

NCLB WAIVER SUMMARY: ACCOUNTABILITY

PROMISING ASPECTS OF THE PLAN:

- District responsibilities to support and intervene in Priority, Focus, and Alert Schools — the schools with the lowest overall or group performance — are clarified in memorandums of agreement with the state. For Priority Schools, these MOAs include the district responsibility to ensure that ineffective teachers do not transfer in. This is important given the critical role that districts play in creating the conditions for school improvement, especially when it comes to ensuring that schools have access to the strongest educators.
- Districts will be held accountable not only for the lowest performing schools, but also for district-wide performance and for student groups missing achievement or graduation-rate goals at any school.

AREAS OF CONCERN:

- The state is simultaneously developing another accountability system, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). Advocates will need to monitor closely how the CCRPI will interact with the expectations and school determinations outlined in this waiver plan to ensure that, taken together, both systems contain ambitious goals for raising achievement and closing gaps, and that both will prompt action when any group of students does not meet goals.
- There are no clear consequences for Priority, Focus, or Alert schools that do not improve after receiving support and interventions.

What indicators are used to measure school performance?

- For elementary and middle schools, proficiency in English language arts, math, reading, science, and social studies, overall and for student groups
- For high schools, proficiency on ninth-grade literature, American literature, biology, economics, mathematics I, mathematics II, physical science, and U.S. history end-of-course assessments, overall and for student groups
- High school graduation rate, overall and for student groups

What are the expectations for performance on these indicators?

- For all indicators, the goal is to reduce by half the difference between 2011 performance and 100 percent in six years, overall and for each student group.
 - Goals are set statewide, not for individual schools.

How are student groups included?

- Group performance is measured against the overall and group-specific goals to generate a Performance Flag for each group:
 - Green Flag = Group met overall and group goal.
 - Yellow Flag = Group met either overall or group goal.
 - Red Flag = Group met neither overall nor group goal.
- Group performance is used to identify Subgroup Alert Schools, which are schools where group achievement falls at or below the third standard deviation compared with the statewide group average; and Graduation Alert Schools, which are schools where group graduation rates fall at or below the third standard deviation compared with the statewide group average.
 - Groups included for Performance Flags, Subgroup Alert Schools, and Graduation Alert Schools are low-income students, African Americans, Latinos, Asians/Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaskans, whites, multi-racial students, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.

How are overarching school determinations made?

- Schools will receive a rating under the state's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), which is not part of the approved waiver plan.
- School determinations include Reward, Priority, Focus, and Alert Schools. Alert Schools include the Subgroup Alert and Graduation Alert Schools as well as Subject Alert Schools, which are schools where performance on a specific subject-area assessment falls at or below the third standard deviation compared with the statewide average for that subject.

How are Priority Schools identified?

- Priority Schools include 5 percent of Title I schools, including the following:
 - School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools
 - High schools with graduation rates of less than 60 percent
 - Schools with the lowest aggregate assessment performance in 2011 and a lack of progress over three years

How are Focus Schools identified?

- Focus Schools comprise 10 percent of Title I schools with the biggest difference in achievement between the highest and lowest performing group in the school.
 - Groups included are low-income students, African Americans, Latinos, Asians/Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaskans, whites, multi-racial students, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.
- High schools with graduation rates less than 60 percent that are not Priority Schools

What happens to Priority Schools?

- Supports and Interventions:
 - The state will provide supports including data analysis, improvement planning, leadership, curriculum and instruction, and professional learning.
 - The district will sign a three-year memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the state outlining the actions and interventions required of each Priority School, including assessing principal performance and, if necessary, replacing the principal, preventing the transfer in of ineffective teachers, data analysis, staff development, additional learning time, and engaging families and communities.
 - Schools must offer Flexible Learning Programs through setting aside 5 percent of Title I funds, and must set aside 10 percent of Title I funds for professional development.

- Exit Criteria and Consequences:
 - Criteria for exiting Priority status are: no longer meets the Priority School definition for three consecutive years, reduces the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent over three years, and, if identified for graduation rates, improves the graduation rate by 8 percent over three years.
 - There are no clear consequences for Priority Schools that don't improve.

What happens to Focus Schools?

- Supports and Interventions:
 - Districts sign a memorandum of understanding (MOA) with the state outlining actions and interventions for each school, including providing additional learning time for students, data analysis, professional development, collaborative planning time for teachers, and leadership development.
 - Schools must offer Flexible Learning Programs through a 5 percent Title I set-aside.
- Exit Criteria and Consequences:
 - Criteria for exiting Focus status are: no longer meets the Focus School definition for three consecutive years, reduces the number of non-proficient students in the group for which the school was identified by 25 percent over three years, and, if identified for graduation rates, improves the graduation rate of the group for which the school was identified by 8 percent, or to a rate at or above the state average for that group for three consecutive years.
 - There are no clear consequences for Focus Schools that don't improve.

What happens to schools that are not Priority or Focus? Does underperformance against goals trigger action?

- Subgroup, Graduation, and Subject Alert Schools receive the same supports and interventions as Focus Schools.
- Title I schools that are not Priority, Focus, or Alert but do not meet their goals overall or for groups will receive interventions from the district, regional service area, or state. If they do not improve within two years, school and district Title I budgets will be reviewed, the school will be subject to monitoring from the district or regional service area, and the state may require the district to develop an Effectiveness Plan.

Will the state continue to require public school choice?

- State law provides choice in all districts and schools. However, it's unclear whether the choice system will prioritize students in Priority, Focus, or Alert Schools.

How are Reward Schools identified, and what incentives are provided?

- Reward Schools comprise 5 percent of Title I schools with the highest achievement and graduation rates that made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2011.
- An additional 10 percent of Title I schools that made the most improvement from 2009-2011 also are identified as Reward Schools.
- Reward Schools receive public recognition and, if available, a monetary reward, .

Is there a system of district accountability?

- Districts are held accountable for district-wide achievement as well as achievement in each school, as measured through the Performance Flags. Districts identified as needing support because of district-wide or school-specific achievement receive interventions from regional service areas and the state, including improvement planning and implementation. Districts may also have to sign an MOA with the state outlining expectations and actions to be taken, which could include Title I set-asides, monitoring reports, or withholding of funds.

- Each year, the state identifies four districts with the greatest improvement for recognition and, if available, a monetary award .