

**Virginia Department of Education  
Virginia's ESEA Flexibility Plan  
August 3, 2012**

**Criteria and Methodology for Identifying  
Priority and Focus Schools**

On June 29, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education approved Virginia's application for flexibility from certain requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), and replaces the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Reports. Under the provisions of ESEA flexibility, Virginia must identify five percent (36) of the state's Title I schools as priority schools based on the reading and mathematics performance and graduation rates of all students, and 10 percent (72) of the state's Title I schools as focus schools based on the reading and mathematics performance of proficiency gap groups. Sections 2.D and 2.E of Virginia's approved [ESEA flexibility application](#) contain the full criteria and methodologies used to identify priority and focus status, respectively. Below is a summary of: 1) the criteria and methodologies used to identify priority and focus schools; and 2) the interventions that apply to both categories of schools.

**Priority School Criteria and Methodology**

Any school meeting criterion A was automatically identified as a priority school. Title I schools meeting the following criterion B, C, or D below for the all students group were also identified.

**Priority School Criteria**

<b>Criterion A</b>	Schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds under Section 1003(g) of ESEA in Federal Fiscal Year 2009 (Cohort I) or 2010 (Cohort II) and identified and served as a Tier I or Tier II school
<b>Criterion B</b>	Title I high schools with a federal graduation indicator* of 60 percent or less for two or more of the most recent consecutive years
<b>Criterion C</b> <i>(see additional notes below)</i>	Title I schools based on the "all students" performance in reading and/or mathematics performance on federal Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)
<b>Criterion D</b>	Title I schools failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics for three consecutive years

\* The ESEA federal graduation indicator recognizes only Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas.

**Criterion C** was applied as necessary to identify as priority schools a number of schools that comprise an amount equal to five percent of the state's Title I schools. Schools in this category were rank-ordered based on the sum of the difference(s) between the performance of the "all students" group in reading and mathematics compared to the respective federal AMO proficiency targets. Those schools with the largest gaps in performance were included in the priority school list, up to the number of schools needed to equal the five percent requirement.

The following methodology was used to determine the list of 36 priority schools for the 2012-2013 school year:

<b>Steps in Methodology</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
1. Identify the number of Title I schools in the state in 2011-2012.	732
2. Identify the number of schools that must be identified as priority schools (a number equal to five percent of Title I schools).	36
3. Identify the schools currently served as Cohort I and II Tier I or Tier II SIG schools. (Criterion A)	26
4. Identify the schools that are Title I-participating with an FGI of less than 60 percent over the past two consecutive years. (Criterion B)	TBD until reports are live
5. Identify the number of schools that are among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools based on the performance of all students in reading and/or mathematics on federal AMOs (Criterion C)	TBD until reports are live
6. Identify the number of schools that are Title I schools failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics for three consecutive years (Criterion D)	0
<b>Total Number of Priority Schools Identified</b>	<b>36</b>

Priority schools will be required to implement interventions aligned with federal “turnaround principles” and contract with a Lead Turnaround Partner, approved by the Virginia Department of Education, to assist with implementing the required interventions. The Office of School Improvement will send communication about required interventions and related technical assistance to divisions with priority schools in the coming weeks. Comprehensive details about the required interventions for priority schools are available in Section 2.D.iii of Virginia’s [ESEA flexibility application](#).

### **Focus School Criteria and Methodology**

Title I schools with proficiency gap groups not meeting AMOs *or* failing to meet the participation rate in reading or mathematics were included in the methodology described below to identify the list of 72 focus schools for the 2012-2013 school year:

1. Exclude any schools identified as priority schools.
2. Automatically identify any school not meeting the participation rate of 95 percent in reading or mathematics.
3. For the remaining schools, calculate for each school the difference between the AMO target and each gap group’s performance in reading and mathematics to determine proficiency gap points.
4. Exclude from each school’s calculation any gap group that meets or exceeds the AMO target.
5. Sum the proficiency gap points in reading and mathematics and divide by the number of gap groups that did not meet the AMO target(s).
6. Rank schools in order of the total number of average proficiency gap points.
7. Identify from the list of schools ranked by proficiency gap points a number equal to 10 percent of the state’s total Title I schools (72 schools).

Each school’s AMO report includes a proficiency gap chart which displays the data used to calculate proficiency gap points for that school’s proficiency gap groups.

Focus schools will be required to identify and implement interventions that will increase achievement of low-performing students and contract with a coach, selected by the Virginia Department of Education, to assist with implementing the selected interventions. The Office of School Improvement will send communication about required interventions and related technical assistance to divisions with focus schools in the coming weeks. Comprehensive details about the required interventions for focus schools are available in Section 2.E.iii of Virginia's [ESEA flexibility application](#).

Questions about the criteria or methodology used to identify priority or focus schools should be sent to [ESEA@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:ESEA@doe.virginia.gov).