

Virginia Department of Education
Guidelines for Determining the Federal Accountability Results of “Small n Schools”
for School Year 2015-2016
(Based on 2014-2015 Standards of Learning Test Results)

Under the provisions of Virginia’s approved application for waivers from certain requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), Virginia will use 30 students as the “minimum n” for purposes of calculating pass rates for federal accountability results and applying the 95 percent participation rate requirement at the state, division, and school levels for accountability results for the 2015-2016 school year (based on assessments administered in 2014-2015).

State Calculation of Federal Accountability Results for “Small n Schools”

As in previous years, Virginia will continue to use the three most recent years of assessment data to automatically calculate the pass rate to determine if a “small n school” met the AMOs. A “small n school” that meets the AMOs in reading and mathematics using this method will meet federal AMOs. Schools with a graduating class will also need to meet the federal graduation indicator. A “small n school” that does not meet AMOs by using this method will be declared “To Be Determined” (TBD) on the preliminary federal accountability reports provided to school divisions.

School Division Determination of Federal Accountability Results for “Small n Schools”

Schools labeled TBD may submit a body of evidence to their *school division* for consideration. The body of evidence must include indicators of student achievement. The school division will make a federal accountability determination for the school and forward that decision, with an explanation for its basis, to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) filed by the division superintendent within one month of the school receiving notice of its results **but no later than Friday, August 28, 2015**, for validation and inclusion in statewide data reports. The VDOE will consider the school division’s recommendation for the federal accountability status of Title I schools, but ultimately it will make the final decision for Title I schools. If no evidence is submitted to the Department on behalf of a school by Friday, August 28, 2015, that school will not meet AMOs.

Indicators of Improved Student Achievement for “Small n Schools”

In determining the federal accountability status of a “small n school,” a school division should consider Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment data and one or more other indicators that measure student progress in reading and mathematics. The body of evidence presented by the school must show a direct correlation to improved student achievement in reading and mathematics. In addition to SOL assessments, such measures may include, but are not limited to, standardized test scores, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) results, results from the Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test, or tests administered on a divisionwide basis. Teacher grades are not considered sufficiently reliable for the purpose of documenting increased student achievement for federal accountability.

Calculating Federal Accountability Results for “Small n Schools”

To remain consistent with other provisions related to calculating federal accountability results, “small n schools” that did not meet AMOs using the state calculations should, at a minimum, show progress on the selected student achievement indicators from one year to the next, and if possible, demonstrate improved performance for the students in a tested cohort over time. The school division may consider a reduction in the failure rate as a methodology to determine if the school met AMOs.

Submission of Evidence on the Federal Accountability Results of a “Small n School”

The documentation submitted to the VDOE for review and validation must provide clear evidence of the measures of student progress that were used, the reduction in failure rate or improved student performance, and any further clarification required to explain the federal accountability decision. School divisions should use the attached form in submitting their decisions for “small n schools” to the VDOE **no later than Friday, August 28, 2015**. The form and accompanying documentation should be mailed to: Christopher Kelly, education coordinator, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, VA 23218-2120. See instructions for submitting the documentation on the form.

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Christopher Kelly, education coordinator, at AMOTBD@doe.virginia.gov or at (804) 225-2122.