



2017 School Accountability Protocol

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Section 1: Overview

1.1 Background and Designations

This document outlines the methodology for calculating school accountability designations for the Tennessee Department of Education. Schools may only have one designation, and designations are assigned in the order detailed below. The department assigns Priority and Focus designations every three years, while Reward status is assigned every year.

Priority and Focus schools that demonstrate marked progress within their three-year identification have opportunities to exit these statuses or to be recognized for improvement. Sections 6 through 9 explain how schools can exit Priority or Focus status or be recognized for improvement.

The department first identified schools using the methodology described here in the summer of 2012. The second cohort of Priority and Focus schools was identified in the summer of 2014. Priority and Focus schools were given the 2014-15 school year to plan interventions, which began in the 2015-16 school year. The next identification of Priority and Focus schools will occur in summer 2018. Schools designated as Priority or Focus are not eligible for Reward status. For example, if a school is designated Priority because its performance was in the bottom five percent of the state overall, it would not also be designated as a Reward Progress school if its progress was in the top five percent of the state. In the example described above the state will continue down the list of schools at the top of the growth rankings to identify five percent of Reward Progress schools. Schools that perform at a level that allows them to exit Priority or Focus lists **are** eligible for Reward status.

The following definitions outline the school accountability designations that a school might receive.

- **Priority:** Five percent of schools with the lowest success rates (using up to three years of data) in the state. Priority schools were identified in summer 2014, with interventions beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The department will not identify new Priority schools in 2017, but 2014 Priority schools may exit the Priority list or be designated Priority Improving based on their 2016-17 academic performance. Priority schools that do not exit cannot earn Reward status.
 - Beginning in the summer of 2018, Priority schools are the five percent of schools with the lowest success rates (using up to three years of data) that **do not** demonstrate solid, consistent growth as evidenced by a level 4 or 5 TVAAS rating in 2016-17 **and** 2017-18.
- **Focus:** Ten percent of schools identified through one of the three pathways listed in detail below. The department will not identify new Focus schools in 2017, but 2014 Focus schools may exit the Focus list or be designated Focus Improving based on their 2016-17 academic performance. Focus schools that do not exit cannot earn Reward status. Schools designated Priority cannot also be labeled Focus schools. The pathways for designating Focus schools are as follows:
 - **Graduation Rate Pathway:** High schools with an average graduation rate of less than 60 percent.
 - **Subgroup Pathway:** Any subgroup with a success rate of less than ten percent.
 - **Gap Pathway:** Schools with the largest gaps between selected groups.
 - Beginning in the summer of 2018, Focus schools are schools where an accountability student groups performs in the bottom five percent relative to that student's performance in other schools across the state or any school that earns an overall school grade of "D".
- **Reward:** Ten percent of schools identified through one of two pathways. The department identifies Reward schools annually. Priority and Focus schools cannot earn Reward status unless they exit Priority or Focus status. The pathways for identifying Reward schools are as follows:

- **Reward Performance:** Five percent of schools with the highest success rates in the state.
- **Reward Progress:** Five percent of schools with the highest progress in the state (using one-year TVAAS index values).
- Beginning in the summer of 2018, a Reward school is any school that earns an overall school letter grade of "A".

Section 2: School Pool Identification Steps

2.1 Grade Pool Definitions and Classifications

School designations consider two pools of schools separately using data from the most recent school year. Graduation rate data drives the placement of a school's grade pool.

- **K8 Grade Pool:** This pool includes schools that do not have at least 30 students in the school's graduation cohort.
- **K12 Grade Pool:** This pool includes schools that have at least 30 students in the school's graduation cohort.

Section 3: Success Rates

3.1 Designation Eligibility

Schools must have at least 30 valid tests in at least one subject¹ to be eligible to receive a school accountability designation. Schools receive one-year and up to three-year success rates for the “All Students” group and accountability student groups.

