

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Title I Priority and Focus Schools

Questions	Answers
SELECTION PROCESS	
1. How were schools selected to be a Title I Priority School?	<p>The NH DOE has selected Priority Schools by rank ordering the state's schools in terms of overall mathematics and reading achievement and then finding the line that identifies the lowest five percent of Title I schools (those participating as of October 1, 2012). This has been operationalized by adding the NECAP index scores for mathematics to the NECAP index scores for reading to produce a combined index score for each year. To identify the priority schools the NECAP combined index scores for 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 were averaged and then rank ordered. The lowest five percent of Title I schools <u>in addition</u> to any school receiving School Improvement Grant funds not already on the list, were then identified as Title I Priority Schools.</p>
2. How were schools selected to be a Title I Focus School?	<p>The NH DOE has selected Focus Schools by identifying those Title I schools (those participating as of October 1, 2012) with the largest achievement gap between subgroups of students compared to the combined statewide index for all students. The major educationally disadvantaged student groups in New Hampshire are students with disabilities (IEP), English language learners (ELL), and economically disadvantaged (SES) students. These subgroups were defined using a new grouping procedure that is unique to this process. The subgroups are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <p>It should be clearly noted, with these new designations, students may belong to ONLY ONE subgroup.</p>

To identify the Title I Focus Schools, the NECAP index scores for reading and math were averaged across all of these student groups for each school. An “equity index” was produced by calculating the combined NECAP index scores (as discussed above in the selection of the Title I Priority Schools) for each of the designated student groups in each school, as long as the student group met New Hampshire’s 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. This 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 identified as Priority Schools were classified as Focus Schools.

PARTICIPATION and REQUIREMENTS

3. What are the requirements of a Title I Priority and Focus Schools?

The following activities are required of all Title I Priority and Focus Schools:

- Schools will identify a leadership team and appoint a main contact for the NH DOE’s Office of School Turnaround. The Principal will service this role, unless otherwise appointed. Districts should also identify a district liaison to serve as a point of contact for the NH DOE.
- Schools will select a process manager to attend the Steps to Success training and take ownership for entering the school’s necessary information into the Indistar tool (school improvement planning and monitoring tool).
- Schools will review existing plans (SINI,SIG, FOCUS MONITORING, etc.) and determine what activities and interventions the school would like to continue based on evidence of success and how the activities connect to one of the seven turnaround principles.
- Schools will analyze their student achievement data and complete the data template when required.

- School leadership team should review the menu of supports handed out at the initial meetings with their NH DOE liaison (Deb Connell or Joey Nichol) and select appropriate supports for the 2013-14 school year.
- The school will participate in the Steps to Success self-assessment for Indicators ID10 (data) and NH101 (ensuring strong leaders).
- School interventions will be entered /updated in the Indistar tool. (See the document entitled [*Title I-A Priority and Focus Schools Accessing School Improvement Funds*](#)). The Steps to Success report function is capable of producing the school improvement plan.
- Assurances shall be signed by the superintendent and the principal before funds are released.
- Title I Priority schools have a year to plan, but funding requires submission of at least a “plan to plan” that includes a review of the indicators ID10 and NH101.
- Focus schools are required to submit an improvement plan for indicators ID10 (Data) and NH101 (Ensuring Strong leaders) by October 15, 2013. Focus schools will be expected to continue the self-assessment for the remaining turnaround principles and submit a complete plan that addresses the 7 Turnaround Principles – with a focus on closing the achievement gap – by May 2, 2014.
- Schools shall load their improvement plan into the on-line grants management system according to the steps outlined in [*Title I-A Priority and Focus Schools Accessing School Improvement Funds*](#).

4. Should a Title I Focus School’s leadership committee focus on whole school data with the goal of improving subgroup results?

Certainly the Title I Focus School should closely analyze its data to determine where instructional practices need to be improved. The expectation is that the school’s improvement plan will concentrate on the reasons the school was selected (i.e. the subgroup with the greatest achievement challenges based on the data).

TURNAROUND COACHES

5. What is a Turnaround Coach?

A dedicated Turnaround Coach supports a school through its individual improvement planning and implementation process. The Turnaround Coach can provide the push and critical guidance necessary to drive instructional improvements.

Also, a Turnaround Coach can:

