



Parent Glossary

A Guide to Academic and Accountability Terms

Accommodation(s) — Changes designed to assist children with disabilities in meeting academic standards. These may include modifications in the way materials are presented or the way children respond to the materials, as well as changes in setting, timing and scheduling.

Adequate Yearly Progress — The term used in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* to indicate that a school or district has met reading and math progress goals.

Alternate Assessment — A non-test method showing access to grade-level standards by students with significant learning disabilities at an alternative standard of achievement.

Assessment — A formal or informal evaluation of student learning.

Benchmark Assessments — A series of low-stakes tests given to students in our district to track progress toward the academic standards that will be included in higher-stakes state tests. The results from the benchmark assessments help teachers identify areas of need and better prepare students for the state tests.

Charter Schools, Community Schools — Non-traditional public schools made possible by Ohio law that are free from many of the regulations of traditional public schools. Instead of having an elected school board, charter schools operate through a contract with a sponsoring organization. They receive the state funding that would have gone to the traditional public school district in which their students live.

Classroom Walk Through — A professional development strategy mainly used by principals to help them become more effective instructional leaders. As principals visit classrooms, they collect focused and specific information, such as the effectiveness of lesson plans supporting learning materials; patterns of teaching; and whether students are engaged in learning. Classroom Walk Throughs are not evaluations but are used to help principals, teachers and their schools work collaboratively to improve instruction.

Community Learning Center(s) — Community Learning Centers are the term that Cincinnati Public Schools uses for a strategy that supports student achievement while reconnecting schools with the communities they serve. Community Learning Centers expand the traditional notion of school by operating beyond traditional school hours to provide services to support families and neighborhoods. The specific services are determined by each school and community through an extensive engagement process designed to identify needs, resources and partnerships.

Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) — The name of the district improvement plan that Cincinnati Public Schools submits to the Ohio Department of Education to show the goals, strategies and action steps our district is taking to improve student achievement. It also is the name of a unified state and federal grants application and verification system.

Credit Recovery — A term used to describe programs designed to help high-school students who are behind grade level in course credits to catch up, or “recover,” missing credits. In Cincinnati Public Schools, many credit recovery opportunities involve online learning programs supported by an instructor.

Cross Cultural Competence — The ability to think, feel and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, social, cultural and linguistic diversity.

Culturally Responsive Practices — Educational practices, curriculum and instructional strategies that have been shown through research to increase the achievement of historically underachieving culturally diverse students.

Differentiated Instruction — Differentiated instruction means that teachers vary their teaching strategies depending on an individual student’s learning style and progress toward the standards. It’s based on the idea that teachers can no longer just teach in the traditional lecture style and expect all students to meet high academic standards.

District Improvement, District in Need of Improvement — These are terms used under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* to refer to a district receiving Title I funds and not meeting reading and math progress goals (Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP) for at least two years. Districts must meet AYP as a whole and for each student subgroup, such as economically disadvantaged and racial and ethnic subgroups.

English Language Learners — Students whose native language or home language is not English who are acquiring English language skills.

English as a Second Language (ESL) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) — English language instructional support provided to students whose native or home language is not English.

Extended-Learning Area (ELA) — An Extended-Learning Area is a design concept used in Cincinnati Public Schools’ Facilities Master Plan to support the district’s standards-based educational model. In this design, typically a cluster of four, enclosed classrooms is grouped with an Extended-Learning Area, which offers space to support such instructional strategies as small-group learning; intervention for students needing extra help; and project-based learning.

Formative Assessments — Assessments that provide constructive feedback to students so they can modify their approach to learning.

Framework — Framework refers to a model that does not involve new initiatives or programs, but, rather, it structures existing initiatives in a more systemic, effective way.

Functional Behavior Assessment — A question-driven problem-solving process that identifies factors impacting student behavior. The focus is on identifying the underlying causes of the behavior.

Futures Planning — Planning designed to assist students with disabilities prepare for additional training and/or jobs after high school.

GED (General Educational Development) — A high-school equivalency program through which students who did not complete high school can earn a high-school equivalency diploma.

Gifted Program — Educational services designed to meet the needs of children who have exceptional levels of performance or potential in one or more of four areas: cognitive ability, academic ability in specific subject areas, creativity in thinking and superior ability in visual or performing arts.