3.2 Student Groups and Included Measures

The following groups and subgroups are considered in school accountability calculations:

- All Students
- Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN)
- Economically Disadvantaged (ED)
- English Learners (EL)
- Students with Disabilities (SWD)
- Non-Economically Disadvantaged (Non-ED)
- Non-English Learners (Non-EL)
- Non-Students with Disabilities (Non-SWD)

The following measures are included in school accountability calculations:

- Subjects for grades 3–8:
 - Math
 - English Language Arts (ELA)
 - Science
- End-of-course (EOC) subjects
 - Algebra I
 - Geometry
 - Algebra II
 - Integrated Math I
 - Integrated Math II
 - Integrated Math III
 - Biology I
 - Chemistry
 - English I
 - English II
 - English III
 - Graduation Rate²

3.3 Subject Modifications and Suppression

¹ A school must meet the minimum test count of 30 in a subject other than graduation rate (i.e., if a school only has data for graduation rate in a given year, that year will not be counted as a year of data).

² Graduation rate data lag by one year (i.e., the 2012 graduation cohort data are used in 2017 school accountability).

The subject will be changed to the corresponding subject in grades 3–8 for EOC records in which the grade is less than 9. For example, the subject will be changed to Math for a student in grade 8 who takes the EOC exam for Algebra I. The table below lists how subjects change for EOC records with grades less than 9.

Original Subject	Original Grade	Modified Subject	Modified Grade
Algebra I	Less than 9	Math	Do not modify
Algebra II	Less than 9	Math	Do not modify
Geometry	Less than 9	Math	Do not modify
Integrated Math I	Less than 9	Math	Do not modify
Integrated Math II	Less than 9	Math	Do not modify
Integrated Math III	Less than 9	Math	Do not modify
English I	Less than 9	ELA	Do not modify
English II	Less than 9	ELA	Do not modify
English III	Less than 9	ELA	Do not modify
Biology I	Less than 9	Science	Do not modify
Chemistry	Less than 9	Science	Do not modify

Subjects are included in success rate calculations when there are 30 or more valid tests within each subject, subgroup (when applicable), and year. Reassignment of EOC records to TCAP subjects for students in grades less than 9 occurs prior to suppression. **Please note that records with missing grades are excluded.**

3.4 Success Rate Calculations

$$\begin{aligned}
 K8 \text{ success rate} &= \frac{\# \text{ On Track or Mastered (Math + ELA + Science + Algebra I + Geometry + Algebra II + Integrated Math I + Integrated Math II + Integrated Math III + English I + English II + English III + Biology I + Chemistry)}}{\# \text{ Valid Tests (Math + ELA + Science + Algebra I + Geometry + Algebra II + Integrated Math I + Integrated Math II + Integrated Math III + English I + English II + English III + Biology I + Chemistry)}} \\
 K12 \text{ success rate} &= \frac{\# \text{ On Track or Mastered (Math + ELA + Science + Algebra I + Geometry + Algebra II + Integrated Math I + Integrated Math II + Integrated Math III + English I + English II + English III + Biology I + Chemistry) + Graduate Count}}{\# \text{ Valid Tests (Math + ELA + Science + Algebra I + Geometry + Algebra II + Integrated Math I + Integrated Math II + Integrated Math III + English I + English II + English III + Biology I + Chemistry) + Graduation Cohort}}
 \end{aligned}$$

Section 4: Designation Exemptions and Exclusions

Schools with only graduation data or only graduation and ACT data in the most current year or in all of the last three years are included in the overall pool of schools but do not receive designations. This determination occurs after suppression rules have been applied.

Schools that are phasing-in grades and have not completed the phase-in as of the 2016-17 school year or have not phased in all the grades served by the school when the school was placed on the Priority list will be eligible for Priority Improving but not eligible for Priority Exit. They will be included in the overall pools.

Schools that are closed are included in the overall pools of schools but do not receive designations.

Special education schools are included in the overall pools of schools but do not receive designations.

The following schools are **not** included in the overall pools of schools and do not receive designations.

