

FAQ's for Parents and Families on Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver

1. What does the waiver mean for students, parents, teachers and families?

The flexibility waiver affirms the strength of Georgia's education reform initiatives in the areas of improving outcomes for all students, closing the achievement gaps, increasing equity, and improving the quality of instruction. Under Georgia's own statewide accountability system, all stakeholders will be able to share a common understanding of school and district performance. The Reward, Priority, Focus and Alert designations will provide all stakeholders with a deeper understanding of what resources schools need in order to be successful in their efforts to prepare students to be college and career ready.

2. Are schools still required to offer public school choice or Supplemental Educational Services (SES)?

No, the waiver does not require Title I schools to offer public school choice or SES. Students who elected school choice prior to this ruling will be allowed to complete the highest grade in their choice school.

3. Will AYP still be calculated and reported?

No. AYP is no longer the state's accountability measure.

4. How will schools still be held accountable?

Beginning in December 2012, every school in the state will receive a numerical index score based on 100 points. The score will be considered the school's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) number and will provide a more comprehensive look at a school's performance.

5. What should I do if my child's school is a named Priority, Focus, or Alert school?

Parent and community involvement is critical to the school improvement process. Schools are required to engage parents in their child's educational process. Designated schools must notify parents of their status, share data and information used to support programming decisions, provide opportunities for engagement in the school planning process, and invite parents to participate in the school's improvement activities. Parents are urged to take advantage of the opportunities offered to become more informed and to provide input in the process. Parent support is vital to a student's success in school.

Houston County Schools and the ESEA Flexibility Waiver

The Houston County School System has 38 schools, 23 of which are designated as Title I.

In the spring of 2012, the Georgia Department of Education identified Priority, Focus, and Alert Schools based on the ESEA flexibility formula.

For Houston County Schools:

- No schools were identified as Priority or Alert Schools.
- Shirley Hills Elementary School was designated a Reward School.
- 4 schools were identified as Focus Schools. These schools are Huntington Middle School, Northside High School, Perry High School, and Westside Elementary School.

For Additional Information and Resources

- <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Pages/Home.aspx>
- askdoe@k12.ga.us
- www.hcbe.net

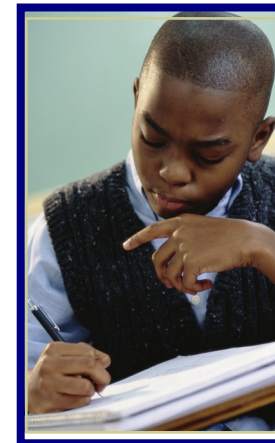
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A Guide to Understanding Georgia's Flexibility Waiver



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Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (US ED) an application requesting flexibility through waivers of ten Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requirements. The waiver allows Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) greater flexibility in designing a Flexible Learning Program tailored to the needs of their school and to have the capacity to serve more students in need of additional academic support.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, the GaDOE will transition from Needs Improvement (NI) distinctions based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports to Reward, Priority, Focus, and Alert Schools distinctions based on the ESEA Flexibility Waiver formulas. Title I will now implement specific programs and interventions based on Reward, Priority, Focus, and Alert Schools status. In addition, a new Single State Accountability System, the *College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)*, will serve as a comprehensive report card for all schools in Georgia.

Identification Status of Schools

Based on the ESEA flexibility formula, schools will be identified as:

Reward Schools-Title I Schools –Highest Performing percent of Title I schools and Highest Progress Schools 10 percent of Title I Schools

- Reward Schools' designation will replace Distinguished Schools and Districts designations. Reward schools will be identified **annually**. There are two ways a Title I school may be identified as a Rewards School. A Title I school may be classified as either a Highest-Performing school or a High-Progress school.

Priority Schools-Title I Students Eligibility-5 percent of the Title I Schools-Lowest Achieving Schools

- Priority Schools will be identified **every three years and the identified schools will be served for 3 years through a Flexible Learning Program (FLP) support interventions**. These Title I schools are among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the All Students group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the All Students group; are a Title I participating or Title I eligible high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years; or a Tier I or Tier II school under the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention model years.

Focus Schools- Title I Student Eligibility— 10 percent of Title I Schools

- Focus Schools will be identified **every three years and the identified schools will be served for 3 years through a Flexible Learning Program (FLP) support interventions**. These schools are Title I schools that have the largest within-school gaps between the

highest achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, have the largest within-school gaps in graduation rates between the highest and lowest subgroups (within-school-gaps Focus School) or are Title I high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years that is not identified as a Priority School (low-graduation-rate Focus School).

Alerts Schools-Title I based on 9 ESEA Subgroups-(does not include Priority or Focus Schools)

- Title I, Alert Schools will be identified **annually**. These schools are both Title I and non-Title I schools that fall into one of the three following categories using the ESEA disaggregated subgroups or subject performance on both statewide assessments and graduation rate: Graduation Alert, Subgroup Alert or Subject Alert.

Transitioning

Title I Schools not making AYP will transition from AYP to ESEA flexibility waiver formula and may be identified as a Priority or Focus School. Priority or Focus Schools will be required to develop and implement a Flexible Learning Program beginning July 2012. Priority and Focus Schools will be identified and served with support interventions for 3 years.