- Provide technical assistance and professional development based on identified needs, including:
 - assessing current school performance status;
 - developing a plan to address student achievement and gaps;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring implementation of the school’s improvement plan; • measuring the impact of the plan; and • assisting the school in revising the improvement plan, as needed, to ensure all students achieve.
6. Are Title I Priority and/or Focus Schools required to have a turnaround coach?	No, however, if a school does not want to hire a Turnaround Coach, a school will need to document how it will use its resources (human, financial, etc.) to ensure its improvement planning and implementation process will occur with fidelity.
7. What is the process for determining who is on the NH DOE’s “vetted” list of Turnaround Coaches?	To become a NH DOE “vetted” turnaround coach an entity or individual must submit a proposal to the RFP to provide Technical Assistance to Title I Priority and Focus Schools posted on the department RFP webpage . The department will review and evaluate proposals as they are submitted. Approved providers will be posted to the Priority and Focus School webpage . The department expects to post the first list of approved providers on October 7, 2013. The list will be updated on an ongoing basis in response to proposals.
8. Where and when will the list of Turnaround Coaches be published/ made available?	The department expects to post the first list of approved providers on October 7, 2013 on the DOE Priority and Focus School webpage . The list will be updated on an ongoing basis in response to proposals.
9. How does a school receive assistance, if desired, from a Turnaround Coaches?	This will be unique to each school and should be based on its specific needs. Please contact Debby Connell (Deborah.connell@doe.nh.gov) or Joey Nichol (Kathryn.nichol@doe.nh.gov) at the NH DOE and they will help provide the necessary connections.
10. Can a school hire an instructional expert/specialist with specific content knowledge to help teachers close the achievement gap, instead of hiring a Turnaround Coach?	Absolutely. The technical assistance for each school will be unique to its needs. Documentation of the reasons for the preferred technical assistance will need to be presented for monitoring purposes.
11. How does a school pay for a Turnaround Coach?	It is up to the district to decide; however, Title I 1003(a) and the district’s 10 percent set-aside can be used for this purpose.
12. How are Turnaround Coaches held accountable for helping schools “turnaround?”	The accountability of the Turnaround Coach should be explicitly written into the contract between the Turnaround Coach and the school/district. Ultimately, the school is held accountable to its own improvement.
DATA COACHES	
13. What is a Data Coach?	All Title I Priority and Focus School have access to a Data Coach to facilitate discussions with the school leadership team at no charge to the district (funded through the state’s SLDS grant). Intensive support for Title I Priority and Focus Schools begins with a diagnosis of the strengths and gaps in the educational program and an examination of the student outcomes that led to the school’s selection.

The Data Coach can work with the school’s leadership team and the school’s Turnaround Coach (if selected) to launch a systematic and ongoing review of evidence to inform judgments about which programs and practices are producing the desired student outcomes. Data Coaches will provide guidance and training to understand data, access data and use data tools to target instruction that fosters student learning.

The Data Coach:

- Reviews data tools – longitudinal reports; district profile; PerformancePLUS;
- Initiates Data Protocol to develop a plan to engage in regular review and collection of school performance data (Turnaround Principle 5);
- Assists school leadership team in building a data team infrastructure within the school;
- Provides training on the use of the PerformancePLUS tool; and
- Provides training and support to use PerformancePLUS to improve instruction. For example:
 - o Building local benchmark assessments tied to the common core;
 - o Using P+ to track interventions and load progress monitoring data;
 - o Develop Individual Learning Plans for students;
 - o Creating and conducting a school climate survey; and
 - o Other individual needs.

14. Are Title I Priority and/or Focus Schools required to have a Data Coach?	No, however, if a school does not want to use a Data Coach, a school will need to document what resources (human, financial, etc.) it will utilize to analyze and use its data in an embedded and ongoing way.
15. How does a school receive assistance from a Data Coach?	Please contact Debby Connell (Deborah.connell@doe.nh.gov) or Joey Nichol (Kathryn.nichol@doe.nh.gov) at the NH DOE and they will help provide the necessary connections.
16. Who pays for the services of a Data Coach?	NH DOE Data Coaches are provided at no cost to the districts through the state’s SLDS grant.

PRINCIPAL MENTOR

17. What is a Principal Mentor?	A principal mentor supports the principal in the day to day operation of his her school in the areas of management and leadership. All mentors from New Hampshire Association of School Principals complete an extensive training program. (Use principal mentor information sheet as a guide for more detailed information.)
18. Are Title I Priority and/or Focus Schools required to have a Principal Mentor?	No, but the NH DOE strongly recommends a principal consider using this support as part their continuous improvement process.

<p>19. How does a school receive assistance from a Principal Mentor?</p>	<p>The <i>New Hampshire Association of School Principals</i> mentoring program offers a list of trained Principal Mentors that are ready to serve. To inquire about this support, please call 603-225-3431. If a Principal would like specific assistance, such as instructional support or guidance to close the achievement gap, please contact Debby Connell (Deborah.connell@doe.nh.gov) or Joey Nichol (Kathryn.nichol@doe.nh.gov) at the NH DOE and they will help provide the necessary connections.</p>
<p>20. How does a school pay for the service of a Principal Mentor?</p>	<p>It is up to the district to decide; however, Title I 1003(a) and the district's 10 percent set-aside can be used for this purpose.</p>
<p>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS</p>	
<p>21. How does a Title I Priority or Focus School submit its school improvement plan?</p>	<p>A school will use the Steps to Success process and Indistar tool to create the school improvement plan and once completed, will be submitted as an attachment in the online grants management system. Please click here see the Accessing School Improvement Funds document.</p>
<p>22. What does a school need to consider when developing their school improvement plan?</p>	<p>A school should consider the following when developing their school improvement plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment or crosswalk to other improvement plans the school may have in place; • Student achievement data connected to improvement strategies; and • Building a collaborative process and ownership of the interventions with the school staff and community.
<p>23. What Indistar indicators – aligned to the School Turnaround Principles – are Title I Priority and Focus Schools required to assess to access their funding?</p>	<p>Schools are required to assess indicators NH101 (The school leader participate in the Principal Leadership Network as determined by self-reflection or superintendent's recommendation) and ID10 (The school's leadership team regularly looks at school performance data...) and determine at least one intervention in each in order to access their funding. For Title I Focus School, the deadline for submitting the initial school improvement plan is on October 15. Both Title I Priority and Focus Schools will be required to continue their Indistar self-assessment during the school year and can update their school improvement plans at any time.</p>
<p>ACCESSING TURNAROUND FUNDS</p>	
<p>24. How and when can schools access the Title I, Part A 10 percent set-aside money and their 1003(a) funds or 1003(g)?</p>	<p>Please see the document <i>Accessing School Improvement Funds</i> by clicking here.</p>
<p>25. Can the Title I, Part A 10 percent set aside funds and/or the 1003(a) funds be used on all staff in a school? All staff in a district? Only on Title I staff in the school? Only on Title I staff in the district?</p>	<p>Please see the <i>Clarifications on the Title I, Part A 10 percent set aside (2013-14 allocation) and 1003(a) funds</i> memo by clicking here.</p>

