

## Target Group Outcomes Guide

### School and District Report Cards

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the Target Group Outcomes priority area, which replaced the Closing Gaps priority area in report cards starting in the 2020-21 report cards.

#### Background

The Closing Gaps priority area, last seen on 2018-19 report cards, was designed to focus on closing statewide achievement gaps for students from traditionally marginalized populations. Over the last few years of implementing this priority area, some issues became clear. Scores for small schools could see large fluctuations year-to-year, with score swings largely influenced by changes in student population, rather than changes in student performance. Additionally, the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) heard from school and district staff that while gap closure is an important focus the calculations were overly complex, making it difficult to convey a clear data story to the public.

The Target Group Outcomes priority area addresses both of these challenges while encouraging support for improved performance for all students regardless of whether they are part of a Closing Gaps group or not.

- To increase stability of scores year-to-year, this priority area focuses on a **single target group of students**, composed of students in roughly the bottom quartile (25%) of performance based on the prior year's assessment results. As a result, schools are unlikely to see large shifts in this priority area score due to changes in student population alone. It is also less common for a school to see changes in whether or not this priority area is scored from one year to the next as the Target Group will not be contingent on multiple student groups meeting cell size as required in the former Closing Gaps priority area.
- To make the meaning of this data clearer, the complicated scoring structure used in the Closing Gaps priority area was replaced with a **multiple measure system**. This scoring system calculates measures familiar from other priority areas - achievement, value-added growth, chronic absenteeism, and attendance or graduation rates. The same calculation methods are used, but applied only to students in the target group, creating a "**mini report card**" for the group. In addition, to better facilitate data storytelling, this approach further contributes to score stability by using measures that fluctuate less year-to-year.

Ultimately, the purpose of these changes is to create a measure that is more reliable, inclusive, and actionable for schools and districts.

## The Case for a Target Group

Target Group Outcomes examines multiple measures for students in roughly the bottom quartile (25%) of performance based on the prior year's test results, along with any students who scored less than proficient on that year's alternate assessment. This measure was designed with equity in mind, to inform improvement efforts that result in positive change for learners who most need it while also improving outcomes for all students.

This change, from scoring the outcomes of demographics-based groups to the outcomes of a performance-based target group was made for three reasons:

**To focus on need:** A foundation of equity is that when the **most vulnerable students are supported, all students will benefit**. This premise is built into the scoring of this metric and the report card - when the performance of the bottom quartile increases, the overall performance (and scores) of all students also increases. Due to historic marginalization of students of color, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English learners, Target Group membership based on prior year performance disproportionately includes students in these groups. As a result, though the Target Group is constructed based on need, it encourages raising achievement for students from these groups just as the demographic based Closing Gaps priority area did.

**For more equitable inclusion:** Historically, student groups at a school that did not have at least 20 students (e.g., 17 Black students, 19 Hispanic/Latino students) were not included in the Closing Gaps measure and student groups that hovered around 20 from year-to-year could jump in and out of cell size (and scores), causing large and distracting score fluctuations. The performance-based Target Group approach allows for the **inclusion of students who are in most need of support, regardless of the size of their demographic group**, while providing a more stable group size year-to-year.

**To support continuous improvement:** Identifying a lowest-performing group reinforces the idea that every school has work to do to close gaps. By focusing on a Target Group that is roughly 25% of students, schools are also provided with a manageable number of students to place focus. They can 'target' their efforts to improve outcomes **for students most in need of support**, while increasing opportunities for all students.

For more information on *how* the Target Group is created, please see the *Creating the Target Group* section below.

## The Case for a Multiple Measures Scoring Approach

The Target Group Outcomes priority area uses a multiple measures "mini report card" scoring approach. The target group is scored using the familiar measures of achievement, value-added growth, chronic absenteeism, and graduation/attendance rates. Our work with stakeholders identified several factors in support of this new approach:

**Clarity:** Target Group Outcomes uses measures that are already on the report card, just applied specifically to a target group of students. One reason for this change is that stakeholders had great difficulty interpreting the Closing Gaps trend comparison data tables in prior report cards and understanding how assessment and graduation trends translated to scores. By shifting to a scoring approach that uses measures from other parts of the report card, stakeholders can more easily interpret and - importantly - act upon these results.



