

# **New Hampshire Department of Education**



## **2013 School Appeal Guidance Priority or Focus School Selection**

**Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of Education  
NH Department of Education  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Selection Methodology for Priority Schools .....	2
Selection Methodology for Focus Schools .....	3
Appeal Content and Parameters .....	4
Timetable and Deadlines for Filing an Appeal .....	6
Contact Information .....	7

## INTRODUCTION

This document contains the procedural guidance for local officials considering an appeal of a school's 2013 Priority or Focus School selection.

In accordance with Section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), an appeal of a school's annual accountability designation is allowable under certain circumstances:

*Each State Education Agency's (SEA) annual determination of school progress is based on the application of formulas defined and approved in its accountability system. Therefore, with rare exceptions, only statistical errors in the underlying data would provide cause for a reconsideration of the school's status.*

*However, if the principal or a majority of the school's parents believe that the identification was made in error for statistical or other substantive reasons, the school principal may provide supporting evidence to the Local Education Agency (LEA), and the LEA, in conjunction with the SEA, must consider it.*

*The LEA and SEA must make a final determination regarding the identification of the school no later than 30 days after the school is notified of the pending action. §1116(b)(2); §200.31*

New Hampshire's request to waive certain provisions of ESEA was approved by the U.S. Department of Education on June 26, 2013. The approved waiver allows New Hampshire to replace the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability system with validated methodology for identifying and prioritizing support for Title I schools meeting the federal definition of "Priority" or "Focus" school. The appeal guidance is therefore reflective of the new methodology and resulting school selection.

While it is expected that the primary audience for this appeal guidance will be school officials of a Priority or Focus School, all Title I schools are strongly encouraged to review their 2013 school performance data for accuracy, as school index scores are a key data element in the new methodology.

## **SELECTION METHODOLOGY FOR PRIORITY SCHOOLS**

To receive an ESEA waiver, each state must identify and prioritize for support five percent of the state's lower-performing Title I schools, selected as Priority Schools. Schools currently participating in the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) program are also included in this category.

As of October 1, 2012, a total of 228 schools were participating in Title I, resulting in a minimum of 12 schools (five percent) to be identified. With the addition of the SIG schools (not selected in the original 12), the total number of Priority Schools is 24.

To identify the Priority Schools, a combined index score\* (student performance scores in reading and mathematics combined) for the "whole school" group was calculated for the most-recent three years. An average of the cumulative index score was then used as the basis for identifying the lower-performing five percent of Title I schools.

*\*Index Score: Each student scaled score for NECAP or NH-ALPs is assigned an index point value. Each student score of "proficient" or "proficient with distinction" (NECAP or NH-ALPs Levels 3 or 4) is assigned 100 index points. Points are then assigned on a sliding scale (from 80 to 0) for student scores that are below proficient.*

## SELECTION METHODOLOGY FOR FOCUS SCHOOLS

In addition to Priority Schools, each state must also develop methodology for identifying Title I schools exhibiting the greatest achievement gaps. Such schools (ten percent of the total number of Title I schools, or 23 schools) are to be designated as Focus Schools.

The definition of Focus Schools in ESEA Flexibility is based on an equity principle, whereby schools with the largest achievement gap are expected to be selected as Focus Schools. The major educationally disadvantaged student groups in New Hampshire are students with disabilities (SWD or IEP), English language learners (ELL), and economically disadvantaged (ED or SES) students. However, these subgroups were defined using a new grouping procedure that is unique to this process. The sub groups are defined as:

- English Language Learners **Only** (ELL)
- Students with Disabilities **Only** (IEP)
- Economically Disadvantaged Students **Only** (SES)
- ELL **AND** IEP
- ELL **AND** SES
- IEP **AND** SES
- ELL **AND** IEP **AND** SES

It should be clearly noted, with these new selections, students may belong to **ONLY ONE** subgroup.

To identify New Hampshire's Focus Schools, the NECAP index scores for reading and math were averaged across all of these student groups for each school. The "equity index" was produced by calculating the combined NECAP index scores, as discussed above, for each of the designated student groups in each school, as long as the student group met a minimum group size of 10 students. The simple average across the three groups yielded the equity index for each school. The average was computed for any or all of the student groups that were present in the school. For example, if the school had only students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students, the equity index was the average performance of only these two groups. The choice to use the average was made to reflect that all of the student groups would count equally in the index so that one group could not "swamp" either of the other two student groups. The equity index was compared to the combined statewide index for all students to frame this equity principle in terms of an achievement gap between average New Hampshire whole school student performance and the educationally disadvantaged students in each school.

A three-year average "equity index" was then calculated and the lowest scoring 10 percent of Title I schools not already selected as Priority Schools were selected as Focus Schools.

## APPEAL CONTENT AND PARAMETERS

As previously referenced and in accordance with federal statute, a school appeal is allowable for either statistical reasons (Data Error), substantive reasons (Special Circumstances), or for both.

### **Data Error Appeal**

A Data Error Appeal must provide evidence of specific statistical errors or data inaccuracies. **Please note that only data related to the calculation of the 2012-13 index score may be appealed**, as the opportunity to appeal prior year data was during the former AYP report cycles.

