

## Title I, Part A: Accountability

### 1. Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities (ESEA section 1111(c) and (d)):

The North Star Excellence and Equity System (“North Star”) outlined in this ESSA state plan builds off of the work we have done under our No Child Left Behind (NCLB) flexibility waiver in the last five years to provide meaningful data about school performance and provide collaborative support to schools with a goal of raising achievement and closing achievement gaps. With that, some significant changes informed by in-depth input and values from a variety of stakeholders are included in this accountability plan.

There are three distinct, yet related, parts of North Star.

1. Accountability indicators and process to identify schools for support (outlined in this plan).
2. Accountability indicators and process to recognize schools for success.
3. Data reporting to the public that includes accountability indicators and other measures for the public to understand the contextual factors and student outcomes in schools and districts.

#### Theory of Action

The theory of action below has helped to guide the development of North Star thus far and will continue to shape our implementation plans moving forward.

If Minnesota’s accountability system:

- Is coherent, transparent and easy to understand.
- Is well-aligned to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the state World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) requirements.
- Includes meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Then we will be able to establish a statewide system of recognition and support that raises student achievement for all students and eliminates predictability in disparities.

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, including extensive work among two statewide accountability committees, some key priorities and guiding principles emerged, including a focus on equity, coherence with World’s Best Workforce, transparent data reporting, the future of the school quality or student success indicator, and opportunities for school recognition.

#### A Focus on Equity

In this plan’s introduction, we presented the fact that Minnesotans want an equitable system, sharing an understanding that equity is the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunity to learn and develop to their fullest potential. This accountability

plan emphasizes meaningful inclusion of *all* students in the system and upholds the civil rights spirit of ESSA by holding every public school accountable for the outcomes of every student group.

A few specific examples of an equity-focused approach in this accountability plan include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying and supporting any public high school with a four-year graduation rate below 67 percent overall or for any student group, ensuring that high overall graduation rates don't mask student groups below the 67 percent threshold.
- Maintaining a primary focus on the four-year graduation rate but also using a seven-year rate in the accountability and reporting systems to capture all students, including students with disabilities that receive an education until age 21.
- Equally weighting each student group in a school's overall performance on each accountability indicator to ensure small groups, often including our disadvantaged students, are meaningfully represented.
- Using a minimum cell size of 10 for reporting purposes and 20 for accountability purposes.

### **Coherence with World's Best Workforce (WBWF)**

In 2013, the WBWF legislation (Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11) passed to ensure every Minnesota school district is making strides to improve student performance. Each district must develop a plan that addresses the following five areas:

1. Meet school readiness goals.
2. Have all third grade students achieve grade-level literacy.
3. Close academic achievement gaps.
4. Have all students attain career and college readiness.
5. Have all students graduate from high school.

The statewide goals section of this ESSA plan outlines goals aligned to WBWF for numbers two, three, and five above. It is important to note, however, that goals number one and four will continue to be developed as more school readiness and career and college readiness data become available.

#### *School Readiness (WBWF Goal #1)*

Currently, Minnesota does not fully fund or mandate the use of one or a set of school readiness assessment tools. This prevents the state from having comparable statewide data that measures school readiness of kindergarteners that can be disaggregated by student group.

Minnesota has developed the Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP), which includes a menu of comprehensive assessment tools that districts can choose from based on the needs of their students and teachers. These tools provide real-time data to help districts plan and support teachers in their daily instructional practice. Each of the tools are aligned to the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) and the Minnesota Kindergarten Academic Standards. Although the KEP is designed to be collected when children start kindergarten, pre-K through grade 12 administrators and principals are encouraged to implement the KEP in programs such as School Readiness, voluntary prekindergarten and other early learning programs to promote alignment in using one of the tools across the pre-K through third grade continuum. All of the tools on the KEP menu have age appropriate versions and can be used pre-K through third grade. Additionally, KEP assessment tools can provide rich information to help teachers and families as children transition from an early learning environment to kindergarten.

Future inclusion of data from the KEP will be dependent on both legislative changes and additional funding from the state Legislature.