**Limitations of trend comparison scoring:** Scoring based on comparison trends can be volatile, as small changes in rates can sometimes lead to large changes in scoring that are not reflective of actual performance changes. Another problem inherent to trend-based comparison scoring is that if the statewide comparison decreases, a school’s score could increase even if that school’s performance has not changed. The new multi-measures approach is a more stable and reliable scoring system that captures student performance regardless of changes in comparison data.

**More well-rounded scoring:** This shift to a multi-measure scoring approach has the added benefit of providing a more comprehensive look at the performance of students at a school who are in most need of support. For example, measuring growth for the target group is important in prioritizing both high achievement and improvement in performance. By incorporating chronic absenteeism into this priority area, schools can get credit for improving attendance among the lowest performing students, an improvement that often foreshadows academic improvement.

### Scoring Components

Target groups are scored using the familiar measures of achievement, value-added growth, chronic absenteeism, and graduation/attendance rates. These scores are calculated using the same methodologies as the analogous priority area and component scores for all students (Table 1). The only difference is that within the Target Group Outcomes priority area these calculations **only apply to students in the Target Group**. Note that students in the Target Group continue to be included in calculations for the Achievement, Growth, and On-Track to Graduation priority areas in addition to being scored separately in the Target Group Outcomes priority area.

**Table 1: Target Group Outcomes Scoring Components Calculations**

Target Group Outcomes Scoring Component	Calculation
Achievement	Multi-year weighted average of English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics points-based proficiency rates
Growth	Multi-year weighted average of value-added growth measure scores
Chronic Absenteeism	Multi-year weighted average of chronic absenteeism rate subtracted from one. Students with attendance rate below 90% are considered chronically absent.
Graduation or Attendance	For schools that graduate students, graduation is calculated using the average of four-year and seven-year cohort graduation rates. For schools with no 12th grade or whose graduation cohort has fewer than 20 students, attendance is calculated by dividing the number of actual days attended by the number of total days attended by students.

*For more information on priority area calculations, please visit the [Report Card Resources](#) page.*

These methodologies have demonstrated reliability in scoring school and district performance over time. In addition, familiarity with these measures allows stakeholders to interpret the results easily and use what they learn to inform continuous improvement.



## Creating the Target Group

The target group is determined by prior performance rather than demographic association. It is roughly the bottom quartile of performers using the prior year's state assessment results, though additional business rules may result in a group that is more than 25% of the school or district's tested population. To determine the students who are included in the Target Group Outcomes priority area, follow the steps described below and demonstrated in Figure 1.

**1. Look at Forward, ACT Aspire,<sup>1</sup> and ACT with writing assessment results from the prior year. The students in the 2022-23 target group were determined by performance on the prior assessment year of 2021-22. It does not matter if the student was not at the current accountable school when taking the assessment in the prior year. For example, 9th graders can be included in a high school's target group based upon their 8th grade Forward results. Students who did not take the Wisconsin state assessment in the prior year are not included in the target group.**

**2a. Convert English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics scaled scores on state assessments to standardized scores (z-scores) that can be compared across grades. Use of a z-score allows for scores for students in different grades to be compared. A score from the 8th grade Forward assessment is on a different scale than a score from the 10th grade Aspire assessment. Z-scores are used to standardize these scores:**

$$\text{Z-score} = (\text{student scale score} - \text{mean scale score for grade statewide}) / \text{standard deviation of scale scores for grade statewide}$$

**2b. Percentile rank z-scores of students within a school to identify students whose ELA and/or Math z-score is in the bottom quartile (25%) in that school for assignment to the target group. If the bottom quartile contains fewer than 20 students, keep adding students to the target group until the minimum cell size of 20 is met, up until 50% of students. In other words, at least 20 students are required in order to have a target group score, but the target group will not comprise the majority of full academic year (FAY) tested students. For example:**

- o 100 tested FAY students = 25 students in the target group (25%).
- o 60 tested FAY students = 20 students in the target group in order to meet cell size (33%).
- o 30 tested FAY students = 20 students in the target group would exceed 50% and therefore the measure is not scored at the school level. Note that students in this school's bottom quartile will be included in the district-level target group.

