoring address both the compliance and fiscal elements of compliance for the Title I program.

f. Additional Optional Action. *If applicable, describe the action the State will take to initiate additional improvement in any LEA with a*

significant number or percentage of schools that are consistently identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement and are not meeting exit criteria established by the State or in any LEA with a significant number or percentage of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.

Teacher Recertification Programs. The purpose of the Teaching Certifications Division is to interpret, administer and enforce the laws and regulations to certify teachers in public and private schools in Puerto Rico, guaranteeing the right of every aspiring teacher to obtain the Regular Certificate for which it was formally prepared. The PRDE has regulations in place to carry out these processes. The current regulations provide, in general terms, three possible routes for obtaining a regular certification as follows: Traditional Route: Way to obtain a regular certificate as teacher, having completed an academic degree in education and fulfilling the certification requirements established by the Regulation, in the category that the candidate wishes to be certified. Certification courses must be part of the academic programs authorized by the Higher Education Council of PR (CESPR, acronym in Spanish) to the institution of higher education. The traditional route certification requires: a baccalaureate degree in education with a specialty (and a minimum of 21 credits) in a specific academic area; course of methodology for teaching this subject; a course of teaching practice in the area to be certified or its equivalent; to approve the corresponding Teacher Certification Test (PCMAS, acronym in Spanish); to approve a course related to the nature of the exceptional child, including the concepts of technological assistance and inclusion; to approve a course on the integration of technology in education; to approve a course of History of Puerto Rico; to approve a course of History of United States; GPA and specialty point average of not less than 3.00; Recertification Route: The way to obtain a regular certificate as teacher, when the candidate already has a regular teacher certificate and meets the

requirements of another certification, established by the regulations in the category in which the candidate wishes to be certified. The courses for recertification should be part of the academic programs authorized by the CESPR to the institution of higher education. Certification via recertification route requires regular teacher certification; a lower concentration (18 university credits at the undergraduate, graduate or combination of both levels), including a course on teaching methodology in the area of recertification; to:

5. Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)): *Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the SEA with respect to such description.*

Unlike the continental United States, where minorities are determined based on ethnic and racial backgrounds, in Puerto Rico, most students are Hispanic, and no such distinctions are made for educational purposes. Therefore, the PRDE defines students with high special needs that belong to at least one of the following groups as minority: 1. students with disabilities 2. students with Spanish language limitations 3. immigrant students, and 4. highly talented students. For the purposes of this equity plan, PRDE uses school-level data and student data to analyze and calculate potential gaps in each of the three regulatory metrics: non-qualified teachers, teachers teaching out of their academic preparation and teachers without experience.

To align with federal definitions and requirements, the PRDE adopts the following terminology:

- **Ineffective teacher:** A teacher rated as “ineffective” in the official summative teacher evaluation conducted by PRDE.

- Out-of-field teacher: A teacher assigned to a subject or grade level outside of the academic preparation or certification area for which they are qualified under PRDE guidelines.
- Inexperienced teacher: A teacher with fewer than three years of experience in a K–12 public school setting.

The PRDE maintains a secure, public accountability dashboard called Perfil del Docente (Teacher Profile), which is updated annually. This dashboard includes detailed data on educator credentials, certification types (provisional, regular, blank), certification renewal status, years of experience, employment status, and academic degrees. It also allows filtering by region, school, and position category.

Access to this dashboard is restricted to educational leaders at the central level, the Regional Educational Offices, and school principals. This access policy complies with local regulations protecting the confidentiality and privacy of teacher-level information. The data are used to monitor and evaluate disparities in teacher assignments and ensure that low-income and minority students are not disproportionately taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

Also, to ensure transparency and meet ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B) requirements, PRDE will annually publish aggregated data on ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers in the School Report Card.

The following table presents the distribution of schools by level for the 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 academic years, illustrating changes in the number of schools at the primary, secondary, and specialized levels.

Table 17: Distribution by Level: 2023–2024 and 2024–2025

Level	Schools 2023–24	Schools 2024–25
Primary	564	572
PS -Institute	5	5
PS - others	3	3
Secondary	147	153
All levels	146	137
Total	865	870

The table below provides an overview of certified student enrollment from the 2021–2022 to 2024–2025 academic years, along with the percentage of students attending schools classified as low-poverty institutions.

Table 18: Certified Enrollment and Percentage of Low-Poverty Level Students (2021–2025)

Year	Certified enrollment MI	Low Poverty Level
2021–2022	259,535	
2022–2023	250,665	
2023–2024	240,910	81.80%
2024–2025	235,819	84.90%

6. School Conditions (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(C)): Describe how the SEA agency will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A to improve school conditions for student learning, including through reducing: (i) incidences of bullying and harassment; (ii) the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and (iii) the use of

aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS). The PRDE has also implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) Plan which manages inappropriate behaviors that affect school climate, to foster an environment conducive to learning and to increase student achievement. The PRDE's intention with the implementation of plan is to address behavioral problems and violence faced in schools. As mentioned above, PBIS is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. The interagency collaboration was established, and agreements were reached with agencies and entities that should begin to develop programs and workshops on harassment, bullying and abuse. The PRDE has preliminary identified that it will use the fund assignment to provide services in the following areas: Training for school directors to empower them in the processes established in the agency's public policy on prevention. This will be accomplished by establishing new plans where teachers are trained to recognize such cases and learn strategies to resolve behaviors in the classrooms and how to communicate the concerns to receive extra support from their directors and their school's staff. The PRDE believes that students should remain in the classroom to avoid suffering academically or socially.

7. School Transitions (ESEA section IIII(g)(1)(D)): *Describe how the State will support LEAs receiving assistance under Title I, Part A in meeting the needs of students at all levels of schooling (particularly students in the middle grades and high school), including how the State will work with such LEAs to provide effective transitions of students to middle grades and high school to decrease the risk of students dropping out.*

Middle Schools Student face many challenges during their transition from middle to high school; it is a time, physical, emotional, and cognitive changes, as well as an increased desire for independence from parents. During this time of transition, students may develop lower self-esteem and fears about new social circumstances, often resulting in anxiety and negative behaviors. This may result in demonstrating diminished engagement and attendance by the end of their first middle school year. Due to behavior problems, suspensions and expulsions are higher in ninth grade than any other high school grade level and are a significant setback for students. Therefore, loss of instructional time because of suspension and expulsions may contribute to academic failure. In 2014, Puerto Rico established the 37 Act to create the “Scholar Retention Program” under the Department of Education. As a reinforcement of this law, PRDE established CC 16 2013–2014 regarding School Retention. The purpose of the UNARE (Unidad de Atención para la Retención Escolar, acronym in Spanish) unit is to impact those students who are at risk of dropping out and showed patterns of absenteeism and class failures in the last school year and reduce school dropout. Some of the patterns are tardiness and unjustified class breaks, low academic achievement school failure or possible school failure chronological ages, with inadequate relationships among its members other situations that may be school dropout factors. Some of the keys to the effectiveness of the UNARE project are visits to homes to closely observe the real needs of these students and their family, as well as follow-up visits. Also, UNARE has as a priority to reinsert the student in the school’s system or in programs whose purpose is for the student to complete his post-secondary studies. The services are offered with the help of an interdisciplinary team composed of social workers, professional counselors, psychologists, clerical typists and administrative assistants in each of the educational regions.

B. Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

1. Supporting Needs of Migratory Children (ESEA section 1304(b)(1)): *Describe how, in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and projects assisted under Title I, Part C, the State and its local operating agencies will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, are identified and addressed through:*
 - i. The full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs.
 - ii. Joint planning among local, State, and Federal educational programs serving migratory children, including language instruction educational programs under Title III, Part A;
 - iii. The integration of services available under Title I, Part C with services provided by those other programs; and
 - iv. Measurable program objectives and outcomes.