#### *Career and College Readiness (WBWF Goal #4)*

Ensuring all students are well-prepared for career and college surfaced as a top priority for stakeholders during the ESSA engagement process. The goal is that every Minnesota student has meaningful opportunities to succeed after graduating from high school. Minnesota's current standards include career and college readiness skills, were developed in collaboration with stakeholders, and have been nationally commended for their level of rigor. Minnesota's standards focus on higher-order thinking skills and are well aligned with the knowledge and skills that students need to succeed in postsecondary and in the workforce. Ensuring every student is successful on the state's academic standards is a priority. WBWF requires districts to ensure high-quality curriculum, and that instruction and assessments are aligned to the career- and college-ready Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) engaged in extensive discussion with stakeholders about the wide variety of career- and college-ready measures that are available beyond the state assessments. Stakeholders specifically discussed equitable student participation in a range of career- and college-readiness options, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), concurrent enrollment programs such as College in the Schools, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO).

MDE is committed to reporting some of these data, as available, on the Minnesota Report Card as well as moving toward the longer-term plan described below to include a measure of career and college readiness as a school-quality or student-success indicator in the accountability system.

This state WBWF strategic planning and accountability framework strives to align district efforts, resources and programs around these five common goals. School boards are to adopt a long-term, strategic, comprehensive plan to support and improve teaching and learning with clearly defined student achievement goals and benchmarks.

MDE provides regional WBWF data profiles to inform district planning. MDE designed these annual data profiles to provide districts with updates on their progress toward the WBWF goals. These data include the measures MDE has available at the state, but districts set their own SMART (strategic, measurable, achievable, results-based and time-bound) goals and track progress at the local level.

Under the requirements of WBWF, the commissioner "must identify those districts in any consecutive three-year period not making sufficient progress toward improving teaching and learning for all students ... and striving for the world's best workforce." MDE is aligning district identification time lines under WBWF with school identification time lines under ESSA, and is working to align indicators used to identify districts and schools under both WBWF and ESSA.

#### **Transparent Data Reporting for Families, Communities and Educators**

Stakeholders also expressed the importance of having a system that is transparent and used by families, communities and educators. The goals, indicators and identification of schools on the subsequent pages of this plan were developed with a focus on transparency and understandability, but it is important to acknowledge the significant work ahead to collaboratively determine how to publicly present these data in a way that is beneficial for families, communities and educators.

A key next step in the ESSA stakeholder engagement process will be focused on meaningful and transparent data reporting. These data will include the indicators and school identifications outlined in the accountability

section of this plan as well as school recognition categories that are yet to be determined and the many other measures required in ESSA report cards. It will be particularly important to make sure the presentation of the data reflects what families, communities and educators value. Some priorities that have emerged related to data reporting include:

- Annually reporting information, at each school, on the performance of students overall and of each student group on the accountability indicators used to identify schools for support.
- Providing a dashboard with a variety of measures so users can fully understand the context of a school, including student outcomes, climate indicators, funding information, access to a well-rounded education, teacher and school leader factors (including access to student support services), and student demographics.
- Ensuring users can easily access an at-a-glance report on school performance at a high level, possibly by combining measures into an easy-to-understand visual, while also allowing users to dig deeper into particular areas as desired.
- Allowing the ability to compare:
  - Student group performance.
  - School and district performance to the state.
  - Schools and districts to other successful schools and districts with similar contexts.
  - Data over time to show progress.
- Ensuring the data are presented in an accessible format, including by language and disability status.
- Transparently reporting school and district performance relative to progress toward statewide goals.
- Making it clear when a school lacks reportable data because it did not submit information to the state, such as through the Minnesota Common Course Catalogue.

This is just a start. Minnesota will consult with stakeholders in the 2017-18 school year to continue to develop shared priorities for data reporting and to determine how to present data in a useful way to empower families, communities and educators.

### **School Quality or Student Success Indicator**

Stakeholders in Minnesota have expressed significant interest in the school quality or student success indicator of the state's accountability system. In line with ESSA, there is a desire to expand the indicators of school and district accountability to include not only test-based and graduation measures, but also other important indicators of school success. There is clear interest in adding a measurement of equitable well-rounded instruction as Minnesota's school quality or student success indicator in the future. In the short-term, the school quality or student success indicator informed by stakeholders and described in this plan is a measure of consistent attendance. In the long-term, this indicator could incorporate multiple components at the preschool, elementary, middle and high school level. There is particular interest in including a measure of access and opportunity for *all* students to a well-rounded education (e.g., arts, physical education, science, etc.), as well as career- and college-readiness program participation and outcomes for high schools. Stakeholders want to ensure that this indicator does not solely focus on what is being offered in a school, but also, emphasizes student-level access to and success in particular opportunities, when possible.

Expanding this indicator may also help to further align with the WBWF legislation, as described above. WBWF Goal #1 is to have all students ready for school, and Goal #4 is to have all students ready for career and college. The school quality or student success indicator could incorporate both a school readiness measure and a career and college readiness measure in the future.

After a close look at state data systems, the Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) has been identified as an existing system that can be used to collect data for the pre-K through grade 12 school quality or student success indicator. The Minnesota Common Course Catalogue is used by districts to report data related to course participation and outcomes, but to meet the requirements in ESSA, the MCCC would need considerable enhancement. MDE will continue work with stakeholders on the direction for expanding the school quality or student success indicator in the future for identifications made after the 2020-21 school year.

### **Opportunities for School Recognition**

Minnesota is committed to ensuring schools are recognized for their successes. While some of the accountability indicators included in this plan will be used, stakeholders have also expressed a desire to include additional data for school recognition. There has been particular interest in exploring the use of school climate measures, equitable access to rigorous coursework, equitable access to diverse and qualified teachers, and science results. This list is just a start. Schools could be recognized with a “badge” for success in one or more of these areas, and stakeholders are especially interested in understanding the school’s story behind their success. In addition, Minnesota would like to emphasize schools that are beating the odds, given their particular context or student population.

MDE will continue work with stakeholders in the 2017-18 school year to determine the process and measures to identify schools for success. Consistent with the timeline for the accountability system outlined in this plan, schools will be recognized beginning in the 2018-19 school year.

- i. Subgroups (ESEA section 1111(c)(2)):
  - a. List each major racial and ethnic group the state includes as a subgroup of students, consistent with ESEA section 1111(c)(2)(B).

In Minnesota we believe it is important to use inclusive language that does not marginalize groups of people. For this reason, we use “student groups” instead of “subgroups” when referring to racial and ethnic groups, as well as other categories of students.

Minnesota will use the federally defined set of seven racial and ethnic student groups:

- American Indian
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- White

- b. If applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students other than the statutorily required subgroups (i.e., economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners) used in the statewide accountability system.

In addition to economically disadvantaged students, English learners and students with disabilities, the system will use “counter-groups” to promote balance in the number of groups in which a student can be included.

For example, in schools with at least 20 English learners, the system will also include students who are not English learners as a separate counter-group if the school serves at least 20 students who are not English learners. These same rules will apply to students who are and are not economically disadvantaged and students with and without disabilities.

Counter-groups will only be included if the required group is included.

For example, if a school has more than 20 non-English learners, but fewer than 20 English learners, non-English learners will not be included as a counter-group.

- c. Does the state intend to include in the English learner subgroup the results of students previously identified as English learners on the state assessments required under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) for purposes of state accountability (ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(B))? Note that a student's results may be included in the English learner subgroup for not more than four years after the student ceases to be identified as an English learner.

Yes

No

Including former English learners increases the number of schools with English learners as a student group.

When reporting results on the Minnesota Report Card, readers will be able to see both the results of the expanded English learner group (including former English learners as described) and the results of current English learners only. This will preserve the ability of the public and educators to focus specifically on current English learners when desired while also honoring the desire of many stakeholders to see former English learners included.

- d. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the state:
- Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or
  - Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or
  - Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) or under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii). If this option is selected, describe how the state will choose which exception applies to a recently arrived English learner.

Recently arrived English learners will be expected to take state academic tests during their first year of enrollment. That first year's results will not be included in accountability calculations. In such a student's second year of enrollment, their scores will be used when calculating academic progress, but not when calculating academic achievement. In their third year of enrollment, their scores will be used when calculating both academic progress and academic achievement.

- ii. Minimum N-Size (ESEA section 1111(c)(3)(A)):

- a. Provide the minimum number of students that the state determines are necessary to be included to carry out the requirements of any provisions under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that require disaggregation of information by each subgroup of students for accountability purposes.

Minnesota will use 20 students as the minimum number of students necessary for a group to be included for accountability purposes. This will apply to accountability for schools under ESSA and for districts under World's

Best Workforce (WBWF). Even when a student group is below the minimum number of students at the school level, in many cases, the group will have enough students across the district to be included at the district level. Across the state, a higher proportion of students within each student group are captured in accountability at a district level.

- b. Describe how the minimum number of students is statistically sound.

Minnesota has used a minimum number of 20 students for accountability purposes for the past several years. While this has allowed small changes in some schools' populations to cause noticeable variation in current calculations, consistent with the agency's mission and vision and the state's World's Best Workforce legislation, Minnesota did not want to increase the minimum n-size. During the development of the accountability system, analyses were completed examining the number of schools and students that would not be included in the accountability system using different minimum n-sizes (including cell sizes of 30, 20 and 15). These analyses were discussed with stakeholders in meetings about the accountability system as well as the very early conversations related to the importance of reporting in the accountability system and of data interpretation. Minnesota also completed analyses examining consistency in the accountability system over time to confirm that a minimum n-size of 20 did not introduce instability to the system.

- c. Describe how the minimum number of students was determined by the state, including how the state collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining such minimum number.

Under its NCLB flexibility waiver, Minnesota reduced its minimum number for the purposes of accountability from 40 students (as it had been under No Child Left Behind) to 20 students. Minnesota's minimum number of students for public reporting has been 10 students.

On January 5, 2017, MDE staff surveyed members of the ESSA Accountability Advisory Committee to identify those interested in providing feedback on the minimum number of students. On April 27, 2017, MDE staff met with these interested members of the ESSA Accountability Advisory Committee, including representation from teachers' professional organization and civil rights groups.

Staff also solicited feedback from members of the ESSA Accountability Technical Committee, including district administrators and representatives from higher education in late April and early May 2017.

On May 10, 2017, staff also met with ESSA School Improvement Committee members, including teachers, district administrators, principals and other school leaders. Members of each committee are also parents of children in Minnesota public schools.

When meeting with these groups, staff analyzed and presented data examining different minimum number options (including cell sizes of 30, 20 and 15), considering both (a) the percentage of students in each student group who would be included in that group for accountability purposes, and (b) the percentage of schools serving students in those student groups who would see that group included in their calculation.

Maintaining stability in the accountability system, particularly to avoid seeing drastic swings in school performance that are the result of small groups of students, was one key value driving the feedback supporting this decision. Stakeholders also expressed the importance of closely considering the number of students within

student groups and the number of schools that the accountability system can include based on different cell size options. The discussion largely focused on the balance between the desire to have a stable, statistically sound system with the desire to also have a cell size that is low enough to ensure meaningful inclusion of student groups across the state in accountability. In the interest of equity and ensuring local decision makers focus on all student groups, there was also strong interest in providing additional support for local-level analysis of trends in groups below the minimum cell size.

While stakeholder opinions varied, the general feedback supported keeping the minimum cell size for accountability at 20 students and the minimum cell size for reporting at 10 students.

- d. Describe how the state ensures that the minimum number is sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information.

A minimum number of 20 can be sufficient to not reveal any personally identifiable information when it is combined with appropriate reporting techniques that protect student privacy. The 2017 report *ESSA State Accountability Systems: Best Practices for Determining Subgroup Size in Accountability Systems While Protecting Personally Identifiable Student Information*, released by the Institute of Education Sciences, describes several such techniques. The report acknowledges that to fully protect personally identifiable information through the minimum number alone, the number must be at least 301 students; however, the use of reporting techniques that suppress some information can protect students' personally identifiable information for minimum numbers lower than 20 students.

Minnesota already uses some of these techniques—such as primary suppression that replaces data for students below the minimum number with “Count Too Small to Report”—and the state is continuing efforts to implement additional secondary suppression techniques and establish reporting minimum and maximum percentages to further protect students' privacy. As a result of these efforts, the minimum number of 20 students is sufficient to protect personally identifiable information.

- e. If the state's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for accountability purposes, provide the state's minimum number of students for purposes of reporting.

Minnesota's minimum number of students for the purposes of reporting will continue to be 10 students. Minnesota's efforts to implement additional suppression rules to protect student privacy will continue in this area, as well.

- iii. Establishment of Long-Term Goals (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)):
  - a. Academic Achievement. (*ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(aa)*)
    1. Describe the long-term goals for improved academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments, for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

Minnesota set a goal to reach a reading/language arts and math achievement rate of 90 with no student group below 85 by the year 2025.



Consistent with MDE’s mission, this statewide goal was established with a clear focus on ensuring excellence and equity for all Minnesota students. It requires that all students reach a high level of achievement but takes into account the accelerated improvement that is necessary for some student groups in order to close achievement gaps. While all groups are expected to improve, student groups that are currently achieving at lower levels than their counterparts have the highest expected gains.

Under the state’s World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) legislation, Minnesota has had an opportunity to emphasize coherence within schools and districts, as well as across the state, around five common goals, including:

- School readiness
- Third grade literacy
- Closing achievement gaps
- Career and college readiness
- Graduation rates

Minnesotans have embraced this opportunity to set aligned goals that meet both state and federal expectations with an eye toward clarity and coherence. The goal to reach an achievement rate of 90 with no student group below 85 by the year 2025 can be used as the state achievement gap goal under WBWF. This provides consistency and focus on common goals in schools and districts across the state.

This achievement goal also offers a way for families, community members, and educators to understand how schools and districts are doing in closing achievement gaps relative to statewide expectations. It is important that MDE provide the data in a way that families, communities and educators can clearly understand achievement relative to goals in order to support local planning and improvement efforts under ESSA and the WBWF.

The required increases by student group outlined in [Appendix A](#) demonstrate the rigor of this 2025 goal. This is ambitious, but it is also important to note that it is grounded in how the state’s best schools perform. The current performance for the “all students” group in the top performing schools in the state is similar to the 2025 goal to reach achievement rates of 85 for each student group, with some differences between math and reading/language arts. This sets a motivating expectation that all Minnesota schools can strive to ensure all student groups achieve at the same levels as our schools with the highest performance.

The calculation of achievement rates are further described in section 4.iv. The achievement rate is similar, but not the same as, the percent of students proficient (which is also publicly reported) because it applies the accountability requirements to the calculation. While Minnesota has historically used a proficiency index rate in accountability which assigns one-half point to students partially meeting standards and one point to students meeting or exceeding standards, the state will move to a calculation of achievement that only gives points to students meeting or exceeding standards (not partially meeting standards). This helps to differentiate the academic achievement indicator from the academic progress indicator described in the sections below. An achievement rate that is similar to percent proficient has also been described by stakeholders as more transparent to families and communities.

### Grade Three Literacy Goal and Grade Eight Math Goal

As previously mentioned, Minnesota stakeholders have expressed a clear interest in aligning with WBWF, including for the statewide goals. Minnesota will continue providing districts and charters with annual data to show local performance relative to statewide WBWF goals. Third-grade literacy and eighth-grade math are two areas that we will continue to report; however, the specific goals will be updated to reflect the priorities established in this ESSA plan.

The WBWF legislation emphasizes the importance of having all students achieve grade-level literacy in third grade, and in addition, the Read Well by Third Grade legislation (Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.12) requires districts and charters to develop a literacy plan with the goal of having all students proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

In an effort to accelerate progress in this area, Minnesota will set a goal in third-grade literacy that is consistent with the math and reading achievement gap goal described above. While the reading/language arts goal above includes all tested grades, this goal is specific to third grade.

In addition, Minnesota will continue to use eighth-grade math as one indicator of success for districts and charters while also working to develop meaningful career- and college-ready measures (as previously outlined). Similar to grade three literacy, Minnesota will set a goal in eighth-grade math that is consistent with the achievement gap goal described above for all grades.

The two additional goals are:

- Minnesota will reach a third grade reading/language arts achievement rate of 90 with no student group below 85 by the year 2025.
- Minnesota will reach an eighth-grade math achievement rate of 90 with no student group below 85 by the year 2025.

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement in [Appendix A](#).
3. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for academic achievement take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps.

*All schools and all student groups are expected to reach a high bar in the year 2025. Different expectations are not set for different student groups.*

The establishment of this statewide achievement goal was driven by the North Star vision: excellence and equity for all. All schools and all student groups are expected to reach a high bar in the year 2025. Different expectations are not set for different student groups. This ambitious goal to tackle disparities in achievement instills a sense of urgency and high expectations with an eye toward collectively ensuring all students are put on the path to success after high school.

The long-term goals and measurements of interim progress in [Appendix A](#) demonstrate the improvements needed by student group.

- b. Graduation Rate. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)(bb))
  1. Describe the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students, including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the state; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

Minnesota has an existing goal to reach a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of 90 percent with no student group below 85 percent by the year 2020. As a commitment to this goal and in an effort to not change expectations for Minnesota schools and districts, Minnesota will keep the 2020 graduation rate goal that was established in 2012. [Appendix A](#) provides the baseline, interim measurements of progress and goal using the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

Similar to the achievement goals outlined above, this ESSA graduation rate goal also aligns with the WBWF legislation to ensure consistency and coherence in schools and districts across the state. Minnesota is currently tracking progress for every district in the state relative to this 2020 graduation rate goal, and MDE provides annual WBWF data profiles to districts to show progress toward meeting the goal.

A goal of 90 percent with no student group below 85 percent by the year 2020 is ambitious. This requires a high graduation rate for all students while also taking into account the accelerated improvement that is necessary for some student groups in order to close graduation rate gaps. Student groups that are currently graduating at lower levels than their counterparts have the highest expected gains.

