

Kansas State Department of Education Defining Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

The identification of the “persistently lowest-achieving schools” in Kansas is based on the definition in the US Department of Education’s (ED) School Improvement Grants (SIG) Section 1003(g) Final Requirements and Guidance and also Phase II of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) Frequently Asked Questions document.

Tier I Schools

The universe of schools that could be identified as the persistently lowest achieving are the Title I schools that are in improvement, corrective action or restructuring. Since there are only 32 Title I schools on improvement, corrective action or restructuring, five (5) schools rather than 5% will be identified as the persistently lowest achieving based on rank order. Since there are no Title I high schools on improvement, corrective action or restructuring, no additional schools are identified based on having a graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years. The Title I schools on improvement, corrective action or restructuring identified as the persistently lowest achieving are the Tier I schools. Kansas is not identifying any additional schools in any tier through the “newly eligible” process.

Tier II Schools

In addition to the Title I schools on improvement, corrective action or restructuring that are identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools, secondary schools that are eligible for but not receive Title I funds will be identified as the persistently lowest-achieving schools. These are the Tier II schools as defined in the School Improvement Grant Final Requirements. Based on the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 and the ED’s interim final School Improvement Requirements, Kansas is seeking the waiver that permits Tier II schools to include not only the persistently lowest-achieving secondary schools that are eligible for and do not receive Title I funds but to also include the lowest-achieving secondary schools that are eligible for and receive Title I funds. These additional secondary schools are in the lowest quintile regarding academic achievement or have missed AYP for two consecutive years.

Since there are approximately 270 secondary schools that are eligible for Title I funds, only the lowest 5% will be identified as the lowest-achieving schools. Secondary schools refer essentially to high schools which are buildings culminating in grade 12.

Not only will secondary schools be identified as persistently lowest-achieving based on academic achievement but also on graduation rate. Any secondary school that is eligible for Title I funds with a graduation rate of less than 60% over three years will be added to the list of Tier II schools.

Tier III Schools

The Tier III schools are Title I schools that are identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring that are not included in Tier I or Tier II. There are 27 schools that meet the criteria.

Since Kansas is requesting a waiver to exclude schools from Tier I and Tier II which have less than 30 in the all students category (N-Size), it will include in Tier III any schools that were excluded as a result of that waiver.

Academic Achievement and Lack of Progress

The academic achievement for determining the lowest-achieving schools is based on the percent of students at or above proficient (Meets Standard) on the State reading and mathematics assessments combined. The “All Students” group is the one for which results are calculated. The Single Percentage Method as defined in the School Improvement Guidance is used to calculate academic achievement. The schools are ranked according to the combined percent proficient in reading and mathematics.

Lack of progress on those assessments is based on three years of data. Achievement and progress are treated equally in that no differing weights are assigned. Lack of Progress is determined by calculating the academic achievement for three years and then ranking the schools according to their three year combined percent proficient. The schools with the lowest rankings (1 is lowest) are identified as the persistently lowest achieving.

All forms of the State reading and mathematics assessments are included: regular assessments, assessments with accommodations, Kansas Assessment of Modified Measures (KAMM) and the alternate assessments. The results for all students who participated in the assessments are included; this is referred to as the “report card” data. No students with disabilities were “reclassified;” actual assessment performance level results were used.

Excluded Schools

The only schools that are excluded from consideration are those that meet one or more of the following conditions:

- The school had less than 30 students in the “All Students” category in the most recent assessment administration. Kansas is requesting a waiver to use a “minimum N” of 30 which is the N size in the approved Accountability Workbook. This will prevent very small schools from being identified as persistently lowest achieving based on invalid or unreliable data due to the small number of students on whom that identification is based.
- The school is missing one or more years of data; therefore, lack of progress over three years may not be determined.
- The school’s primary purpose is to serve over-age, under-credited students. These students’ class has already graduated and they are behind in acquiring credits for graduation.

Posting

The definition and list of persistently lowest-achieving schools are posted on the Kansas State Department of Education’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) website at <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3498> and on the Federal Programs Title I School Improvement website at <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=405>.