2. Promote Coordination of Services (ESEA section 1304(b)(3)): *Describe how the State will use Title I, Part C funds received under this part to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the State will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year.*

3. Use of Funds (ESEA section 1304(b)(4)): *Describe the State's priorities for the use of Title I, Part C funds, and how such priorities relate to the State's assessment of needs for services in the State.*

C. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

1. **Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs** (ESEA section 1414(a)(1)(B)): *Provide a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.*

The PRDE Title I, Part D program provides supplemental educational services and other support to children and youth in juvenile institutions and correctional facilities to provide services that will assist students in making a successful transition between correctional facilities and locally operated programs. As stated in ESEA section 1414(a)(1)(B), the services included within this provision are related to meeting the educational needs of neglected, delinquent, and at-risk children and youth and to integrate with other programs under this Act, as deemed appropriate. In 2017-2018 academic year, PRDE implemented a Correctional School System. This system is part of the Department of Education, and it is responsible for implementing or adjusting the initiatives that meet the needs of its participants, including the transition between correctional facilities and locally operated programs. The Correctional School System ensures that students entering a correctional or juvenile facility are provided with appropriate levels of instruction and coursework, including contextualized learning and entrepreneurial skills; continue earning credits to obtain their regular high school diploma or its equivalent and make a successful transition to postsecondary education, career and technical education, or employment. To effectively achieve a successful relationship between correctional facilities and locally operated programs, the program offers its participants services from educators, social workers, counselors, and other professional personnel that oversee providing different services related to the transition process for each of

the participants. Some of these activities are: Also, upon entrance to a juvenile institution or correctional facility, each student is provided with a diagnostic test to identify the student's academic needs, allowing the program to better provide the appropriate educational services based on an individual student's specific needs, thus providing eligible students with the same opportunities for academic success as their peers in traditional public schools. Also, personnel of the correctional institution (counselors and social workers) assist the youth with the reentry necessary steps, as processing records transfer to the public and private schools, universities and institutes so that the young people continue studying in their reentry to the community. As an outreach event, the program coordinates the Parent Encounters, which consists of a parent activity where tools are offered to better assist students with their academic improvement and keeping healthy self-esteem. These consist of focused discussions of outreach strategies, trust building, communication mechanisms, and family support services. The program work with children and youth who were school dropouts before entering the correctional or juvenile facility so that youth and children are encouraged to return to school upon completion of the term of imprisonment or provide the child or youth with the skills necessary to obtain employment, continue their education or obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent if the child or youth does not wish to return to school. To achieve this, the program has established a follow-up for its program graduates where it communicates through telephone calls and through Community Social Work. The personnel (counselor, teacher, social worker) prepare an exit plan jointly with participants, to ensure that all graduates have a plan when leaving the facility that contemplates continuity of studies through technical institutes or universities. It completes for each young participant a document: entitled: Follow-up in the Transition Process, where it documents the follow-up given to the

young graduates for 90 days. Also, communication links (i.e. emails, phone calls, mail) are created with the people who will receive them at their place of housing upon leaving. It also follows up to young people who are transferred to another correctional institution in order to help them to continue studying in a new institution. Letters are sent (correspondence to the places where the young people indicated that they were going to live) to inquire about their educational future. For the occupational and technical education part, the Agency promotes that the secondary and post-secondary levels meet the standards of excellence that ensure the recognition of the community as an alternative to study, in compliance with the provisions of the Federal Law Carl D. Perkins. During their stay at the facility, the PRDE will offer a sequence of courses providing students with the academic and technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and for careers in current or emerging employment sectors. Through classroom activities, students will be able to develop higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, improve work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills.

2. **Program Objectives and Outcomes (ESEA section 1414(a)(2)(A)):**
Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the State that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Title I, Part D program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program.

The Neglected and Delinquent program objectives and outcomes have been established to achieve the goal of providing both support and educational services to children and youth who have been placed in a local or state secure care institution. Objectives include providing supplemental services to this population and promoting student success

at meeting the state's rigorous academic and career-technical standards, becoming productive members of society and reducing the probability of returning to a juvenile or adult secure-care institution.

Program Objectives: Improve education services and recruit resources for the juvenile-correctional facilities; Provide high quality education programs to prepare youth for secondary school completion and increase the percent of eligible students who graduate from high school; Provide tools that helps the youth in employment search or further education; Train teachers and other professional personnel (i.e. counselors and social workers) in strategies of curricular integration, reading comprehension for students with academic backwardness, legal aspects of reasonable accommodation, among other topics. Provide activities to facilitate the successful transition of youth who are incarcerated between the correctional programs and schools; Coordinate activities with the PRDE's School Retention Programs to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school. Decrease dropout rates of students who were served in a secure-care facility and transitioned back to their educational programs. Increase placement rates in career and technical programming or employment based on 3 and 6 month follow up periods from the date of release from secure care. Increase in percentage of college or postsecondary institutions applications compared to previous year's percentage based on enrollment. PRDE work with direct response to inquiries with the support of the National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Youth (NDTAC), which is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. NDTAC serves as a national resource center to provide direct assistance to states, schools, communities and parents seeking information on the education of neglected, delinquent or at-risk children and youth

Program Outcome: The PRDE implemented the Correctional School System to improve educational services and timely

recruitment of resources in juvenile correctional facilities. The PRDE is responsible for providing high quality educational programs to prepare youth for high school completion. In addition, the PRDE provides resources and technical assistance opportunities to enable the program to better meet the needs of underserved, delinquent, and at-risk youth. The Correctional School System works with the timely recruitment of social workers, and teachers (tutoring services) to provide academic and supplemental services at the beginning of the academic year and ensure that services are provided during the number of days that school must be in session. Practices that support the youth and lead him or her to a successful exit from the system and within the community are set into place. Personnel from the secure-care facility requests the education records from the educational agency or school that the youth is coming from. Transfer of the participant's educational records complies with local and federal privacy laws, as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99. Some of the information included in the participant's education record are grades, local assessments results, evaluations, behavior records, previous placements, and immunization records. To ensure education records are accurate, complete and maintained. Annually, the Auxiliary Secretariat for Alternative Education, under the PRDE, develops a Work Plan for the juvenile institutions (Ponce and Villalba) and the young adult correctional institution (Ponce) that includes offering professional development to all staff participating in the program, in order to ensure these are equipped with the program information and provide students with a safe, healthy, facility-wide climate that prioritizes education, excellent conditions for learning, and encourages the necessary behavioral and social support services that address the individual needs of all youth, including those with disabilities. Also, upon entrance to a juvenile institution or correctional facility, each student is provided with a

diagnostic test to identify the student's academic need, allowing the program to provide the appropriate educational services based on an individual student's specific needs, thus providing eligible students with the same opportunities for academic success as their peers in traditional public schools. Results of these tests allow PRDE to trace performance against goals for each of the participants. Regarding the program's objective to assist the youth in employment search or further education, the neglected and delinquent program offers students Job and Studies Fairs, while being in the juvenile institution and correctional facility. This is one of the opportunities offered in the transition of N&D program, as it allows youth to participate in Employment Fairs, University Orientations and any activity that offers youth opportunities for integration into the community. The Program offers guidance, counseling and social work services for career exploration that may result in the interest of the participants. The personnel (counselor, teacher, social worker) prepare an exit plan jointly with participants, to ensure that all graduates have a plan when leaving the facility that contemplates continuity of studies through career and technical institutes or universities. It completes for each young participant a plan where it documents the follow-up given to the young graduates for 90 days. Family Engagement. The family is notified of any academic progress, change in behavior, mental health needs and treatment their child has received or shown during their stay at the secure-care facility. This way they are informed on how they may support their child to ensure that positive habits continue after exit. Another family involvement activity carried out by the N&D program, is providing tools and communication links to parents to enhance their parenting or behavioral management skills. On a quarterly and semi-annual basis, the Auxiliary Secretariat for Alternative Education, under the PRDE, requests a programmatic and fiscal report from the participating institutions, summarizing both budget and program effectiveness and

the expected outcomes, as whether the correctional school was able to increase students' pre and post test scores in reading and math, increase the number of high school diplomas, and/or increase the percentage of youth who reenter school upon discharge. This allows the N&D program to identify areas where technical assistance is most needed and consider if modification of the services provided to participants is necessary.

D. Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

1. Use of Funds (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(A) and (D)): *Describe how the State educational agency will use Title II, Part A funds received under Title II, Part A for State-level activities described in section 2101(c), including how the activities are expected to improve student achievement.*

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) strategically allocates Title II, Part A, to enhance state-level activities that improve student achievement and educator effectiveness. These initiatives align with the CRECE program (formerly META-PR) and the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, ensuring that professional learning opportunities are data-driven, evidence-based, and aligned with PRDE's educational priorities.

PRDE designates 5% of Title II, Part A funds for state-level activities, including:

- 1% for administrative functions, ensuring efficient management of human, technological, and financial resources to support technical assistance and professional development.
- 4% for capacity-building initiatives, such as Leadership Academies for school principals, teachers, and instructional leaders. These academies provide training in instructional leadership, human and fiscal resource management, and best practices in classroom instruction.

These funds support PRDE's mission of improving student outcomes by equipping educators with effective teaching strategies and leadership skills.

The professional development programs focus on:

- Data-informed decision-making, utilizing state assessment results, professional growth plans, and school needs assessments.
- Instructional excellence, ensuring that teachers have access to rigorous, research-based training aligned with state standards.

- Support systems for educators, including mentoring, induction programs, and job-embedded professional learning.
- Specialized training in priority areas, such as STEM, bilingual education, and literacy interventions, particularly for students from underserved backgrounds.

Title II, Part A funds are leveraged to directly enhance student academic performance by:

- Strengthening Educator Effectiveness
 - Expanding professional learning communities (PLCs) and instructional coaching models.
 - Providing ongoing training in differentiated instruction, technology integration, and culturally responsive teaching.
 - Supporting educators in using data-driven practices to identify and address learning gaps.
- Addressing Critical Areas of Need
 - Expanding teacher recruitment and retention initiatives, particularly in STEM, bilingual education, and special education.
 - Enhancing professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators, ensuring quality instruction for students from PreK to Grade 3.
 - Supporting the use of evidence-based interventions in reading, writing, and mathematics to close achievement gaps.
- Enhancing Leadership Development
 - Implementing Leadership Academies that train school leaders to create positive learning environments.
 - Providing training in equity-based leadership to ensure high-quality instruction in low-performing schools.