MONITORING OF ACHIEVEMENT PROGRESS

26. What local measures can be used for providing baseline, interim and summative student achievement data?	Schools must use a research-based measure such as NEWA, AIMS web, STAR, etc. to provide achievement data information to the NH DOE.
27. When will schools be required to submit their data to the NH DOE?	Summary of local achievement data should be submitted at the beginning of the year (October 15), middle (January) and end of the year (May/June).
28. How will the school be expected to report our progress?	Schools will use the <i>Summary of Local Achievement Data Template</i> (or a comparable report) to report their data progress. The completed form should be posted in the schools Indistar FILE CABINET.
29. Which data should be included on the <i>Summary of Local Achievement Data Template</i>?	All grade levels, including the subgroup data within each grade level, should be reported.
30. How often will the NH DOE be on site to provide technical assistance and progress monitoring?	It is the intention of the NH DOE to be onsite at each Title I Priority and Focus School every six to eight weeks. However, schools should always reach out to their contacts at the NH DOE for support, when necessary.

EXIT CRITERIA

31. How can a school exit its Title I Priority selection?	<p>In order to exit from the selection of being a Title I Priority School, a school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must not be in the lowest five percent of all Title I Schools in the state (using the selection criteria) and must have 3 years of averaged growth.• (If a high school) Must have a combined graduation point score of greater than one or 75 percent. <p>Every school selected as Priority must remain in this designation for at least three years (beginning with the 2013-14 school year). The only two exceptions to this would be those meeting the above criteria (two bullets above) and schools currently participating in the SIG program that are included in the five percent. These schools will be able to count their years in the SIG program as part of their three year requirement. However, they must also meet the exit criteria outlined above. A school receiving SIG funds that are above the five percent may exit this status as soon as their funding year concludes.</p>
32. How can a school exit its Title I Focus selection?	A Title I Focus School may exit from its selection when it can demonstrate that it is no longer a part of the 10 percent of Title I schools experiencing the greatest gaps within their subpopulations (see selection criteria above). The school must also meet their "exit target delta." Schools should contact Dr. Scott Mantie (scott.mantie@doe.nh.gov) for more information.

33. What decision has been made around the “escape hatch” and the 18-month lapse in state assessment?

In order to exit a schools selection of being a Title I Priority or Focus School, the school must meet the exit criteria above. After the results of the Fall NECAPs are received (in the Spring of 2014), the NHDOE will assess the schools data to determine if the criteria was met. If not, the school will remain in its selected status. The next review will be in late Spring, or early Summer of 2015, using the Smarter Balanced assessment. Due to the fact that these are two different assessment, we will be working with the U.S. Department of Education (along with all other approved states) to determine the methodology that will need to be used to determine a schools exit. As we learn more information, we will share it with all selected schools.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

34. Can Title I money be used for IEP students?

Yes, If students with an IEP meet the eligibility requirements for Title I services, as established by the school and/or district, they must be served if it makes educational sense. It would be discriminatory to automatically not serve them. Also, the services provided to the students using Title I funds must never appear in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) because Title I is supplementary. A district must provide the resources necessary to meet what is written in the IEP without Title I funds to ensure these funds are not supplanting already required services. The percent of students with disabilities in Title I should reflect (not exceed) the percent of students with disabilities in the school.

35. SIG Priority Schools: What SIG requirements are still in place? Which no longer apply? For those that still apply, when will they be due? (e.g., Reports – Leading Indicators, Lagging Indicators, Annual Interventions)

All SIG requirements are still in place for schools who receive Title I-A 1003(g) funds. The SIG schools are required to complete the Steps to Success crosswalk to access the additional award.

36. Can professional development activities include non-Title I schools with the understanding that the focus is what is needed by Title I schools but also by others in the district?

In general, the answer would be no. Only participating Title I schools can benefit from Title I dollars. Please contact your Title I consultant at the NH DOE for further clarification.