- CTE and adult high schools
- Alternative schools³
- Schools that do not have 30 valid tests in any subject for the most recent school year
- Schools from the following districts:
 - Department of Children's Services (system #970)
 - Tennessee School for the Deaf (system #964)
 - West Tennessee School for the Deaf (system #960)
 - Department of Mental Health (system #972)
 - Tennessee School for the Blind (system #963)

³ Records from students in alternative schools are remanded back to students' home district and school. Therefore these schools are not included in the overall pools of schools.

Section 5: Priority Improving Identification

Priority schools consist of the five percent of schools with the lowest success rate in the state.⁴ Priority schools that do not meet the exit criteria are eligible to be named Priority Improving. Priority Improving schools remain on the Priority list and receive recognition for making improvement. In 2017, schools that exceed the tenth percentile⁵ but do not exceed the fifteenth percentile will earn Priority Improving status.

⁴ Success rates considered for Priority identification use up to three years of data.

⁵ This percentile refers to a school's relative performance in terms of its success rate compared to all other schools in the state within the same school pool.

Section 6: Priority Exit Identification

Priority schools will be eligible for exit based on the pathways detailed below.

1. The school exceeds the 15th percentile in terms of one-year success rate when ranked against all other eligible schools in the state within the same school pool in 2017.⁶
2. A school is not named to the Priority list when school designations are calculated again in 2018.

⁶ Please see [section 2.1](#) for more information regarding school pools.

Section 7: Focus Improving Identification

Focus schools consist of ten percent of schools identified through one of three methods:

1. High schools with an average graduation rate, using up to three years of data, of less than 60 percent that have not also been identified as Priority.
2. Any subgroup with a success rate, using up to three years of data, of less than 10 percent.
3. Schools with the largest within-school gaps between selected groups.

Focus schools that do not meet the exit criteria are eligible to be named Focus Improving if their performance improves but does not reach the threshold required for Focus Exit status. Schools that are named Focus Improving remain on the Focus list and receive recognition for making improvement. The pathways to achieve Focus Improving status are listed below.

1. **Graduation Rate improving:** Schools that have a graduation rate greater than 70 percent and less than or equal to 75 percent will be named Focus Improving: Graduation Rate.
2. **Success rate exit:** Schools that have a one-year success rate greater than 15 percent and less than or equal to 20 percent for the subgroup(s) identified in the success rate pathway will be named Focus Improving: Subgroup(s).
3. **Subgroup gap exit:**
 - a. **K8 schools:** A school reducing its *below percentile rank* by at least 12.5 points and fewer than 25 points will be named Focus Improving: Subgroup Gap.
 - b. **K12 schools:** A school reducing the percentage of students scoring at the lowest level of achievement by at least 12.5 percent will be named Focus Improving: Subgroup Gap. The Percent Below reduction is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Percent Below Reduction} = 100 * \frac{\text{Percent Below 2016} - \text{Percent Below 2017}}{\text{Percent Below 2016}}$$

For instance, a school with 40 percent of students scoring Below in 2016 must reduce its percent of students scoring Below in 2017 to 35 or less in order to be labelled focus improving.

Schools that meet the criteria below are excluded from school pools when calculating percentile ranks for each subgroup:

- Schools in which a subgroup has only one year of data in either the current or previous year. This is determined after suppression rules have been applied.
- Schools in which a subgroup has only graduation data either the current or previous year. This is determined after suppression rules have been applied

Section 8: Focus Exit Identification

Please note that Focus Exit is directly linked to the method in which a school was originally identified as Focus, as described in [section 1.1](#). Focus Schools identified for multiple pathways and/or subgroups must exit for all pathways and subgroups to earn Focus Exit status.

Focus schools will be eligible for exit in 2017 based on the pathways listed below. Schools may also exit if they do not appear on the list of Focus schools when the department next produces the list of Focus schools in 2018.