Through these initiatives, PRDE expects to see measurable improvements in student achievement, evidenced by:

- Increased student performance on state assessments.
- Higher graduation rates and college readiness scores.
- Improved teacher retention and effectiveness, reducing inequities in teacher quality across districts.

2. Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools (*ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(E)*): *If an SEA plans to use Title II, Part A funds to improve equitable access to effective teachers, consistent with ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), describe how such funds will be used for this purpose.*

PRDE is committed to ensuring that all students, particularly those in high-need schools, have access to highly effective teachers and school leaders. To achieve this, Title II, Part A funds are utilized to implement a comprehensive teacher equity plan, which aligns with CRECE's priorities and addresses equity gaps in teacher distribution.

Strategies for Improving Equitable Access to Effective Educators

1. Strengthening Teacher Recruitment and Retention
 - Targeted recruitment efforts for hard-to-staff schools and subjects, particularly in STEM, bilingual education, and special education.
 - Pathways for career changes, allowing professionals from other industries to transition into teaching through alternative certification programs.

2. Enhancing Professional Development for Educators in High-Need Schools
 - Expanding coaching and mentoring programs for early-career teachers (0-3 years) to reduce attrition rates.
 - Providing targeted professional development to teachers in Title I schools, focusing on:
 - Culturally responsive pedagogy.
 - Differentiated instruction for diverse learners.
 - Trauma-informed teaching strategies.
 - Supporting teachers with professional learning in bilingual and special education, ensuring compliance with ESSA's equity requirements.

3. Building Leadership Capacity in High-Need Schools
 - Implementing leadership development programs for principals and instructional coaches, equipping them with the skills to support teacher growth.
 - Providing training in data-driven decision-making, ensuring that school leaders use student performance metrics to drive instructional improvements.

4. Developing a Data-Driven Approach to Educator Equity
 - Conducting annual equity audits to identify disparities in teacher quality, experience, and effectiveness across schools.
 - Creating regional support teams to provide targeted interventions in low-performing districts.
 - Utilizing state and district-level educator effectiveness data to inform hiring, placement, and retention strategies.

Expected Outcomes

By implementing these equity-focused initiatives, PRDE aims to:

- Reduce teacher vacancies and turnover in high-need schools.
- Increase the number of certified and experienced teachers in Title I schools.
- Improve student achievement by ensuring access to highly effective educators.
- Foster a pipeline of future school leaders through leadership training and mentorship programs.

3. System of Certification and Licensing (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(B)): *Describe the State's system of certification and licensing of teachers, principals, or other school leaders.*

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) established an updated teacher, principal, and school leader certification and licensing system under the new Regulation No. 9375, effective as of May 28, 2022. This regulation modernizes the certification process, aligns requirements with current educational needs, and expands certification options for specialized areas. The certification system ensures that all educators meet academic, professional, and practical experience requirements to serve in public and private schools across Puerto Rico. It provides three main certification pathways for teachers:

- Traditional Route – For candidates who have completed an academic degree in education, including coursework in teaching methodology, pedagogical foundations, student teaching experience, and additional general education courses such as:
 - Special Education: Intervention for Regular Education Students
 - Integration of Technology in Education
 - Puerto Rican and U.S. History

- Recertification Route – For certified teachers who seek additional certification in a new subject area. Requires at least 18 additional credits in the field and completion of a teaching methodology course.
- Alternative Route – For individuals with a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree in a non-education field. Candidates must complete at least 21 credits in their subject area and 15 foundational education credits, including courses in educational philosophy, psychology, sociology, and supervised teaching practice.

Significant Changes Introduced in the 2022 Regulation

The 2022 regulatory update brought important modifications to simplify and improve the certification system:

- Elimination of the GPA Requirement – Previously, candidates needed a minimum GPA to qualify for certification; this requirement was removed, broadening access to the teaching profession.
- Elimination of the Teacher Certification Exam (PCMAS) for Certain Professions – Candidates in regulated technical and occupational fields (e.g., electricians, mechanics, refrigeration specialists) no longer need to take PCMAS if they already hold a professional license in their field.
- New Required Courses – All certification routes now mandate coursework in:
 - Special Education – Intervention for Regular Education Students

- Integration of Technology in Education
- Puerto Rican and U.S. History
- Creation of New Certification Categories – The regulation expands certification options to align with workforce and educational system needs, introducing:
 - Cinematography (Fine Arts Program)
 - English K-12 and K-5 Certifications
 - Occupational Education Fields (Preschool Assistant, Medical Billing, Agricultural Biotechnology, Therapeutic Massage, and Pre-Veterinary Professor)
- Streamlined Regulation Structure – The certification process is now more transparent and organized, with a single table per program that clearly outlines all certification options and requirements.
- Flexibility for University Students – Students completing degrees under the previous regulations can finalize their programs, and universities have two years to adjust curricula to align with the new certification requirements.

Certification for Principals and School Leaders

To obtain certification as a school director (principal) or administrator, candidates must:

- Hold a master’s or doctoral degree in School Administration, Educational Leadership, or Management.
- Have an active teacher certification in an academic subject or a related field.
- Complete a supervised principal internship or equivalent experience.
- Have at least five years of classroom teaching experience.

For school superintendents, certification requires:

- Holding a principal certification.
- Five years of experience as a school principal.

Certification Validity and Reciprocity

- All regular teaching and administrative certifications are valid for six (6) years.
- Teachers and school leaders can apply for recertification upon meeting continuing education or coursework requirements.
- The PRDE offers reciprocity for out-of-state certifications, evaluating credentials from U.S. states and territories based on subject-area equivalency and professional exams.

4. Improving Skills of Educators (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(J)): Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs, particularly children with disabilities, English learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and provide instruction based on the needs of such students.

To ensure all students, including struggling learners and students with special needs have access to quality education PRDE is putting in place a structured, evidenced based principal academy that will strengthen and expand the skills and capacity of Region Educational Offices and school principals around best practices to provide the leadership that can transform low performing schools and improve student outcomes. Through the Leadership Academy initiative, the PRDE will develop a teacher talent pipeline by training teachers on how to gather qualitative, quantitative and observational evidence about teacher capacity for instructional leadership and serving the needs of diverse learners, as well as focusing their time on

supporting other teachers. Principals will prepare a strategic leadership plan for their individual school based on school level data, focused on improving curriculum and delivering well designed instruction to all students to increase student achievement. Puerto Rico is determined to train teachers so all our children can receive all the tools they need to thrive. PRDE improves the skills of teachers, principals and other school leaders by offering professional training specifically designed to: Enhance educators' knowledge in identifying students with special learning needs, Spanish learners, students with low literacy and gifted and talented students by utilizing resources and tools provided by Central level and district staff that coordinate the programs and services that are provided to the students. Principals, social workers, and school counselors are also engaged in supporting educators in the identification process. Provide for the professional learning needs of teachers to attend students with low literacy levels. Training includes assessment, groupings based on data and specific instructional activities to increase literacy levels. Parent engagement is encouraged in all PRDE planning for special populations and in instances where needed, they also participate in the implementation of various activities. PRDE provides a diversified continuum of resources, tools, training, and opportunities for stakeholder engagement to improve the instructional skills of educators with an emphasis on special populations. data platforms written material procedures manual, policy letters, rules and regulations Professional Learning Communities Teachers should participate in community, sectors development events. School budgets include T-II Part A funds awards that are used to provide professional development activities designed with the specific academic needs of the students and teachers. Regional LEA superintendents, academic programs directors, and academic unit staff also provide professional development opportunities for teachers to attend students with specific learning needs.

5. Data and Consultation (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(K)): *Describe how the State will use data and ongoing consultation as described in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) to continually update and improve the activities supported under Title II, Part A.*

PRDE employs various strategies to obtain the necessary data to assist in the decision-making process and to improve the support under Title II, Part A. PRDE has several platforms that provide data from all schools and districts that are used as a measure to identify the activities that represent the best use of Title II, Part A funds.

- **DEE (*Diseño de Excelencia Escolar* or **School Excellence Design**)**- Each school develops a school improvement plan, which summarizes its objectives and goals for the school year. This year the school comprehensive plan has been totally redesigned and for the first time is based on current year student data. This has given PRDE a clearer idea of student needs and guided professional development plans. Professional development is being focused on attending those content areas in need of improvement.
- **Student Information System (SIE)** - The results of standardized tests, grades reports, and other data are used to determine the students' academic growth and needs.
- **SL (Spanish Learners)**- PRDE uses a standardized research-based test, Spanish language proficiency assessment that measures the speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension skills of K-12 students who are non-native speakers to identify students who qualify for services. It aids teachers to identify language difficulties a student may have in Spanish and track and monitor progress in attaining Spanish language proficiency. Comprehensive language proficiency data is used to target instruction to meet each student's needs and help speed progress toward Spanish language proficiency. This data is used to ensure that

teachers and other school personnel that provide services for SLs are well prepared by providing sustained professional development activities in areas directly related to learning a second language. Emphasis is given to teachers who have SL students enrolled in their classroom for professional development opportunities related to second language acquisition. The professional development plan includes sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data driven and classroom focused training related to the assessed needs among teachers and student academic progress data.