Graduation rates in Minnesota have increased for all groups since 2012, and this goal asks for the rate of improvement to increase for most groups. For example, from 2012 to 2016, graduation rates for black students increased from 51 percent to 64 percent. For American Indian students, the increase from 2012 to 2016 was from 45 percent to 49 percent, and for students in special education, the increase was from 56 percent to 60 percent. Under Minnesota's graduation goal, each of these groups will be expected to have a four-year graduation rate of at least 85 percent by 2020.

The 2016 graduation rates, using the new seven federal race/ethnic codes, show that the black, Hispanic and American Indian student groups all need to demonstrate the most improvement in order to reach the 2020 goal. Data show that the white student group 2016 graduation rate is at 87 percent. Students with disabilities, English learners, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch are at 60 percent, 63 percent and 69 percent, respectively. Under ESSA, Minnesota will provide support to both Title I and non-Title I high schools with a graduation rate below 67 percent overall or for any student group which will give the state an opportunity to target assistance to schools contributing the most to the statewide graduation rate gaps in order to accelerate progress toward this 2020 goal.

2. If applicable, describe the long-term goals for each extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, including (i) baseline data; (ii) the timeline for meeting the long-term goals, for which the term must be the same multi-year length of time for all students and for each subgroup of students in the State; (iii) how the long-term goals are

ambitious; and (iv) how the long-term goals are more rigorous than the long-term goal set for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

3. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in [Appendix A](#).
4. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide graduation rate gaps.

The four-year graduation rate goal requires significant closure in statewide graduation rate gaps. Similar to the math and reading achievement goals described above, the graduation rate goals were driven by the overarching vision of the North Star Excellence and Equity System. Minnesota has persistent graduation rate gaps and needs to continue the sense of urgency to make sure every Minnesota student—including students of color and American Indian students, English learners, students with disabilities and students in poverty—graduates from high school well prepared for success in career and college.

The rate of graduation rate improvements for all students and each student group demonstrated in the tables above and in [Appendix A](#) show the improvement that is necessary to close graduation rate gaps. It is important to Minnesota stakeholders to ensure high expectations for all students, and these goals reflect that. The four-year graduation rate goal sets the same high expectation for every student group and requires groups with lower graduation rates to improve at much faster rates than their counterparts.

c. English Language Proficiency. (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii))

1. Describe the long-term goals for English learners for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the State-determined timeline for such students to achieve English language proficiency; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious.

Minnesota set a goal of 85 percent of students making progress in achieving English language proficiency by the year 2025. A student is considered to be making progress toward proficiency if they reach or exceed their individual target for the year on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment. The process to establish student targets is described in the section of this plan describing the progress toward English language proficiency indicator.

While goals for the performance of English learners have been established in the past under the previous Title III accountability system, this is the first time Minnesota has a measurable goal to track and report the progress of English learners in every Minnesota school. This statewide goal makes English learners a priority and works to ensure equity and access for English learners through high-quality language instruction education programs.

The English learner population in Minnesota has increased more than 300 percent in the last 20 years. Currently, it is the fastest growing student population in the state. ESSA presents many opportunities to meaningfully include and support Minnesota's English learners to ensure they are making progress in achieving English language proficiency.

Ensuring the success of English learners is important for Minnesota’s future workforce, particularly as the English learner population continues to rapidly grow in the state. Under the state World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) legislation, districts must have meaningful strategies in place for improving instruction, curriculum and student achievement, including the English and native language development and academic achievement of English learners. The department is committed to supporting districts and charters in implementing high-quality English language instruction educational programs that ensure English learners make progress in attaining proficiency and achieve at high levels.

**Baseline Data**

Given the most reliable data available, approximately 41.5 percent of English learners in Minnesota made progress toward English language proficiency in 2017, as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. The ambitious goal of 85 percent of students making progress toward achieving English language proficiency within eight years, or by 2025, establishes a high expectation. To meet the 2025 goal, a total increase of 43.5 percentage points is needed, or 5.4 percentage points per year. This ambitious baseline goal and interim measurements of progress can be found in [Appendix A](#).

**Note:** Minnesota is using the most reliable estimate of baseline data for English learners making progress toward proficiency. Minnesota is a member of the WIDA Consortium, and the first administration of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment was in 2015-16, which limits the availability of historical data to assess trends and establish a definitive state baseline. Consistent with recommendations from WIDA, Minnesota will measure progress toward English language proficiency in the 2017-18 school year for use in the accountability system. For this reason, