

NCLB Waiver Workgroup - October 14 Meeting

Questions to Address

- 1. How will we build state, local education agency (LEA) and school capacity to improve student learning?
- 2. What interventions should be used in Priority Schools? These interventions must be aligned with the "turnaround principles" and must be implemented by the Priority School's LEA.
- 3. What interventions should be considered for Focus Schools? How should the state work with LEAs to implement these interventions? These interventions must address achievement gap issues, low-performing subgroups and low graduation rates.

Definitions

Priority School- A Title I or Title I-eligible school that, based on available data, has been identified among the lowest-performing schools in the state. The state must identify at least five percent of Title I schools as priority schools. While these schools might have achievement gap problems, they also have systemic, across-the-board issues with proficiency and growth. Priority Schools are required to work with their LEA and the state to implement research-based turnaround models.

Focus School- A Title I or Title I-eligible school that, based on available data, is contributing to the achievement gap in the state. This category of schools includes schools with the largest achievement gaps, the lowest-performing subgroups and graduation rates below 60 percent. The state must identify at least 10 percent of Title I schools as Focus Schools. Focus schools are required to work with their LEA to implement an improvement plan that addresses the specific issues in that school. The state is required to provide technical assistance and support to LEAs working with Focus Schools, and to ensure that Focus Schools are subject to research-based interventions.

Reward School- A Title I or Title I-eligible school that, based on available data, is either one of the highest-achieving or has made substantial progress despite obstacles within the past year.

There is no set percentage of schools that must be identified as Reward Schools but half must be identified as the "highest-performing" and half must be identified as the "highest-progress."

Turnaround Principles- Principles that must guide the state, LEAs and communities in identifying meaningful interventions in Priority Schools. These principles include:

- Providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal;
 (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the state that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and
 (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing
 the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and
 have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective
 teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing
 professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and
 tied to teacher and student needs;
- redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards;
- using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
- establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
- providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.