- **Star Framework** - One of the key tools supporting this effort is the "*Conoce Tu Escuela* (Know Your School) - STAR Framework", a comprehensive school performance model that evaluates academic achievement, school quality, and school administration effectiveness. The STAR Framework provides a holistic approach to measuring school performance using 36 key metrics, divided into three domains: Academic Achievement (18 metrics, 380 points max.), School Quality (13 metrics, 130 points max.), School Administration (5 metrics, 50 points max.) Each school receives a score based on performance indicators such as student proficiency, attendance rates, chronic absenteeism, and academic growth. This data-driven model ensures that schools are evaluated equitably and consistently, allowing PRDE to align professional development initiatives with actual school needs. By leveraging real-time performance data, PRDE can ensure that Title II, Part A funds, are allocated to activities that directly impact school effectiveness and student outcomes. This includes: targeting Schools in Need of Improvement: Schools with lower ratings receive specialized professional development programs aligned with their weaknesses, developing Evidence-Based Training for Educators: Data from STAR Framework informs the design of personalized training programs tailored to the specific needs of teachers in each school and enhancing Equity in

Resource Allocation: Schools with higher percentages of at-risk students, SLs (Spanish Learners), or students with disabilities receive targeted support interventions based on their STAR scores.

6. Teacher Preparation (ESEA section 2101(d)(2)(M)): *Describe the actions the State may take to improve preparation programs and strengthen support for teachers, principals, or other school leaders based on the needs of the State, as identified by the SEA.*

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) has identified the need to strengthen teachers, principal, and school leader preparation and support. Based on comprehensive needs assessment, PRDE has implemented strategic initiatives to enhance leadership, management, and professionalization in schools.

Certificate Program (PADE (Profesionalización Acelerada del PRDE now Certificate y Evolucionada con PRDE))

This certificate program was developed in collaboration with the state university to provide professional development opportunities for educators. This program was designed to certify teachers who are not yet licensed. This initiative ensures that educators receive the necessary training and certification to meet the department's standards and enhance classroom instruction. Additionally, this initiative plays a critical role in addressing teacher shortages by streamlining the certification process and expanding the pool of qualified educators within Puerto Rico's public school system.

EDUGESPRO (Educación Para la Gestión del Liderazgo y la Profesionalización): Leadership Training

EDUGESPRO is an innovative certification program in leadership and management for school principals and regional leaders. Based on a study of 400 schools, EDUGESPRO addresses identified gaps in school administration through seminars, workshops, and personalized coaching. PRDE remains committed to improving teacher preparation and leadership development, ensuring high-quality education and safe learning environments for students in Puerto Rico.

E. Title III, Part A, Subpart 1: English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement

1. **Entrance and Exit Procedures** (ESEA section 3113(b)(2)): *Describe how the SEA will establish and implement, with timely and meaningful consultation with LEAs representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures, including an assurance that all students who may be English learners are assessed for such status within 30 days of enrollment in a school in the State.*

Spanish Learners Assessment As described in the entry and exit procedures detailed below. These are administered in the form of an eligibility test to determine Spanish learners' level of proficiency once admitted into the public school system. During the student's participation a series of annual assessments administered until the students meet the program's exit criteria. These monitor the student's Spanish proficiency to determine the level of progress since becoming a participant in the program. Said proficiency levels are monitored through this assessment until the students reach a proficient or above grade. Once the student achieves this level of proficiency, they exit the Program. The SLA program has developed standardized forms that comply with state and federal regulations to be used for the entrance and exit procedures. Students who enroll for the first time in a PRDE school or return after withdrawing from the PRDE, are provided a Home Language Survey, (HLS) Form AEI001, as part of the enrollment package, which can be completed in-person or online manner. PRDE modified the logic behind the instrument in order to minimize cases of misidentification of non-eligible participants. Currently, a contractor has been selected and is responsible for coordinating school personnel to schedule the administration of the standardized assessment screener to SL candidates. The administration is conducted at the school level or in

locations determined by PRDE. After the administration of the standardized assessment, the results are reports to the SLA Program Director with the results. The SLA Director is in charge of delivering the students' results to the schools, so that the placement of the student is completed, and the parents can be notified. SL candidates who are assessed and demonstrate to be non-proficient in the Spanish language are enrolled into the Title III-A Program and the information is entered into the Student Information System. The school is responsible for developing an SL assessment and school plan as well as an individualized plan for each student. In cases where parents and guardians are not interested in the program services, the school informs them of their right to refuse the program services. However, as required by law, the school will continue to use strategies that ensure that the SL student is making progress in developing Spanish as well as being proficient in their academic achievement and meeting the state challenging standards. These strategies will be aligned with the objectives and activities of other services provided by other programs the student is eligible for such as special education or Title I. All Spanish learners are required to have an individualized educational and language and development plan to describe all the services and support that will be provided to the student. In addition, the school must create a school plan to ensure the implementation of services for the SL students and their families. This plan will be aligned with the results of the needs assessments administered to parents and school personnel, along with the students Standardized Assessment, grades, or CRECE-PR outcomes. The school director is responsible for disseminating and orientating parents and school personnel on the program services and requirements. The activities for parental and family engagement must be consistent with needs identified in consultation with the SL population. Also, the school should provide professional development activities to

ensure that teachers and other staff are prepared to address SL students' needs. All SL students are annually assessed the Language Proficiency assessment to determine the students' progress toward learning the Spanish language. The SLA Program Director and the PRDE Assessment Director are responsible for coordinating the administration logistics of the annual assessment. The regional facilitators and members of the LRC must be informed of the proficiency results of the student. The results of the annual assessment test are classified into four scales of proficiency level based on a composite score of the four domains areas evaluated. Students that obtain results of 3 or 4 in the proficiency level scales are considered proficient in Spanish and thus meet the exit criteria for the program. The external provider that administers the tests will conduct training on how to analyze the results in order to make data-based decisions for SL placement, instruction, topics related to teacher's instructional planning taking into consideration the student's needs and proficiency results. Level 1: Beginner (approximately a range of 0-45 points)– A level 1 student demonstrates minimal comprehension or doesn't comprehend the four language domains (listening, speaking, writing and reading) of the Spanish language. The student is beginning to develop receptive and productive use of the Spanish language in the school context, although comprehension may be demonstrated nonverbally or through the native language, rather than Spanish. Utilizes general phrases and vocabulary. Level 2: Apprentice lexical, syntactic, phonological, and discourse features when addressing new and familiar topics. An SL student exits from the program upon achievement of proficiency or above proficiency (Levels 3 and 4) on the annual assessment and the achievement. PRDE has modified the exiting criteria to meet the established requirement of standardized statewide procedures as we have considered best practices from other states. In addition, PRDE has identified challenges related to information and data

collection, which will be difficult to take into consideration other elements within the criteria. Furthermore, we believe that the result from the proficiency test alone will absolutely serve the purpose and comply with the requirement. The academic achievement of former Spanish language learners will be monitored by the Academic Affairs Department, Spanish Language Acquisition Program for a period of four years as required by the ESSA Act. The grades and results from the CRECE-PR and CRECE-PR Alterna will be analyzed to confirm that former SLs achieve academic standards. If academic difficulty is identified during the monitoring period, the student will be assessed individually and re-evaluated, if necessary, to identify the reasons for this failure and provide additional academic support. (approximately a range of 46-74 points)- A level 2 student demonstrates limited proficiency in the four domains of the Spanish language. The student utilizes simple phrases or sentences, and common expressions. The students also have basic fluency and with effort they can communicate effectively in the Spanish language. The students are in the process of developing the ability to communicate effectively in Spanish across a range of grade-level appropriate language demands in the school context. The student exhibits a limited range of lexical, syntactic, phonological and discourse features when addressing new and familiar topics. Level 3: Proficient (approximately a range of 75-85 points)- A level 3 student demonstrates a competent execution of the four Spanish language domain areas. The students are proficient enough in the typical use of Spanish words and utilizes concrete expressions. The students are fluent and can communicate effectively in Spanish. Level 4: Outstanding (approximately a range of 86-100 points) A level 4 student demonstrate proficiency of the four domain areas of the Spanish language. The student expresses ideas with complex sentences and utilizes words and expressions with precise meaning.

2. **SEA Support for English Learner Progress** (ESEA section 3113(b)(6)):

Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:

- i. The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and
- ii. The challenging State academic standards.

As stated in the Title I, Part A section of this plan, the State designed long-term goals for Spanish Language proficiency established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's Spanish language proficiency assessment under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G). The baseline for long term goals for PRDE's Spanish Learners was set using actual data from the 2016 PRDE's Report Card

3. **Monitoring and Technical Assistance** (ESEA section 3113(b)

- i. *How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A subgrant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and*
- ii. *The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A, are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies.*

i. Puerto Rico operates under a unitary system, meaning there is no State Educational Agency (SEA) as defined in other U.S. jurisdictions. Instead, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) centrally administers all education programs, including Title III, Part A program.

The Title III-A Program currently serves both public and private schools in accordance with its approved work plan, which details the activities to be implemented using Title III-A funds. These activities include:

- **Monitoring Implementation and Effectiveness** – The PRDE systematically reviews Title III-A funded programs to assess their impact on Spanish learners' language acquisition and academic performance. Monitoring activities ensure that instructional strategies align with evidence-based practices and programmatic goals.
- **Annual Program Evaluation** – At the end of a one-year implementation period, the PRDE assesses program outcomes to determine whether the continuation of a plan is justified. Based on this evaluation, subgrantees may be required to modify strategies or submit a revised plan for approval.
- **Office of Federal Affairs Oversight** – The Office of Federal Affairs monitors entities and programs that handle federal funds to ensure compliance with applicable regulations. This includes reviewing financial records, programmatic reports, and implementation of fidelity.
- **Financial Monitoring and Early Warning System** – PRDE's financial system includes an early warning mechanism to detect delays in federally funded projects. This system helps ensure that Title III-A funds are used efficiently and that potential issues in implementation are addressed promptly to maximize the use of available resources.

ii. Steps to Assist Eligible Entities When Title III, Part A Strategies Are Not Effective if monitoring reveals that the strategies implemented under Title III-A are not yielding the expected results, the PRDE takes corrective action to improve program effectiveness.

These actions include:

- **Targeted Technical Assistance (TA)** – The PRDE provides technical assistance to underperforming schools and entities, focusing on areas such as instructional methods, compliance requirements, and resource utilization. This may include on-site coaching, training sessions, and virtual consultations.
- **Professional Development Enhancement** – Schools and educators receive additional training in best practices for Spanish language instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and intervention strategies. Professional learning communities may also be formed to foster collaboration and shared learning among educators.
- **Modification of Strategies and Plan Adjustments** – Based on the annual assessment, schools may be required to revise their Title III-A implementation plans to incorporate more effective, evidence-based approaches to supporting Spanish learners.
- **Increased Oversight and Accountability Measures** – Schools struggling with Title III-A implementation may be subject to more frequent monitoring, additional reporting requirements, or structured improvement plans to ensure compliance and progress.
- **Use of PRDE’s Early Warning System** – The financial monitoring system helps detect and address project delays, ensuring that funding is utilized efficiently and that necessary adjustments are made to prevent underutilization of resources.
- **Collaboration with External Experts and Organizations** – Schools may be connected with research institutions, universities, or nonprofit organizations specializing in language acquisition education to provide targeted support and guidance.
- **Reallocation of Funds and Resource Optimization** – In cases where a school or entity fails to improve despite multiple interventions, Title III-A funds may be reallocated to more effective initiatives, ensuring that

resources are directed toward programs demonstrating positive outcomes for Spanish learners.

F. Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

1. **Use of Funds** (ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(A)): *Describe how the SEA will use funds received under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 for State-level activities.*

Through the Title IV-A Program, known as Student Support and Academic Enrichment, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE), provides a variety of services and strategies aimed at contributing to improve student's academic achievement. These services and strategies are focused on providing a high-quality education and supporting students' development through the following main objectives: Provide all students with access to a well-rounded education (section 4107); Improve safe and healthy school conditions for student learning (section 4108); Promote the use of technology to improve academic achievement and digital literacy for all students (section 4109). Through the submission of Work Plans, the different Academic Programs and PRDE Offices request funds from the Title IV-A Program to address the identified needs that can be addressed through sections 4107, 4108 and 4109 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the ESSA Act. In the case of Title IV-A, the 4106 (d) section requires that each LEA must have a Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Therefore, through this Study, the needs and priorities to be addressed through the Program's funds are identified each year. During the past years, through the approved work plans, the Program has addressed several priorities identified by the different Academic Programs and PRDE offices through needs assessments included in submitted work plans. Among the main areas of need on which the Program's efforts have been focused are: Strengthening the socio-emotional development of students through the arts. Improving school safety Strengthening the School Technology Program Developing a Positive Behavioral Support System (PBIS). For the coming years, the priority areas that

will be addressed with Title IV-A funds will continue to be framed within the three main objectives of the Program, which correspond to each of the sections of ESSA, and according to the results of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Immediately, for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year and during the next school year (2025-2026), Program funds will be directed to address the following areas of priority, as identified by PRDE's Academic Programs with approved work plans. These areas are: Strengthen the Early Childhood Education Program through the development of effective practices for curricular integration. Likewise, PRDE intends to through curriculum integration from the library to the classroom. At the Ponce Regional Education Office (ORE by its acronym in Spanish), a project will be developed to integrate technology and STEM approaches to improve the academic achievement of students from 9th to 10th grade in mathematics and science. Continue to strengthen the social-emotional aspects of high school students through the visual arts. Continue to support the implementation of a Positive Behavioral Support System (PBIS).

2. **Awarding Subgrants** (ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(B)): *Describe how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2).*

As mentioned above, the PRDE is a unitary system that serves as both a state educational agency (SEA) and a local educational agency (LEA). Thus, the PRDE oversees the education system on an island-wide basis. Pursuant to section 4105(a)(2) of ESSA, the PRDE will ensure that no allocation is less than \$10,000. To meet this requirement, the department will use an internal formula based on section 4105(a)(1) and any U.S. Department of Education guidance related to Title IV, Part A LEA allocations. Of its total allocation, the PRDE will award 95 percent of the grant to provide services to students through the Regions and

Academic Programs to ensure that students receive a comprehensive education in a safe and healthy environment. To allocate these funds, the PRDE developed a process for the submission of Work Plans. This process is documented in the Procedures Manual for Projects to be Financed with Federal Funds through Work Plans published in 2019. In accordance with this process, the Office of Federal Affairs (OFA) annually conducts a pre-award process in which it discloses the availability of funds that may be requested through the different Federal Programs. Subsequently, it issues a memorandum with the dates of the cycles established for the submission of work plans and coordinates a series of practical workshops designed to help potential proposers identify the essential elements to consider when conceptualizing and drafting a work plan, including compliance with the requirements established by each federal funding program. Once the work plans are received, they are evaluated and those that are approved begin to be implemented, in order to achieve the main objectives of the Program and continue contributing to the achievement of the academic goals of the PRDE.

G. Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

1. **Use of Funds** (ESEA section 4203(a)(2)): *Describe how the SEA will use funds received under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, including funds reserved for State-level activities.*

The Title IV, Part B, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant program, supports the creation of community learning centers that offer well-rounded educational experiences to all students, including female students, English learners, children with disabilities, and low-income students during non-school hours. PRDE improves student's education through the 21st CCLC Program by supervising the awarding of funds to eligible organizations and providing technical assistance (TA) to subgrantees. 21st CCLC services support state strategies in helping children to succeed academically through: Provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet the challenging State academic standards; Offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities, service learning, nutrition and health education, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling programs, arts, music, physical fitness and wellness programs, technology education programs, financial literacy programs, environmental literacy programs, mathematics, science, career and technical programs, internship or apprenticeship programs, and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and offers families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development. Program activities are based on an assessment of objective data regarding the need for after school programs and activities in the schools and communities. The needs assessment identifies educational

gaps, coordination between existing programs and services, and additional background data and related information about the students, families and communities. Stakeholders, including schools, parents-guardians, and community partners are engaged in the needs assessment. Data considered in the needs assessment includes but is not limited to poverty level data, grades, graduation rate, and dropout rates. Community learning centers also coordinate transportation services and snacks for its participants. Considering that services are during non-school hours; sub grantees also provide school/center programmatic reports on a timely basis, and that services are aligned to the needs identified in schools. The 21st CCLC program provides technical assistance to subgrantees and staff members each year. These meetings focus on a variety of topics including but not limited to fiscal management, family engagement, and evaluation activities that provide opportunities for subgrantees to share best practices. At the beginning of each calendar year, the 21st CCLC program provides and orientation of the program fiscal procedures manual and grant guidelines. On-going communication is conducted between the director and each subgrantee. At the beginning of each academic year, the 21st CCLC Procedures Manual is provided to subgrantees containing all deliverable templates, agreed upon procedures (AUP) and guidance documents for subgrantees throughout the five-year funding cycle. Technical Assistance is also provided to all sub-grantees on how to properly complete deliverables and AUPs. Also, PRDE contracts an external evaluator to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and monitor the effectiveness of 21st CCLC programs in order to refine, improve and strengthen the program and its outcomes.

- 1. **Awarding Subgrants** (ESEA section 4203(a)(4)): Describe the procedures and criteria the SEA will use for reviewing applications and awarding 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds to eligible entities on a competitive basis, which*

shall include procedures and criteria that take into consideration the likelihood that a proposed community learning center will help participating students meet the challenging State academic standards and any local academic standards.

