

Accountability Facts and Tough Questions 2013



1. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver was approved in July 2012. Largest impact: Eliminates “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) target of 100% proficient using old cut scores and sets **new target of 85% proficient by 2022 using new career and college ready cut scores**.
2. ESEA Flexibility Waiver also required adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Math and English Language Arts; new cut scores based on College and Career Readiness; alliance with Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC); and educator effectiveness legislation with system recommendations by Michigan Council of Educator Effectiveness.
3. **There are two ways school accountability is tracked. 1) An Accountability Scorecard** that measures the schools progress toward reaching 85% proficient by 2022 in five content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies). For each content area, student subgroups are awarded 0 – 2 points depending on the percent proficient and the percent increase from the previous year.

2 points – On track to reach 85% proficient by 2022

1 point – Percent increase sufficient, but not enough to be on track to 85% by 2022

0 points – Percent increase insufficient and not on track to reach 85% by 2022

Depending upon the school’s demographics, the number of subgroups scored will vary from 2 to 12. Therefore, a school with 12 subgroups across 5 content areas may earn up to 120 points, or a school with only 2 subgroups in 2 content areas may earn up to 8 points. A final percentage is calculated based on the number of points earned compared to the total points possible and the following color code is applied. This 5-color code system replaces the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) pass/fail system:

Hunter Green: 85% + of possible points

Lime Green: 70-84%

Yellow: 60 – 69%

Orange: 50 – 59%

Red: 0 – 49%

The second type of accountability is the **2) Top to Bottom (TtB) Rankings** and subsequent labels. All schools who test at least 30 Full Academic Year (FAY) students will receive a percentile ranking based on achievement, improvement and one gap measure. Only 25-30% of the schools who receive a TtB Ranking will also receive an additional designation or “label” of **Reward, Focus, or Priority**.

- a. **“Reward” schools** represent 10 – 15% of schools recognized by one or more of the following:
 - the top 5% of schools on the overall TtB Ranking (if not Focus or Red)
 - the top 5% of schools with the greatest improvement index (if not Focus or Red)
 - any Beating the Odds (BtO) school (if not Focus and met AYP)
- b. **“Focus” schools** represent 10-15% of the schools with the largest achievement gap between their own top 30% of students compared to their own bottom 30% of students. All Focus schools will have additional requirements within the School Improvement Process plus participation in the Superintendents’ Dropout Challenge. Additional sanctions and supports from MDE will apply to Title I Focus Schools, such as, but not limited to:
 - 10% Building Title I Set-Aside in Year 2 for PD, PLC, MTSS, and other options.
 - **NO longer required to offer Choice or Transportation**
 - In Year 3, Districts are required to set-aside additional Title I funds equivalent to 10% of the buildings Title I allocation. This amount increases to 15% in Year 4.



- c. **“Priority” Schools** represent the bottom 5% of the TtB Rankings and replace the former federal label of Persistently Low Achieving. All Priority schools regardless of Title I status will have additional sanctions. Among these requirements, “Priority” schools must create a Reform/Redesign plan within 90 days of notification indicating one of four approved options:
- Closure of the building with significant redistribution of the student population
 - Restart the building as a charter school (such as Muskegon Heights example)
 - Transformation (replace principal plus significant changes to culture and curriculum)
 - Turn-around (replace principal and at least 50% of staff)

Did the state actually lower the bar from 100% of students achieving proficiency to only 85%?

No, the state significantly increased the bar by expecting 85% of students to be on track to score extremely well on a college entrance exam such as the ACT. A score of 18 on the ACT was once considered the standard average composite score for students, including college athletes. Now students need to be on track to score a 21 in Reading, 22 in Mathematics and 24 in Science (NOTE: a 36 on the ACT is the highest possible score and extremely rare). In addition, the new metrics now measure the achievement and the improvement of every student equally instead of just looking at how many students can surpass a certain cut score. For the first time, “all” truly means ALL tested students.

What is better about the new accountability system?

The old system of NCLB implied accountability for ALL students; however, the system only measured the lowest performing students. If a high performing student declined and became an average performing student, NCLB did not monitor this decline. The new accountability system measures every student's achievement and growth. Therefore, the decline of a high performing student will result in a lower school ranking on the Top to Bottom list. The system now holds schools accountable for accelerating our high achieving and average students by at least one year of academic growth. In addition, the system requires schools to increase the performance of our most struggling students by more than one year of growth in order to close the achievement gaps. Just as we expect teachers to individualize assessing and instructing students when they fall outside the average range, the state now has set ambitious targets customized for each building based on their current academic performance.

With all this attention on the “Bottom” students, will the rest of the students be neglected?

The new accountability metrics weight 75% of each content area on the achievement of ALL students and on the improvement of ALL students. Every student has equal weighting; however, on a bell shape curve, the students further from the center always have the greatest impact on the average. Imagine a traditional grading system where a student earned an A- or 90% on nine straight assignments; however, the student chooses not to complete the tenth assignment. By missing only one of the ten assignments, the student's grade would drop from an A- to a B-. In a similar way, high achieving students significantly pull upward the average achievement. If our top students become more average, this will have a significant, negative impact on both achievement and improvement (or 75% of the overall metric.). Finally, the most effective way to improve 100% of the metric is to advance all students at least one academic year and accelerate the learning of our most struggling students beyond one year of growth in order to close the achievement gap.

Should I consider moving my child out of a Focus School?

No, every school has a gap between the top 30% of students compared to the bottom 30% of students. There are schools across the state that are extremely high performing with a larger achievement gap than most low performing schools. For example, a school could have their top students averaging 90% correct on the test and their bottom students' average 60% correct. This 30% gap in achievement would designate them a Focus school. Another school might have their top students' average 60% correct compared to their bottom students with only 40% correct. This 20% gap would not designate them a Focus school, yet overall students are testing lower. Remember to consider multiple data points before drawing conclusions. Each Focus schools should concentrate on accelerating the most struggling students beyond one academic year of growth in order to close the achievement gap while keeping the high fliers, flying high.