The Data Error Appeal must contain, at a minimum:

- a cover letter on school district letterhead stating the reason for the appeal;
- a clear description of the specific data error(s) identified by school officials;
- the rationale as to how such error(s) occurred and were not corrected before the Superintendent certified the 2012-2013 data;
- the new data, together with documentation of data sources, that school officials request be considered; and
- evidence that use of the new data in calculating the school's scores will change the school's selection.

### **Special Circumstances Appeal**

A Special Circumstances Appeal must explain unusual or extraordinary circumstances, such as a major natural disaster, community crisis, or other extraordinary or unforeseen event, that occurred during the administration window **for the most recent NECAP or ALPs assessments**, resulting in atypical student performance.

The Special Circumstances Appeal must contain, at a minimum:

- a cover letter on school district letterhead stating the reason for the appeal;
- a clear description of the unusual or extraordinary circumstances that occurred during the administration of the above-referenced assessments;
- an explanation of how students and resulting student performance were adversely affected by these circumstances;
- data-based evidence that the student assessment results are atypical of student performance; and
- an explanation of how, in the absence of such extenuating circumstances, the school's selection would change.

## **Accessing the 2012-13 Student-Level Data File**

As in prior years, the student-level file for reviewing and verifying the data upon which your school's 2012-13 index score was calculated is accessible through the customary Measured Progress password-protected site.

The data file, is a district-level file accessible only by the superintendent; however, it is easily sorted by school.

The file contains all students included in the whole-school index score calculations, including the demographics associated with each student record. This is a large file; therefore, it is recommended that you also download the "Student Data Layout" file to see how the data columns are organized.

1. Go to <http://iservices.measuredprogress.org>.
2. Select New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) from the drop-down menu and click on the "Enter" button.
3. On the left-hand side of the screen, click on "NECAP Reporting."
4. On the next screen, click on the shape representing the State of New Hampshire.
5. On the next screen, enter your User Name and password in the appropriate boxes.
6. Click on the "Login" button. A successful login directs you to the Home page of the New Hampshire Analysis and Reporting System (NARS).
7. Select "Reports" from the options available in the blue bar.
8. Select "2012-2013" from the drop-down menu for the year.
9. Select "NECAP Fall 2012" from the Administration menu.
10. Select your school from the District menu.
11. From the school drop-down menu, select your/a school.
12. Select a grade from the Grade menu.
13. Various reports will be visible and available for your selection and download.

## TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES FOR FILING AN APPEAL

The appeal submission and review process is extremely time sensitive; please refer to the specific deadlines listed below. As stated, the New Hampshire Department of Education must **receive** completed appeals, comprised of all materials and accompanying documentation, by the close of business **August 5, 2013**. Note that receipt date differs from a postmark date. Appeals received after the deadline will not be considered.

DATE	APPEAL TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES
July 9, 2013	Title I Priority and Focus School selection publicly available on the NH Department of Education's website ( <a href="http://www.education.nh.gov/">www.education.nh.gov/</a> )
July 11, 2013	Day 1 of the 30-day appeal process
July 19, 2013 4:30 p.m.	By this date, the Superintendent must submit, via electronic mail, an <i>Intent to Appeal</i> to Merry Fortier at <a href="mailto:merry.fortier@doe.nh.gov">merry.fortier@doe.nh.gov</a>  The <i>Intent to Appeal</i> notification must include the name of the school and the type of appeal that will be filed (Data Error, Special Circumstances or both)
August 5, 2013 4:30 p.m.	Deadline for the New Hampshire Department of Education to receive an original and fourteen copies of the completed appeal packet, including all materials and support documentation
August 9, 2013	Commissioner of Education prepares an Executive Summary for the State Board of Education regarding the appeals received from Title I Priority or Focus Schools
August 13, 2013	Appeal packets sent to the State Board of Education for review
August 19, 2013	School and district officials present appeals to the State Board of Education on <b>Monday, August 19, 2013</b> .

**Send the original and fourteen copies of the completed appeal packet to:**

Trisha Allen  
Commissioner's Office  
NH Department of Education  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT:  
August 5, 2013  
4:30 p.m.**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Until August 1, direct inquiries regarding the appeal process to:**

Merry Fortier  
Bureau of Accountability and Assessment  
NH Department of Education  
Tel. 271-7382  
[merry.fortier@doe.nh.gov](mailto:merry.fortier@doe.nh.gov)

**After August 1, direct inquiries regarding the appeal process to:**

Heather Gage, Director  
Division of Instruction  
NH Department of Education  
Tel. 271-5992  
[heather.gage@doe.nh.gov](mailto:heather.gage@doe.nh.gov)

**Direct inquiries regarding the selection methodology to:**

Scott Mantie, Ph.D., Administrator  
Bureau of Accountability and Assessment  
NH Department of Education  
Tel. (603) 271-3844  
[scott.mantie@doe.nh.gov](mailto:scott.mantie@doe.nh.gov)