Entities eligible to apply for 21st CCLC grants include public schools, community and faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, public or private entities, or a consortium of two or more such agencies, organizations, or entities. A competitive process takes place in compliance with the procedures contained in the manuals established by PRDE. Process is performed through an open competition so interested entities can participate and submit an RFP application. Later, an orientation is provided to discuss the proposal information, additional documents that need to be submitted, and the date of submission. When proposals are received, a rigorous peer review process is performed by knowledgeable and experienced reviewers to score each proposal based on an established rubric. Each reader is assigned to a two- or three-person panel reviewing the same group of applications. For each application assigned, each reviewer must provide independent, detailed, objective, well-written and constructive comments. Proposals are evaluated for basic eligibility, qualifications and criteria, and a validation that the services included in the proposal will serve security to their students. Similarly, the program offers services to private schools. In addition, community centers offer literacy and related educational development opportunities to the families and communities to empower them with any resources and information needed to promote high quality education for their children. They are offered workshops on self-employment, Conversational English courses, Computers literacy, among others. As required by ESSA, PRDE engages on an ongoing basis, with families and other community partners in the implementation of programs to support students. Regardless of income or background, research has shown that

students from families who are engaged in their education earn better grades and test scores; enroll in higher-level courses and programs; are more likely to be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits; have better school attendance; show improved behavior and have better social skills; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education. The 21st CCLC provides a broad array of services, programs, and activities outside of the regular school day, designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students. Activities include behavioral and social services that profoundly affect academic success. Some of the PRDE's 21st CCLC activities include but are not limited to: Academic enrichment (tutoring and homework help) Well-rounded Education Activities Healthy and Active Lifestyle Telecommunications and Technology Education Counseling Programs Entrepreneurial Education Cultural Programs Parent involvement/family literacy Recreational activities.

Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

1. **Outcomes and Objectives** (ESEA section 5223(b)(1)): *Provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, including how the SEA will use funds to help all students meet the challenging State academic standards.*
2. **Technical Assistance** (ESEA section 5223(b)(3)): *Describe how the SEA will provide technical assistance to eligible LEAs to help such agencies implement the activities described in ESEA section 5222.*

Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B

1. **Student Identification** (722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act):
Describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youth in the State and to assess their needs.

For the purpose of ensuring homeless children and youths are afforded the same educational opportunities as all other children and youths, PRDE has established procedures to identify homeless children and youth and to assess their needs. **Identifying homeless children and youth** On an annual basis, the PRDE issues an official communication to all its school personnel defining a homeless youth as a youth who “lacks a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence” or an “individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a) a supervised or publicly operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill; or c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.” This definition includes both youth who are unaccompanied by families and those who are homeless with their families. Also, at the beginning of the school year, a Census/Profile of identified students is also conducted. The purpose of this census is to identify homeless students, their place of residence, services received and requested. Within the schools, the social worker or school counselor completes and certifies the document (census / profile) with the information provided by the parent, guardian or unaccompanied minor. The school director then certifies the content of the form as correct and sends it to the region’s worker or director of the Homeless Education Program for Children and Youth. On a monthly basis, the census is to be updated by the social workers. Runaway homes and

shelters also collaborate in identifying youth and supporting street outreach, emergency shelters and longer-term transitional living and maternity group home programs serving and protecting young people experiencing homelessness. In shelters, the social worker of the educational region prepares the census during the month of May and certifies the content of the form as correct and complete. The shelter director then certifies the information provided in the census as correct. This form is prepared at the beginning of the school year and updated monthly as other children are enrolled in the Homeless Education Program. The liaison of the program of the educational region sends a duly signed electronic copy to the Central Office of PRDE with attention to the Coordinator of the Program. Students identified as homeless are flagged in the PRDE's SIE System. This "flagging" is accessible only to those that provide state reporting or monitoring academic success. At a minimum, liaisons monitor students' progress, grades, attendance, most recent residence, and services provided. This allows liaisons to continue providing services, even if students move to another school or region. Once identification of homeless students is performed, PRDE works on the dissemination of homeless guidance, documents, and surveys to schools and communities to ensure that identified homeless children and youths are afforded the same opportunities to be successful learners as all children and youths. The homeless education liaisons are trained to educate and work closely with all personnel in the school district as well as with community social service agencies to properly identify homeless children or youths. Regional homeless liaisons work closely and collaboratively with the Family Department of Puerto Rico and with the Administration for the Integral Development and Childhood Care (ACUDEN, per its acronym in Spanish) to identify and serve young children and their families to ensure educational services and family stability. The PRDE also works in collaboration with the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency with the identification of homeless children and youth, dissemination of the Homeless program and providing housing. To identify the children and

youth needs, the participating shelters and schools develop a work plan for the provision of the services. The purpose of the work plan for the Homeless Children and Youth Program is to establish the needs of students so that they can receive adequate, viable, sustainable, and aligned educational services. At schools, the school director completes and certifies that the plan is correct, complete, and aligned with the students' needs. The director sends the plan to the social worker or director of the program of the corresponding educational region. In the case of shelters, the social worker (liaison) of the program is the one that completes and certifies the work plan. Also, the program makes sure high mobility homeless students receive appropriate services, by situating their social workers to those regional areas experiencing an increase in student mobility. Student mobility is often related to residential mobility, such as when a family becomes homeless or moves due to changes in a parent's job. Homeless students are likelier than other students to change schools not just several times in their school career, but multiple times in a single year. Also, they remain more mobile than other students even after their families find stable homes. Situating social workers in regions where a higher number of homeless students is identified, allows the program to ensure these homeless students are provided the services they are eligible to receive and, on the time, they need them. To ensure that children and youths who are homeless have access to public education and are supported in their efforts, the PRDE has adopted and implemented policies and procedures guaranteeing the evaluation and identification of these individuals. The PRDE's Homeless Children and Youth program provides support and technical assistance in accordance with the McKinney-Vento non-regulatory guidance by ensuring all regions utilize the following activities, strategies, and tools to help ensure that all students experiencing homelessness are identified and have access to educational programming and support. The program coordinator provides regional homeless liaisons with a student residency questionnaire to prevent the stigmatization of students and reduce defensiveness of adult caregivers by

preventing students and families from feeling singled out. The program coordinates professional development and training at least once annually to heighten awareness with training that focuses on the definition of homelessness; signs of homelessness; identification and specific needs of runaways; the impact of homelessness on students; and the steps that should be taken once a potentially homeless student is identified including how to connect the student with appropriate housing and service providers. The regional liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. The liaison is the person responsible of coordinating services to ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically. In addition, regional liaisons should utilize existing resources including counseling and other supports.

2. **Dispute Resolution** (722(g)(1)(C) of the McKinney-Vento Act): *Describe procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of children and youth.*

PRDE has in place dispute resolution procedures regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth. In the event that an initial written or verbal grievance is received, the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth will be instructed of the right to file a formal complaint. Then, an investigation of the situation began. This investigation is carried out by the program's social worker, who will immediately communicate by telephone or visit the school director who is denying services (eligibility, school selection, school access, among others) to the homeless child or youth. Program or district personnel of the program that receive a complaint will initiate the corresponding investigation process. Then, the school director will be orientated on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, on the rights of the children and youth participating in the program and the applicable laws

established by the Puerto Rico Family Department, among other regulations. Subsequently, a complaint process is immediately placed for the director, district lead in charge, or Title I, A Coordinator, at the regional level. If an agreement between both parties is established, it must be ensured that they guarantee the right that the student has to receive the services, and the complaint process will not proceed. Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the district personnel or the Title I Coordinator shall, within the next 24 hours, submit it to the Regional Director who will intervene in the dispute resolution process. The Regional Director will have two working days to resolve the complaint (dispute). If the complaint is not resolved within that time, it will be referred to the Homeless Program Coordinator by telephone, and a written communication will be sent to the Auxiliary Secretariat of Federal Affairs. The Coordinator of the Program will proceed to resolve the complaint in three days. Otherwise, the complaint will be submitted to the Legal Division of the Department of Education to take corresponding action. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending to the resolution of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

3. **Support for School Personnel** (722(g)(1)(D) of the McKinney-Vento Act): *Describe programs for school personnel (including the LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youth, including runaway and homeless children and youth.*

The program has developed, promoted, and raised awareness, and increased understanding and sensitivity towards homeless children and youth. The identification of non-educational needs, educational needs and student rights is worked through training and professional development activities to school and support staff that serve this population. To heighten the awareness of school personnel to the specific needs of children and youths who are homeless, the PRDE Homeless Children and Youths State Coordinator provides on a monthly basis training, technical assistance and dissemination of information about children and youths who are homeless for all program liaisons, school districts, community-based organizations to include Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and runaway and homeless youth. The program offers technical assistance and orientations on topics such as: Compliance with Homeless Children and Youth program policies Requirement of annual census and monthly update Violence management Identification of Sexual abuse of children and youth Identification and address specific needs of Runaway children and youth Special Education services Enter homeless student's information in the PRDE's Student Information system. The SIE an important tool used by school personnel and regional liaisons to monitor a student's academic progress, identification of non-educational and educational needs and monitor attendance (pattern of absences). PRDE provides training over the requirement to enter and update data in the Student Information System.