Grouping (and Regrouping) — An instructional strategy through which students are grouped according to a learning standard they need to learn, then regrouped once they have mastered a standard.

Highly Qualified Teacher — A term used in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* to describe a teacher who meets requirements showing the teacher knows the subject he or she teaches, has a college degree and is state certified. The *Act* requires that children be taught by Highly Qualified Teachers in core academic subjects.

Horizontal Team — A team of teachers from the same grade level that works collaboratively to support student learning.

IDEA, IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) — A federal law requiring that districts provide a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. The law was most recently amended in 2004 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

IEP (Individualized Education Program) — An IEP, or Individualized Education Program, is a term used to describe a written plan for a child with a disability. This includes a statement of plans for the child's future; the child's current level of performance; needs that require specially designed instruction; and the frequency, location and duration of those services.

Inclusive Practices — Practices through which children with disabilities are educated to the extent possible with non-disabled peers, being provided with appropriate support and access to the general education curriculum.

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) — An Instructional Leadership Team is a team formed by each school in our district designed to share instructional leadership decisions to improve student achievement. The ILT is composed mostly of educators at the school, but it also includes two non-teaching staff and two parent representatives selected by parent members of the school's Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC). The ILT makes budget recommendations, which then need LSDMC approval to occur.

Instructional Support Team (IST) — A professional development strategy used in our district through which an expert team including a principal, teachers and coaches works with and in schools to improve teaching and learning. Cincinnati Public Schools has seven Instructional Support Teams, each of which works with a group of schools.

Intervention — Targeted instruction given to children who are at risk of academic or social failure.

Job-Embedded Professional Development — A term used to describe training that is delivered in schools, as teachers and administrators go about their normal day, to help them become more effective at their jobs.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment–Literacy (KRA-L) — An assessment of incoming kindergartners required by the Ohio Department of Education to measure the degree to which children have developed early reading skills.

Least Restrictive Environment — A principle used in federal law regulating the education of children with disabilities in which children with special needs are educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) — Students whose native or home language is not English and whose limited English speaking, writing and listening ability may deny them the opportunity to participate effectively in school if English is the exclusive language of instruction.

Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC) — Local School Decision Making Committee is the name used in Cincinnati Public Schools to describe the group responsible for school governance decisions. Members include a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 16 people according to the following breakdown: three teachers, three non-teaching staff members, including the principal; three parents; and three community members. Optional additional members may include up to three students and one Partner in Education representative. Major LSDMC roles include setting school goals, approving school budget recommendations and helping to select the school principal.

Multi-Age, Multi-Age Classroom — An instructional grouping that includes students of different ages and grade levels.

National Board Certification — A prestigious, voluntary certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that is widely regarded as the highest honor in the teaching profession. Teachers earn national certification by successfully completing a rigorous, performance-based assessment that takes between one and two years. More than 100 teachers in our district have earned this honor.

No Child Left Behind Act — The name of major federal education legislation approved in 2002 designed to improve student achievement by setting higher standards and greater accountability for schools, districts and states.

Ohio Achievement Tests — State-mandated assessments in grades 3 through 8 designed to measure student proficiency on state academic standards in the content areas of reading, math, science, social studies and writing.

Ohio CORE — A state initiative passed into law in December 2006 strengthening the academic credits students must have to graduate from high school. The Ohio CORE includes four years of math, including Algebra II or its equivalent; three years of science, with lab experience; four years of English; three years of social studies; a half unit of health; a half unit or two semesters of physical education; and a combination of five credit units selected among foreign language, fine arts, business, technology and career technical courses.

Ohio EdChoice — A voucher program sponsored by the state through which students in schools that have been rated in Academic Watch or Academic Emergency for two of the past three years are eligible for tuition vouchers to non-public schools.

Ohio Graduation Tests — State tests linked to state academic standards in the areas of reading, math, science, social studies and writing that students must pass to graduate from high school.

One Plan — The term used by Cincinnati Public Schools to describe each school's comprehensive plan to improve student achievement. It is a school's equivalent of the district's strategic plan.

OTELA (Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition) — A test used to measure English-language proficiency of students who are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), also known as English Language Learners (ELL).

