

## **NCLB WAIVER SUMMARY: ACCOUNTABILITY**

*Note: Oklahoma received a conditional waiver because its A-F grading system is not yet final. The state must amend its waiver request by the end of the 2012-13 school year. This summary covers both the current system and the anticipated A-F grading system.*

### **PROMISING ASPECTS OF THE PLAN:**

- The state requires any district with a Priority School to demonstrate that it can improve these schools. Oklahoma lists the type of data and evidence that a district must submit to the state to prove that it has the capacity to make improvement. If a district cannot do so, the state will assume control of the operations and management of the school. This status gives Priority Schools in low-capacity districts immediate access to state assistance.
- The state will maintain choice options for families of students in the lowest performing schools. The state and districts will also support principals in these schools in ensuring that ineffective teachers are not hired and do not transfer in.

### **AREAS OF CONCERN:**

- The plan is incomplete. The state has not yet finalized its A-F grading system, so it's unclear how school determinations will be made.<sup>1</sup>
- The performance of students of color, low-income students, English-language learners, and students with disabilities will be secondary to the school grades. The state has clear goals for these groups requiring ambitious improvements every year. However, performance against these goals is one of several metrics that determine only whether a school receives a “plus” or “minus” designation alongside its grade, and these pluses and minuses are virtually irrelevant in terms intervening in schools.
- The Focus School identification process has the potential to exclude some groups of students. Focus Schools will be identified either on the basis of their enrollment and performance of the state's three lowest performing groups (which, for the initial year, are African Americans, English-language learners, and students with disabilities); or (for high schools) on the basis of their graduation rates for students in the two groups with the lowest graduation rate statewide (which, for the initial year, are African-American and Latino students). As a result, schools where a different group — low-income students or American Indians, for instance — is performing at low levels may not receive the supports and interventions they need to improve.

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### **What indicators are used to measure school performance?**

- Performance index in reading, math, science, social studies, and writing for students overall
- Learning gains in reading and math for students overall and the bottom 25 percent of students in the school:
  - The learning gains measure looks at students' year-to-year change in achievement levels.

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<sup>1</sup> The State Board of Education is scheduled to approve the administrative rules for the grading system in March 2012.

- Whole school improvement:
  - For elementary and middle schools: attendance rate, parent and community engagement, school culture, dropout rate, and the percent of students taking higher level coursework at a satisfactory or higher level
  - For high schools: the percent of students completing a college-prep curriculum, graduation rate, parent and community engagement, school culture, postsecondary readiness, advanced coursework participation, graduation rate of students who did not pass eighth-grade state assessments, and change in these components from year to year

### **What are the expectations for performance on these indicators?**

- An index that includes performance (weighted at 50 percent), growth of all students (25 percent), and growth of the lowest performers in the school (25 percent) is calculated for each school and group.
- Reading and math Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) are an index score of 300 or an increase of 15 percent of the difference between last year's index score and 320, overall and for each group.
- Graduation-rate AMOs increase from 82 percent in 2011-12 to 87 percent in 2013-14, or an improvement of at least 10 percent of the difference between last year's rate and 100 percent, overall and for each group.
- Attendance-rate AMOs increase from 92 percent in 2011-12 to 95 percent in 2013-14, overall and for each group.
- Expectations within the grading system are not yet finalized.

### **How are student groups included?**

- The performance of each group against reading, math, graduation-rate, and attendance-rate AMOs is one of the factors that determine whether the school receives a "plus" or a "minus" alongside its school grade (the other factors are teacher and leader effectiveness, and whether all metrics are moving in the same direction or show significant discrepancies).
  - Groups include: low-income students, African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, Asians, whites, students with disabilities, students without disabilities, and English-language learners.

### **How are overarching school determinations made?**

- If the A-F system is delayed, schools are assigned a color rating based on the percentage of AMOs achieved.
  - 0-33 percent = yellow; 34-66 percent = yellow-green; 67-100 percent = green
- Under the A-F system, school grades will be based on the following:
  - 33 percent on student test scores in reading, math, science, social studies, and writing
  - 17 percent on student learning gains in reading and math
  - 17 percent on student learning gains of lowest 25 percent of students in reading and math
  - 33 percent on "whole school improvement," including graduation and dropout rates
- The state has yet to determine thresholds for each category and how a school's total score will be converted to a grade.