**3. Some students have test results without scaled scores from the prior year. These students are added in addition to the bottom quartile of students and are included in the target group as follows:**

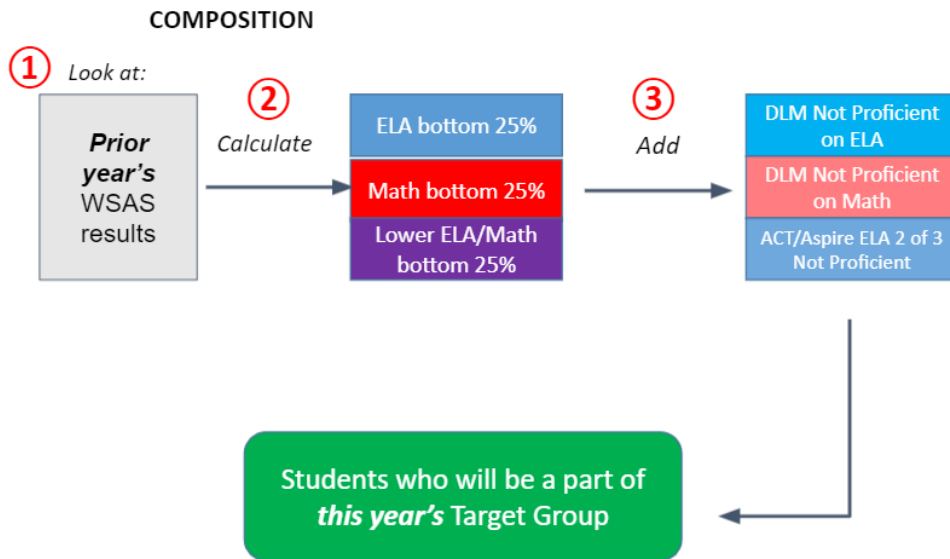
- a. Add students who scored less than proficient on the alternate assessment, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) in either ELA and/or Math. The DLM does not provide scale scores, so these students cannot be included in the percentile rankings.
- b. Add students who scored less than proficient and only completed 2 out of 3 components of the ELA content area on the ACT with writing or ACT Aspire assessments, as these students also do not have scaled scores to be included in the rankings.

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<sup>1</sup> Pre-ACT Secure replaced ACT Aspire for grades 9-10 in the Wisconsin State Assessment System in 2023. Since target groups are determined using *prior year* assessment results, the 2023-24 report cards will be the first in which target groups can be determined using Pre-ACT Secure.



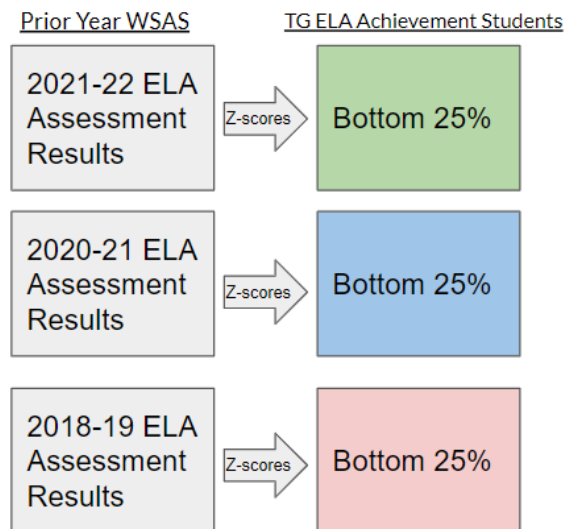
**Figure 1: Steps for Creating Target Group**



See the “Additional Business Rules” section on page 7 for more details on specific target groups inclusion.