4. **Access to Services** (722(g)(1)(F) of the McKinney-Vento Act): *Describe procedures that ensure that:*
 - i. *Homeless children have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the State;*
 - ii. *Homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary*

- education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youth described in this clause from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies; and*
- iii. Homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels.*

The liaisons for each of the seven Regional LEAs must ensure that homeless children receive the services that they need to become successful learners. Liaisons are to work with other service providers in their region, such shelters, food banks, and health and housing providers to assist families in homeless situations and be able to provide services that address the needs of homeless families and to identify children aged to 5 years who are in need of early childhood education services. PRDE has established the importance of early childhood to strengthen comprehensive development and ensure successful scholar preparation and life success. Priority is given to children at preschool screenings who are determined to be at risk of academic failures due to environmental and developmental delays. Per recent data, Over the past four academic years, PRDE has observed fluctuations in enrollment figures across all regions. The total enrollment in 2021-2022 stood at 2,946 students. This number slightly increased to 2,998 in 2022-2023, reflecting a modest growth across the system. However, a significant decline was recorded in 2023-2024, with total enrollment dropping to 2,719 students. Projections for the 2024-2025 academic year indicate a sharp decrease to 898 students. A disproportionate share of children come from low-income working families, or homeless

families. Homeless children and youths are a priority in this high-risk category and if slots are available at the time of enrollment, homeless children must be enrolled immediately. If no slots are available, the child must be placed at the top of the program's waiting list. Some of the considerations, the regional homeless liaison takes into consideration is the child's attachment to preschool teachers and staff; the impact of school climate on the child, including the school's safety; the availability and quality of services to meet the child's comprehensive needs, including academic, nutritional, health, developmental, and social- emotional needs; and travel time to and from the school. PRDE believes that the educational development and success of all children can be significantly enhanced when children participate in early childhood programs. Homeless liaisons will also assist families to access federally funded Head Start programs, when appropriate. Regional homeless liaisons work closely and collaboratively with the Family Department of Puerto Rico and with the Administration for the ACUDEN that serves young children and their families to ensure equitable access to preschool programs and other services. Head Start has specific local criteria for meeting the needs of homeless children in the community. Head Start provides information about families whose staff identify as in need of homeless education services. Head Start programs identify a need that closely aligns their family service provisions for early childhood students with local homeless education liaisons to coordinate services, and staff members often have collaborative relationships with local public health clinics and may be able to obtain immunization records to ensure that homeless children do not receive excessive immunizations due to their living situation. PRDE collects data through SIE. Data collected through SIS for kindergarten through grade 12 is significantly higher than birth to age 5 data. Based on research, there are more children between birth and age 5 that are in a homeless situation than any other age group. For students attending elementary and secondary level, homelessness may become a barrier to participating in extracurricular activities and even enrolling in school. Homeless

students who change schools during the school year may lack birth certificates, physical examinations, and other documents normally required prior to participation. The McKinney-Vento Act provides legal rights and support to help ensure that students experiencing homelessness can participate fully in extracurricular school activities. Schools are required to enroll children and youths experiencing homelessness immediately. Therefore, homeless students must be allowed to enroll and participate immediately in class and other academic activities and extracurricular school activities, such as sports, music, and clubs. Support is provided so that students can attend school consistently and provide and strengthen academic areas. The needs of these students are assessed, and the service plan is adapted academically as needed. Alternate education is established, coordinated and referred to the students who are identified in need for the completion of their secondary education. While targeted remedial services and other supports are important, PRDE will engage in additional efforts to thoroughly expand practices and policies that secure appropriate credit for coursework satisfactorily completed for homeless youth and youth separated from school. Technical assistance and training efforts to address these specific requirements are just one step in this process. Additional development and issuance of state level guidance to schools will provide additional support in securing progress in this newly defined provision. The additional targeted supplemental remedial services and other supports will include: Opportunities to meet the same state academic achievement standards/requirements through course articulation, rigor, and, planning Assistance to advise, prepare and improve readiness outcomes through Advanced Placement, SAT, and counseling services Alternative educational opportunities, which are flexible through online learning, credit recovery, remedial, independent study, employment internship, and supplemental instruction. Entrepreneurial education, financial management, and technological literacy. Also, part of the assessment liaisons perform is to ensure homeless children stay in school and help bring them up to the same

academic level as their peers. Tutoring is important to help homeless students bridge gaps in their education. Schools refer students to appropriate services, and the Homeless program pays for tutoring sessions. Tutors meet with students at homeless shelters when a designated room is available, at community centers, or at school. Other services coordinated by liaisons are the purchase of materials and provision of snacks during the after hours' tutoring services, school uniforms, ear aid, and eyeglasses, among others. As part of the support that PRDE provides to school personnel, the Homeless program ensures that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, summer school, career and technical education, and advanced placement programs. If barriers are present, parents or guardians are directed to communicate concerns to their respective school personnel, principals and/or other school leaders. If not resolved at the school level, the Homeless program has in place detailed procedures on how to resolve dispute issues.

5. **Strategies to Address Other Problems** (722(g)(1)(H) of the McKinney-Vento Act): *Provide strategies to address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by –*
- i. requirements of immunization and other required health records;*
 - ii. residency requirements;*
 - iii. lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation;*
 - iv. guardianship issues; or*
 - v. uniform or dress code requirements.*

To address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, the PRDE issued an Official Communication, dated September 11, 2011, where it established the rules and procedures to ensure homeless children and youth are allowed to be enrolled at school. This Official Communication is

reviewed and revised on an annual basis, and it promotes the Homeless Children and Youth Program policy. Per official communication, all homeless children are to be enrolled, while these are in the process of gathering or obtaining the following necessary documentation: Residency area Immunization records and birth certificate Medical and academic records School uniform Parent or legal custody A representing adult during the enrollment process Other required document On a monthly basis, the program ensure through monitoring visits, that school Regional LEAs continue to follow all state and federal guideline regarding immediately enrolling children and youths who are homeless, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificates, or other documentation), has missed application or enrollment deadlines during a period of homelessness or presents a pattern of absences. Liaisons provide assistance in obtaining relevant academic or other records such as collaborating with the Puerto Rico Department of Health in obtaining the students immunization records. The Official Communication established the policy to meet with immediate enrollment of a student experiencing homelessness regardless of the student's ability to provide immunization records, evidence of residency area, birth certificate, medical and academic records, school uniform, presents a pattern of absences upon enrollment.

6. **Policies to Remove Barriers** (722(g)(1)(I) of the McKinney-Vento Act): *Demonstrate that the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth, and the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.*

In 2014, Puerto Rico established the 37 Act to create the “Scholar Retention Program” under the Department of Education. The purpose of UNARE, per its acronym in Spanish, is to impact those students, including homeless students, who showed patterns of absenteeism and class failures in the last school year and reduce school dropout. Some of the patterns are Tardiness and unjustified class breaks Low academic achievement School failure or possible school failure Chronological age on grade Family with inadequate relationships among its members. Other situations that may be school dropout factors Upon receipt of student referral, the UNARE project coordinates home visits to closely observe the real needs of these students and his family, as well as follow-up visits. Also, UNARE has as a priority to reinsert the student in the school’s system or in programs whose purpose is for the student to complete his post-secondary studies. Homeless population is attended through the UNARE project. On an annual basis, PRDE reviews and revises its policy to remove barriers to identification and student enrollment, such as the student’s ability to provide immunization records, evidence of residency area, birth certificate, medical and academic records, school uniform, shows a pattern of absences upon enrollment. PRDE’s Homeless Children and Youth Official Communication establishes the program requirements that all School Directors must meet with immediate enrollment of a student experiencing homelessness regardless of any of these barriers. Other activities offered by the program and that eliminates barriers to school enrollment and retention, is the availability of sports and other extra-curricular activities, hiring teachers in these areas. Homeless students are also offered to participate in summer school programs. Accordingly, a homeless student who is enrolled at school should be provided with transportation to summer school, if the student needs summer school to ensure academic success. Lack of such transportation would be a barrier to the students’ attendance, even if the district does not provide transportation to permanently housed students. Also, liaisons assist homeless pregnant girls in

receiving medical assistance and insurance. The program ensures through monitoring visits, that school Regional LEAs continue to follow the Program's policy regarding immediately enrolling children and youths who are homeless. Regarding outstanding fees or fines, these are not considered to be a barrier for enrollment and retention in Puerto Rico's public education system. The Puerto Rico Department of Education does not impose fines nor charge any type of fees to its students at public schools. Therefore, these are not a barrier for enrollment and retention to Homeless students.

7. Assistance from Counselors (722(g)(1)(K)): A description of how youth described in section 725(2) will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.

The program has developed, promote, and raise awareness, increase understanding and sensitivity towards homeless children and youth. The identification of non-educational needs, educational needs and student rights is worked through training and professional development activities to school and support staff that serve this population. In addition, the program works with offering technical assistance, orientation, dissemination of the program, and coordination with other agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth. Training and supporting school counselors ensure that the unique needs of homeless students are addressed as they carry out these expectations.

School counselors assist homeless youth with college readiness and preparation. They encourage a college-going mindset among homeless youth and help these youth cover college application expenses. Counselors explain to homeless students how to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and if there are any career tests that the homeless youth is interested

on taking. The PRDE currently implements the Upon certification, counselors will be able to provide students guidance on the preparation, application of the College Board test, university application, identify interest on certain careers, and guidance regarding the ability of homeless students to complete and submit the FAFSA application form the readiness of such youths for college.