Portfolio — A collection of student work that could include such items as writing assignments and projects.

Positive Behavior Supports — A model for setting, modeling and supporting clear, consistent expectations of desired behavior in schools.

Positive School Culture, Positive School Culture Plans — Positive School Culture is the term used by Cincinnati Public Schools to describe a proactive approach to student discipline. It involves strategies that focus on individual, classroom and school levels to promote positive behavior that keeps students engaged in learning. Every school develops its own Positive School Culture Plan based on its specific needs.

Professional Learning Community — In Cincinnati Public Schools, a Professional Learning Community is a term used to describe schools that use elements of teaming to create a culture of collaboration to support student learning.

Pyramid of Interventions (POI) — The framework used by our district to provide both academic and behavior supports to children. There are three levels of support in this model: Schoolwide, Targeted Group and Intensive Individual Interventions.

Public School Choice (PSC) — Public School Choice is a provision in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* that may offer a student enrolled in a Title I school designated as in Need of Improvement the option to attend a school not in that designation, even as the student's original school is improving.

Rubric(s) — A description of a level of performance toward mastery of a standard. Rubrics typically are used in sets that describe ranges of performance from low to high.

School Improvement Status, School in Need of Improvement — These are terms used under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* to refer to a school receiving Title I funds that has not met reading and math progress goals (Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP) for at least two years. Schools must meet AYP as a whole and for each student subgroup, such as economically disadvantaged and racial and ethnic subgroups.

SEAL (Standards/Examine Data/Assessment/Learning Experiences) — A framework used to develop lessons that identify and support high levels of student proficiency on academic standards.

Standards in Practice — Standards in Practice (SIP) is a professional development strategy used by Cincinnati Public Schools that is based on looking closely at the assignments that teachers give students. Working under the premise that, "Students can do no better than the assignments they are given," teachers use SIP to analyze and strengthen student assignments to make sure they are helping students reach academic standards.

Standards — A set of common expectations of skills and knowledge that all students need to master to be competent learners. Cincinnati Public Schools has adopted the academic standards set by the Ohio Department of Education.

Standards-based instruction means that teachers must help each and every student reach the standards for every subject.

State Report Card Ratings — Ratings based on state test passing rates and other performance measures for schools and districts. The Ohio Department of Education rates schools according to five categories, which are (in highest-to-lowest-order): Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch and Academic Emergency.

Strategic Plan — A comprehensive, multiyear plan used to guide systemic improvement. Cincinnati Public Schools' five-year improvement plan for the 2006-07 through 2010-11 school years is called, *Building Futures: Every student... Every school... Every day*. This plan includes 10 broad goals, strategies to achieve them, and measurable annual and five-year improvement targets to track and provide accountability for progress.

Student Based Budgeting — A budgeting system used in Cincinnati Public Schools whereby the majority of district revenue follows the student to the school rather than being centrally controlled, and schools have responsibility for many budget decisions.

Summative Assessments — Summative assessments are tests that occur at the end of instructional terms to provide a summary of student learning over a period of time. Examples include midterms, final exams and state grade-level tests.

Supplemental Educational Services — The term used in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* to refer to the extra, free tutoring help that children from low-income families may be eligible to receive. These services usually are provided outside the regular school day.

Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) — A research-based model designed to strengthen instruction and professional development by demonstrating the link between good teaching and student achievement. TAP, which is endorsed by the Ohio Department of Education and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, is being piloted in three district elementary schools during the 2006-07 school year.

Teacher Evaluation System — The system developed and used by Cincinnati Public Schools to describe good teaching and evaluate teachers' performance. It is based on nationally recognized standards of good teaching. Teachers receive annual evaluations and a more comprehensive evaluation every five years.

Title I — The part of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* that supports school and district programs to improve academic performance of students from low-income families. The U.S. Department of Education provides Title I funds to states to distribute to districts such as Cincinnati Public Schools, based on the number of economically disadvantaged children.

Transition — Movement of a student from one setting to another; for example, preschool to elementary school, elementary school to high school, or high school to college, other postsecondary options or the workplace.

Vertical Team — A team of teachers from different grade levels (such as kindergarten through third grade, or fourth through sixth grade) that works cooperatively to prepare students for successively higher learning standards.