Note that Target Group Outcomes components, like the priority areas, are scored by averaging multiple years of data. In order to score multiple years of target group data, the process above must be applied to the number of years of data required for the component (Table 1). In other words, multiple years of data, require multiple years of target groups. For example, the ELA achievement score of the 2022-23 report card uses a weighted average of data from 2022-23, 2021-22, and 2020-21. The Target Group Outcomes ELA achievement score mirrors this process, so target groups must be determined for each of these years by looking at prior year assessment results (Figure 2):

**Figure 2: Creating Target Groups for 2022-23 Target Group Outcomes Achievement**



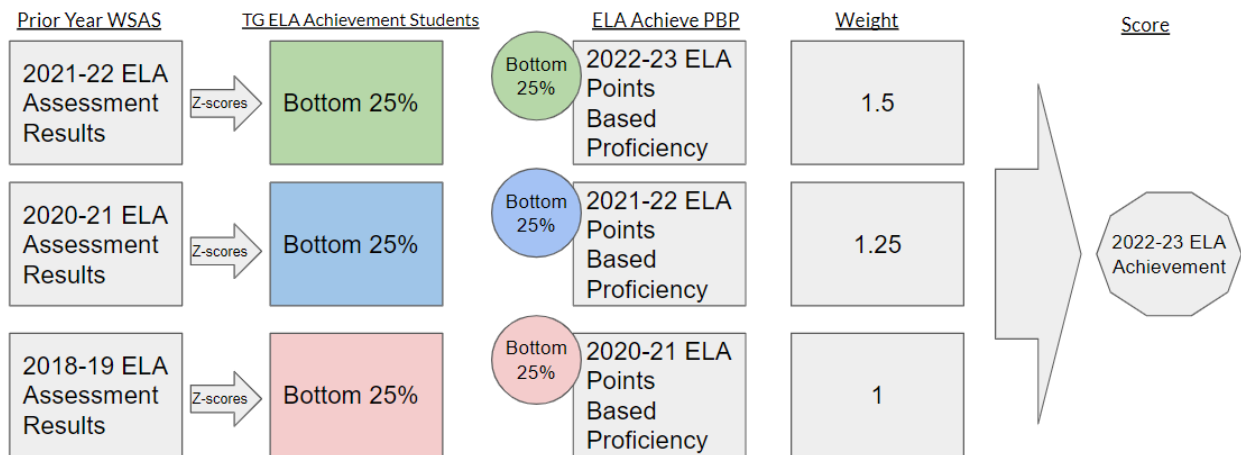
## Scoring the Target Group Components

Target Group Outcomes component scores are calculated using the same methodology as the “all students” priority area scores. The only difference is that these calculations **only apply to target group students** and not all students at the school. To score the target groups, continue the steps using the students identified in the previous section (Figure 2):

**1. Apply the same calculations** (e.g., points-based proficiency) to achievement, growth, chronic absenteeism, and attendance/graduation as used in other priority areas for all students **to target group students only**. These calculations use the **same source data** (i.e., most recent assessment, attendance, and graduation data) as in the “all students” measures.

**2. Use these calculations to determine the scores for each component of the Target Group Outcomes priority area.** Figure 3 demonstrates this process for 2022-23 Target Group Outcomes ELA achievement:

**Figure 3: Scoring 2022-23 Target Group Outcomes ELA Achievement**



For complete details on how Target Group Outcomes and other priority areas are scored in the report cards, please see the Technical Guide located on the [Report Card Resources page](#).

## Target Group Outcomes Priority Area Score

To determine a Target Group Outcomes priority area score:

1. Average the scoring components together using the Target Group Outcomes component score weights found in the [online report card weighting calculator](#). Table 2 provides example weighting for a school that has all four Target Group outcomes scoring components.
2. Transform the raw score to the priority area score<sup>2</sup> by using the following formula:  

$$\text{TGO Score} = (\text{TGO Raw Score} * 1.77) - 51.01$$
3. Set TGO scores below zero to zero. Likewise, set TGO scores above 100 to 100.

<sup>2</sup> Growth and Target Group Outcomes score distributions are rescaled to align with the Achievement score distribution so that overall scores and ratings are comparable for schools with and without these priority areas.



**Table 2: Example Target Group Outcomes Priority Area Weighting**

Target Group Outcomes Scoring Component	Weight (% of Target Group Outcomes Priority Area score) <sup>3</sup>
Achievement	20%
Growth	50%
Chronic Absenteeism	15%
Graduation or Attendance	15%

Note that unlike in overall report card weighting, **achievement and growth are not subject to variable weighting for Target Group Outcomes**. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students at a school or district does not impact how the achievement and growth components are weighted in Target Group Outcomes, as it does in the overall report card weighting. For a comprehensive look at Target Group Outcomes and report card weighting scenarios, please refer to our [online report card weighting calculator](#).