### **How are Priority Schools identified?**

- Schools in the bottom 5 percent of all Title I schools, and in the bottom 5 percent of all schools based on student performance in reading and math unless the school has been named a High-Progress Reward School
- Any high school (Title I or not) with a graduation rate below 60 percent for three consecutive years
- All Tier I School Improvement Grants (SIG) schools
- Under A-F: Any school that receives an F grade or any school that would qualify for the designation under the prior system

### **How are Focus Schools identified?**

- Any school in the bottom 30 percent of reading and math proficiency for at least one of the three lowest performing groups in the state that also has overrepresentation of the group(s) of students for which it is low performing, unless the school has been named a High-Progress Reward School
  - For the initial year, the groups included are African Americans, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.
- Any school in the bottom 10 percent of graduation rates for at least one of the two groups with the lowest statewide graduation rates that also has an overrepresentation of the group(s) of students for which it has a low grad rate, unless the school has cut in half the difference between the group's graduation rate and 100 percent since 2007-08
  - For the initial year, the groups with the lowest graduation rates are Latinos and African Americans.
- High schools maintaining a graduation rate below 60 percent for three consecutive years but which haven't been named Priority Schools
- Under A-F: Any D+, D, or D- school, or any school that would qualify for the designation under the prior system

### **What happens to Priority Schools?**

- Supports and Interventions:
  - The state provides data training for principal and teacher leaders. The state will also establish School Support Teams (SSTs) that visit Priority Schools at least quarterly to monitor implementation of interventions.
  - Districts must review principal performance, provide autonomy, and work with the principal to review school staff.
  - Schools must conduct a needs assessment and use the results to select appropriate interventions aligned to each of the turnaround principles. They must submit quarterly status reports to track progress toward goals, and they must participate in a regional district network aimed at supporting Common Core implementation.
  - If the district cannot demonstrate capacity to improve its Priority Schools, the state may assume control of operations and management of the schools through the C<sup>3</sup> (college, career, citizen) Schools partnership.
- Exit Criteria and Consequences:
  - Criteria for exiting Priority status: Earn an A, B, or C.
  - The state may close any school that the State Board of Education determines cannot improve.

### **What happens to Focus Schools?**

- Supports and Interventions:
  - The state provides training for principals and teacher leaders on data review and turnaround interventions and works with the district and school to perform a needs assessment and identify appropriate interventions. SSTs will visit Focus Schools as needed to monitor implementation of interventions.
  - Focus schools must submit semi-annual status reports to track progress towards goals.
- Exit Criteria and Consequences:
  - Criteria for exiting Focus status: Make AMOs for all student groups and for students overall, and earn an A, B, or C.
  - There are no clear consequences for Focus Schools that do not improve.

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

- A- schools and B schools must revise school improvement plans.
- C+, C, and C- schools and Targeted Intervention Schools must have comprehensive needs assessments, select interventions, and revise school improvement plans.
  - Targeted Intervention Schools are those in the bottom 25 percent in the state in terms of student achievement that are neither Priority nor Focus.

- If the A-F system is delayed, Yellow Schools must implement the same interventions as Targeted Intervention and C+, C, and C- schools. Yellow-Green and Green Schools must implement district-identified interventions, which the state must approve for Yellow-Green Schools.

**Will the state continue to require public school choice?**

- Yes. Districts with Priority or Focus schools are required to set aside at least 5 percent of Title I funds for parental choice.

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

- Schools that are in the top 10 percent of all schools on an index of math, reading, science, social studies, and writing that also meet AMOs for students overall and all student groups, have no significant achievement gaps that are not closing, and have a graduation rate of 82.4 percent or higher for three consecutive years
- The top 10 percent of improvers on the reading and math index: These schools must show consistent growth progress, no decline from highest performance in an intervening year, may not have been identified as a SIG school, must have no significant achievement gaps, and must be in the top 20 percent of schools with the largest gains in graduation rates between 2008 and 2010.
- Under A-F: Any school (Title I or not) that receives an A or A+, or any school that would qualify for the designation under the prior system.
- Reward Schools may receive increased autonomy, public notification of designation, and opportunities to serve as advisors to the state. When available, schools may receive financial rewards and grant opportunities to partner with underperforming schools.