

# Minnesota's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request

**Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility Request will cause the following No Child Left Behind (NCLB) provisions to be waived:**

- 2014 goal of 100 percent proficiency
- Sanctions on schools resulting from not making AYP
- Mandatory financial set-asides for School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services
- Sanctions for districts resulting from not making AYP
- Identification of schools as in need of improvement, corrective action and restructuring
- Identification of districts as in need of improvement or corrective action

**In order to have these provisions waived, Minnesota's application had to meet four principles:**

- College- and career-ready academic standards
- State-developed system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support
- Supporting effective instruction and leadership
- Reducing unnecessary administrative burdens

The accountability system was the principle for which Minnesota had to do the most work, and therefore it is the area of the application that has drawn the most attention.

Essentially, the application describes a new accountability system for the state. At the core of the new system is the use of multiple measurements for accountability. Unlike AYP, which is mostly centered around proficiency, Minnesota's proposed Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) uses four measurements, weighted equally, to measure school performance:

- **Proficiency-** Schools earn points in the MMR by meeting AYP proficiency goals in individual student subgroups. The percentage of subgroups that make AYP determines the percentage of points a school receives. Please note that for the purposes of the MMR, subgroups cannot make AYP through Safe Harbor or Growth.
- **Growth-** Using the same methodology as the Minnesota Growth Model, students are measured by their performance on the MCAs relative to their performance in the most recent year they took the test. Schools get a growth score based on the average growth of all students in the school.
- **Achievement gap reduction-** Schools are measured based on how the growth of their students from the seven lower-performing subgroups (Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, English Learners, students in poverty, and special education students) compares to the statewide average growth of higher-performing subgroups. Schools earn MMR points based on their ability to reduce the achievement gap.
- **Graduation rate-** Schools earn points through the same methodology as proficiency: by the percentage of their subgroups that reach their AYP target for graduation rates. Starting next year, we will use the new, federally-mandated, cohort-adjusted graduation rate calculation methodology.

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The percentage of possible points that each school earns will generate a Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR).

**Using the results of the Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR), schools can fall into three groups:**

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**Reward Schools.** These schools are the top 15 percent of Title I schools in the MMR. They represent the highest-performing schools on the four measurements. Currently, the reward for these schools mainly comes through public recognition. These schools are identified annually.

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**Focus Schools.** Using just the proficiency and achievement gap reduction measurements from the MMR, each school receives a Focus Rating that measures their contribution to the state's achievement gap. The 10 percent of Title I schools with the lowest Focus Ratings are identified as Focus Schools, and must work with MDE and their district to implement serious interventions aimed at improving the performance of the school's lowest-performing subgroups. Focus Schools are designed to attack the achievement gap head on. These schools are identified every three years.

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**Priority Schools.** These are the 5 percent most persistently low-performing Title I schools. Just less than half of these schools are identified through their participation in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. The remaining schools in this group are the Title I schools with the lowest MMRs. These schools will implement turnaround plans to drastically change the way the school operates.

To encourage continuous improvement in all schools, MDE has proposed the creation of two additional groups. Title I schools in the 25 percent of schools directly behind the Reward School cutoff may apply to be Celebration Schools. These schools can show both quantitative and qualitative results in making their case. MDE will select a total equal to 10 percent of Title I schools so that when combined with the Reward Schools, we are recognizing the top 25 percent of Title I schools. On the other end of the spectrum, the bottom 25 percent of Title I schools will be identified as Continuous Improvement schools if they are not already Priority or Focus Schools. These schools will work with their districts to create improvement plans. MDE will audit a percentage of these schools' plans to ensure fidelity.

Finally, in order to ensure that all schools are being held accountable, MDE will annually publish two measurements for every school in the state: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) AYP and the MMR. AYP results will be reported with new targets and no sanctions for not making AYP. The new targets will reduce the achievement gap by half within six years. The MMR will be reported on the MDE website using a Multiple Measurements Chart that will allow parents to compare the performance of schools in all four MMR categories, as well as overall performance.