1. **Graduation Rate exit:** The school has a graduation rate exceeding 75 percent for the All Students group for the most recent school year.
2. **Success rate exit:** The school has a one-year success rate exceeding 20 percent for the subgroup(s) for which the school was identified as Focus.
3. **Subgroup Gap exit:**
 - a. **K8 schools:** The school reduces its *percentile rank* in terms of the percentage of students scoring at the lowest level of achievement by 25 points or more.
 - b. **K12 schools:** The school reduces the percentage of students scoring at the lowest level of achievement by 25 percent or more. The Percent Below reduction is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Percent Below Reduction} = 100 * \frac{\text{Percent Below 2016} - \text{Percent Below 2017}}{\text{Percent Below 2016}}$$

For instance, a school had with 40 percent of students scoring Below in 2016 must reduce its percent of students scoring Below in 2017 to 30 or less in order to exit.

Schools that meet the criteria below are excluded from school pools when calculating percentile ranks for each subgroup:

- Schools in which the subgroup has only one year of data in either the current or previous year. This is determined after suppression rules have been applied.
- Schools in which the subgroup has only graduation data either the current or previous year. This is determined after suppression rules have been applied.

Finally, a school that is not named to the Focus list when school designations are calculated again in 2018, the school will be designated Focus Exit.

Section 9: Reward Identification

Reward schools are ten percent of all schools in the state that reflect the top five percent of highest performing and the top five percent of highest progress schools.

9.1 Reward Exclusions

Any school that is a Priority or Focus school in 2017 (named previously and did not exit) cannot earn Reward school status.

Any school that meets the exclusion criteria outlined in [section 4](#) cannot be named a Reward school.

9.2 Reward Exemptions

A school will be exempt from Reward designation if the gap between any of the gap groups listed below is in the top 25 percent of all gaps for a given gap group.

- Black/Hispanic/Native American vs. All Students
- Economically Disadvantaged vs. Non-Economically Disadvantaged
- English Learners vs. Non-English Learners
- Students with Disabilities vs. Non-Students with Disabilities

Schools considered Reward exempt may not earn Reward school status.

Schools that meet the criteria below are excluded from school pools when calculating gap percentiles:

- Schools in which either the historically underperforming subgroup or the comparison group in the gap group has only one year of data.
- Schools in which either the historically underperforming subgroup or the comparison group in the gap group has only graduation data. This is determined after suppression rules have been applied.

9.3 Reward Performance

Using the one-year success rate for the All Students group, eligible schools are ranked from highest to lowest, and the top five percent are selected after excluding exempt schools, as outlined in [section 9.2](#).

9.4 Reward Progress

Using the one-year TVAAS school composite index⁷, eligible schools are ranked from highest to lowest, and the top five percent are selected after excluding exempt schools, as outlined in [section 9.2](#).

⁷ Any school whose recalculated TVAAS index (after reconciling assessment scoring errors) is above the cutoff for the top five percent in the state will also be labeled as Reward Progress.

Section 10: File Descriptions and School Selection Cutoffs

10.1 School Selection Cutoffs

The table below lists the cutoffs for identifying Reward Performance and Progress schools.

School Pool	Success Rate	TVAAS Index Score
K8	59.9	4.06
K12	54.4	5.29

10.2 Output File Variable Descriptions

The purpose of each output file is listed below. Please consult the [file layouts](#) on the accountability application for more detailed descriptions and layouts of each file.

- School Accountability File
 - This file explains whether schools are eligible to receive designations.
- Reward File
 - This file details whether schools have met Reward criteria, including exemptions.
- Focus Exit and Improving File
 - This file explains whether current Focus schools have exited Focus status or have earned Focus Improving status
- Priority Exit and Improving File
 - This file explains whether current Focus schools have exited Focus status or have earned Focus Improving status
- Data Summary
 - This file provides a summary of the data that are used in school accountability designations.
- School Accountability Lists
 - This file lists all schools in the district with updated designations. Some districts have no schools with updated designations and consequently do not have this file.