

## **National Center School Transformation (NCUST)**

### **2015 National Excellence in Urban Education Eligibility Criteria**

The National Excellence in Urban Education Award (NEUE) is presented annually to the nation's highest performing urban schools. In May 2015, the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) will present this award to elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and alternative schools. In order to compete for a National Excellence in Urban Education Award, schools must meet or exceed the following criteria.

**1. Urban Location:** The school must be located in a metropolitan area with 50,000 or more residents.

**2. Non-Selective Admissions:** In general, the school may not require students to meet academic criteria in order to attain or retain admission. For example, a school that requires students to possess/maintain a certain test score or possess/maintain a minimum grade point average would not be eligible for consideration. Schools may house programs (e.g., programs for students identified as gifted or talented) that admit children from beyond the school's attendance area through selective admissions if fewer than 10 percent of the school's students are enrolled through selective admissions.

**3. Low-Income Eligibility:** For elementary schools in which the highest grade is grade six or lower, at least 60% of the students enrolled (both in the prior and the current year) must have met eligibility criteria for free- or reduced-price lunch. For middle schools (grade nine or lower), at least 50% of the students must have met the same criteria. In high schools, at least 40% of the students must have met the same criteria.

**4. High Rates of Academic Proficiency:** The school must be able to demonstrate that the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on state assessments, in both 2013 and 2014, was higher than the average of all schools in the state (within the same grade span grouping). The school must have exceeded the state average in at least half of the subject areas/grade levels assessed in 2013 and 2014.

**5. High Rates of Academic Proficiency for Every Racial/Ethnic Group:** The school must indicate the percentage of students from each racial/ethnic group who achieved academic proficiency. The school may be eligible to compete only if, in at least two academic subjects, the percentage of students proficient in each racial/ethnic group exceeds the average of all schools in the state.

**6. Evidence of High Achievement for English Learners:** If more than 20 students are identified as English learners, the school must present evidence that a high percentage of English learners are progressing toward proficiency with the English language. As well, the school must present evidence that a high percentage of English learners are achieving greater proficiency in at least two academic subjects.

**7. Evidence of High Achievement for Students with Disabilities:** The school must present evidence that a high percentage of students with disabilities are achieving greater proficiency in at least two academic subjects. Evidence must include the percentage of students with disabilities demonstrating proficiency on state assessments, but might also include evidence of students with disabilities demonstrating year-to-year achievement gains on state assessments or other indicators of success.

**8. Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (STEM):** Each school must present evidence that their students are developing strong levels of success in STEM subjects.

**9. High Attendance Rates:** The school must have evidence to indicate that the average student attendance rate exceeded 92% for each of the past two academic years.

**10. Low Rates of Out-of-School Suspension:** The total number of days students were out of school because of suspensions must be smaller than the total number of students enrolled. Similarly, there must be a low rate of suspension for every racial/ethnic group of students.

**11. Evidence of Student Success at Subsequent Levels:** Each school must present evidence that their students achieve strong levels of academic success at the subsequent school level (e.g. elementary schools must show evidence that their students are successful at the middle school level; middle schools must show evidence that their students are successful at high school).

#### **Additional Criteria for High Schools**

In addition to the general criteria, high schools must meet the following criteria:

**12. Percentage of First-Year High School Students Advancing to the Second Year:** Each high school must present the number and percentage of their 2013-2014 first-year students who earned sufficient credit to be promoted to second-year status.

**13. Percentage of Students Earning College Credit or Participating in Advanced Placement Courses During High School:** Each high school must present evidence of the number and percentage of students who earned college credit in the prior year. Also, each applicant must present evidence of the number and percentage of students who participated in advanced placement or international baccalaureate courses; the number and percentage who took advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or Cambridge assessments; and the number and percentage who received passing scores.

**14. High Graduation Rates:** Each high school must present the latest four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (as defined by the U.S. Department of Education). The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate must be at least 70% for every racial/ethnic group of students.

**15. Number of Dropouts Recovered:** Each high school must present data regarding the number of dropouts they helped re-enter into school. As well, schools must present data indicating the success of recovered students in earning credits and graduating.

**Criteria for Alternative Schools**

Alternative school applicants must meet criteria one through three above. Regarding item two, alternative schools may be considered if they selectively enroll students who have experienced academic and behavioral difficulty in typical schools. Additionally, alternative schools must present data regarding all other criteria (four through 15); however, there are not minimal eligibility criteria associated with these criteria. Alternative schools will be reviewed and considered on a competitive basis.