Appendix A: Measurements of interim progress

Instructions: Each SEA must include the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency, set forth in the State’s response to Title I, Part A question 4.iii, for all students and separately for each subgroup of students, including those listed in response to question 4.i.a. of this document. For academic achievement and graduation rates, the State’s measurements of interim progress must take into account the improvement necessary on such measures to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency and graduation rate gaps.

A. Academic Achievement

Long Term Goals for Academic Achievement (LTGA) is calculated as follow:

$$LTGA_t = 100 - GAP [1 - (y * T)]$$

Table 19: Baseline and Projected Proficiency Growth in Core Subjects (2023–2029)

Subject	Baseline (2023-24)	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Long-Term Gain
Spanish	39.6	42	44	47	49	52	12
Mathematics	32.6	35	38	41	43	46	13
English	30.1	33	36	38	41	44	14

PRDE proposes the following increase in proficiency across the board to close proficiency gaps:

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE), committed to addressing the diverse learning needs of all students and subgroups, has implemented a

series of systemic school improvement strategies. These initiatives are designed to promote contextualized teaching, differentiated instruction, meaningful learning, and accelerated learning strategies, ensuring that education remains relevant and impactful for all students.

Contextualized Learning

Contextualized learning aims to connect academic content with real and relevant situations for students, allowing them to understand how classroom concepts apply to their daily lives. This strategy not only increases motivation and interest in learning but also develops critical skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making.

In the PRDE context, contextualized learning includes integrating cultural, social, and economic themes that students recognize in their communities. Additionally, this strategy fosters connections between different disciplines, integrating subjects like science, social studies, and language arts to provide a holistic learning perspective. This reinforces the idea that knowledge is not compartmentalized but interconnected in the real world.

Differentiated Instruction

The PRDE has official documents establishing differentiated strategies to address the specific needs of diverse student groups, including Spanish language learners and students in the Special Education Program. These documents serve as guides for teachers to implement differentiated pedagogical practices in their classrooms, adapting to each student's abilities and learning styles. For Special Education students, various strategies are outlined to personalize instruction, such as graphic organizers, dramatized activities, and technological tools. These practices help students develop linguistic, mathematical, and socio-emotional skills.

Contribution to Academic Performance

Differentiated strategies enable students with special needs to actively participate in learning, promoting better understanding and retention of concepts. They facilitate inclusion by providing alternative means for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The document addressing strategies for students with limited Spanish proficiency suggests using visual aids, manipulatives, word walls, and cooperative activities to enhance comprehension and academic language use. Teachers are responsible for applying these differentiated strategies in their classrooms. The PRDE provides clear guidelines and suggests specific activities to address each student's needs, ranging from individualized instruction to small-group teaching, ensuring that each student receives the necessary support to achieve academic goals.

Meaningful Learning

Meaningful learning is based on the premise that students acquire deeper and more lasting knowledge when they actively participate in their learning process. Promoted by PRDE, this strategy fosters research, creativity, and problem-solving through interdisciplinary projects integrating areas such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), social studies, and the arts. In this approach, students become active agents in their learning by addressing complex and relevant topics. Teachers are encouraged to use familiar contexts to activate students' prior knowledge, facilitating comprehension of new linguistic and literary concepts.

The PRDE emphasizes that subjects, particularly Spanish and Mathematics—key accountability indicators—should not be taught in isolation from students' social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts. Mathematics and Spanish become meaningful when taught in ways that students can apply in real and relevant situations.

Benefits of Meaningful Learning

- Improved Knowledge Retention: Students are more likely to remember and apply concepts when they relate to their experiences and prior knowledge.
- Development of Key Competencies: Critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills are fostered.
- Increased Motivation and Participation: Connecting learning to real contexts engages students more in their studies.
- Preparation for Real Life: Students acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills applicable to everyday life and future careers.
- Examples of meaningful learning projects include:
- Environmental problem-solving: Students research and design strategies to address community challenges, such as waste management or resource conservation.
- Exploration of local history: Students collect and present historical data using digital storytelling or creative exhibitions.
- Technology development: Students create apps or devices to address specific needs in their school or community, enhancing their technological and innovative skills.
- Teaching for Accelerated Learning
- PRDE is committed to providing a learning environment that accelerates students' academic and personal development. This is achieved through pedagogical strategies that address individual needs while enhancing progress in key curriculum areas.

Problem-Bases Learning (PBL)

Is an innovative educational strategy that emphasizes active learning through the exploration of real-world problems. It shifts the focus from traditional teacher-centered instruction to a student-centered approach, fostering

critical thinking, collaboration, and self-directed learning. Here's why PBL is important as an educational strategy:

1. Promotes Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
 - PBL challenges students to analyze complex, real-world problems, identify key issues, and develop viable solutions.
 - It encourages students to think critically, evaluate evidence, and apply knowledge across disciplines.
2. Enhances Engagement and Motivation
 - By focusing on relevant, real-world scenarios, PBL makes learning more meaningful and engaging for students.
 - Students are more motivated when they see the direct application of their learning to practical situations.
3. Encourages Self-Directed Learning
 - PBL requires students to take ownership of their learning by researching, analyzing, and synthesizing information independently.
 - This fosters lifelong learning skills and prepares students for the demands of higher education and the workforce.
4. Develops Collaboration and Communication Skills
 - PBL often involves group work, where students collaborate to solve problems, share ideas, and present solutions.
 - This helps students develop teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills, which are essential in professional settings.
5. Integrates Knowledge Across Disciplines
 - PBL encourages interdisciplinary learning, as real-world problems often require knowledge from multiple subject areas.
 - This helps students make connections between different fields and understand the holistic nature of problem-solving.
6. Prepares Students for Real-World Challenges

- PBL mirrors the complexities of real-life situations, preparing students to tackle challenges they may encounter in their careers and personal lives.
- It equips students with practical skills such as decision-making, adaptability, and resilience.

The Puerto Rico educational system faces significant challenges, but it also has immense potential for growth and transformation. By adopting innovative strategies like Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Puerto Rico could create a more engaging, relevant, and effective educational experience for its students. PBL aligns with the needs of 21st-century learners and could empower Puerto Rican students to become critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and leaders in their communities. With the right support and resources, PBL could play a key role in revitalizing Puerto Rico's educational system and preparing its students for a brighter future.

Key Components of Accelerated Learning

- **Continuous and Formative Assessment:** Periodic evaluations help teachers identify individual learning needs and adjust strategies accordingly.
- **Contextualized Learning:** Connecting academic topics with students' real lives enhances understanding and retention, accelerating the learning process.
- **Personalized Interventions:** Based on concrete data, teachers design activities to address specific needs through tutoring, small groups, or adaptive technological tools.
- **Active Family Participation:** Families play a crucial role in accelerated learning by providing a supportive environment and reinforcing school concepts.

STEM approach in all academic areas

The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) approach is an interdisciplinary educational model that seeks to develop skills in these areas through hands-on learning, problem solving and innovation. It aims to prepare students to meet real-world challenges by integrating scientific and technological knowledge, fostering critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. This approach is key in modern education as it drives competitiveness in an increasingly digital and technological world.

The STEM approach applies to all areas of knowledge because it promotes essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and evidence-based decision making, which are fundamental to any discipline. Although STEM focuses on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, its principles can be applied in education, economics, health, the arts, humanities and more, as the use of logic, experimentation and innovation cut across any field. Moreover, in an increasingly digital and interconnected world, integrating STEM across all areas allows for the development of interdisciplinary solutions to global challenges.

The STEM focus will be expanded with the integration of the arts (STEAM) and reading (STREAM). This is critical to developing more well-rounded and balanced learning for students. The arts foster creativity, expression and innovative thinking, and essential skills for problem solving in science and technology. Reading, on the other hand, strengthens comprehension, communication and critical thinking, key elements for interpreting information and formulating ideas in any discipline. By extending STEM to STEAM and STREAM, a more humanistic and inclusive approach is promoted, preparing students not only for technological innovation, but also for effective communication and creative thinking in solving real-world problems.

Additional Activities Being Implemented

- **Curriculum Review** (ensuring alignment with student development and federal standards)
- **"Connect with Learning and Grow"** Initiative (fostering student engagement and improving proficiency)
- **DE Read Project** (enhancing reading comprehension through weekly reading sessions and digital resources)
- **NEExt Extended School Program** (offering extracurricular and academic support activities)
- **ATEMA Mathematics Technology Integration** (leveraging digital tools for personalized math instruction)
- **Summer Educational Program** (providing recreational, remedial, and entrepreneurial learning opportunities)
- **Family Guide and Competency Manuals** (supporting home-based learning reinforcement)
- **Social-Emotional Guide** (helping students manage stress, build self-esteem, and strengthen interpersonal relationships)
- **PK-12 Teaching Plans** (ensuring academic continuity in hybrid or remote settings)

Appendix B

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 03/31/2017)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity

has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are

applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concern of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.