### Additional Business Rules

The previous sections describe the processes used to create and score target groups. As is the case with other priority areas, there are additional technical business rules that impact exactly which students are included and scored in each target group component. This means that the groups of students who are included in each target group scoring component can differ from each other (though the degree of overlap will likely be significant for most schools). The descriptions and Table 3 below outline these additional business rules:

#### ELA and Mathematics Content Areas

Just like in the priority areas, Target Group Outcomes Achievement and Growth scoring components are separated by ELA and mathematics content areas. This applies to both composition and scoring, meaning that a student could score in the bottom 25% of ELA at their school but not in the bottom 25% of mathematics. In this example, the student would be included in the Target Group Achievement and Growth for ELA but not mathematics.

#### Inclusion of Non-Proficient DLM and ACT/Aspire ELA 2 of 3 students

As mentioned in the “Creating the Target Group” section above, students who scored below proficient on the DLM or who scored below proficient in ELA for ACT/Aspire when only 2 of 3 subjects were completed do not have scaled scores. Therefore, they cannot be included in percentile rankings. These students are added to target groups after bottom quartiles are calculated. These students cannot, however, be included in Target Group Growth, because scaled scores are required to calculate a growth score.

#### Bottom Quartile for Chronic Absenteeism and Graduation/Attendance

For Target Group Achievement and Growth, different target groups are created and scored for ELA and mathematics content areas based on the bottom quartile of performers in these content areas. For the other Target Group scoring components, the target groups are determined by taking the **lower of the two content area scores** for each student and percentile ranking based on these lower scores. DLM non-proficient students (on either ELA or mathematics) and non-proficient ACT/Aspire ELA 2 of 3 students are added to these groups after the bottom quartile of lowest scores is calculated.

<sup>3</sup> Target Group Outcomes weighting can vary based on data availability. Please see the [online report card weighting calculator](#) for complete weighting scenarios.



### **Full Academic Year (FAY) Status**

Just like in other priority areas, Target Group Outcomes Achievement and Growth scoring components require students to be enrolled in a school or district for a full academic year (see [WISEdash glossary](#) for complete definition of FAY) to be included in the *scoring* of these measures. Target Group Outcomes components Chronic Absenteeism and Graduation/Attendance do not require students to be FAY at a school to be included, though for the chronic absenteeism measure, students must be enrolled in the school for at least 90 days in order to be included (akin to what is done for the 'all students' chronic absenteeism measure). Note that the prior year test result used for *assignment* to the target group need not be FAY.

### **Lagged Data**

Attendance, graduation, and chronic absenteeism data are all lagged by one year on report cards because of the timing of the WISEdata snapshots that capture these data. This applies to Target Group Outcomes scoring components as well. For example, 2022-23 report cards have 2022-23 assessment data for Target Group achievement and growth but 2021-22 attendance, graduation, and chronic absenteeism data for these Target Group scores.

### **Graduation**

Only students who are eligible to graduate are included in the Target Group Graduation scoring component. This includes 12th grade students and students who remained enrolled past 12th grade. For the students in high school for more than four years, the assessment results in the year prior to their 4-year cohort graduation year are used for percentile ranking in target group inclusion - this will usually be a grade 11 assessment.

Students in the 2021-22 four-year and seven-year graduation cohorts are included in the 2022-23 Target Group Graduation scoring component. Assessment results from 2020-21 for members of the four-year cohort and from 2016-17 for seven-year cohort members (the 11th grade assessment for all but a few) are used to percentile-rank the students for target group inclusion.





**Table 3: Additional Considerations for Target Group Inclusion**

Additional Consideration	TG Achievement	TG Growth	TG Chronic Absenteeism	TG Graduation	TG Attendance
Took state assessment in prior year	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Took state assessment this year	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Was FAY at school in prior year	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
FAY at school this year	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
90+ days at school last year*	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Eligible to graduate last year*	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗

\*Graduation and attendance data are lagged by one year in report cards.

✓ = Required

✗ = Not required

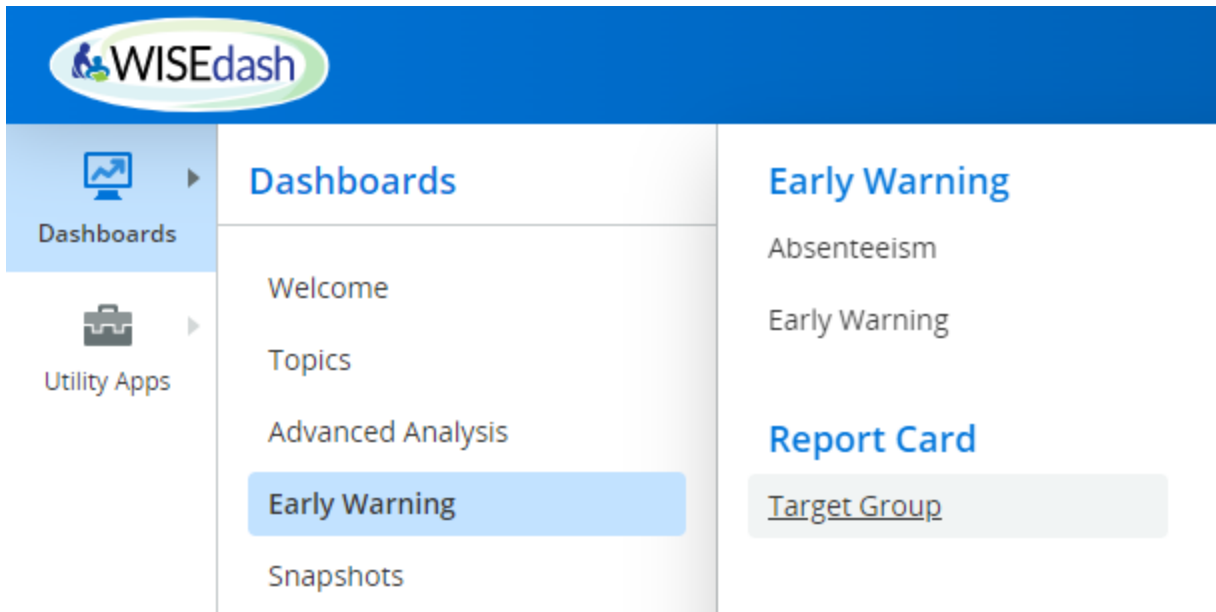
### Target Group Outcomes in District Report Cards

The target groups used in Target Group Outcomes for **district report cards** is comprised of **students from target groups at schools in the district**. In other words, it is **not** the bottom 25% of assessment performers in the district. This approach differs from other priority areas that treat all students in the district like “one big school” for calculations. Students in the bottom 25% at their school are included in the district target group, even if their school did not meet cell size for its target group.

### Target Group Preview Dashboard in WISEdash for Districts

Target Group Outcomes is designed to help schools see their own “gaps” between students scoring in the lowest quartile and the rest of their student body. Schools should strive to narrow these gaps by implementing policies and procedures that will best serve the students most in need of support while also improving opportunities for all students. In order to support schools and districts in identifying and serving their lowest-performing students, students who are *likely* to be in the target group in future years at a district- and school- level are displayed on WISEdash for Districts starting in October 2022; these dashboards will be updated between late-September and early-December annually to help with continuous improvement planning for the upcoming school year. This dashboard can be found in the Early Warning area of WISEdash for Districts under Report Card. For more information, please see the [WISEdash for Districts - Target Group Preview Dashboard page](#).





For the current year’s report card, the Office of Educational Accountability will provide, upon request, a list of students who are included in a school or district report card target groups. Starting with the 2022-23 report cards, **Target Group Outcomes (TGO) data files are no longer automatically available in SAFE**, but can be requested by opening a data inquiry or emailing [ReportCardHelp@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:ReportCardHelp@dpi.wi.gov) during the report card inquiry period.

### Resources

Please visit the [Report Card Resources page](#) to find additional resources on Target Group Outcomes. You can also contact the OEA team with questions at [reportcardhelp@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:reportcardhelp@dpi.wi.gov).

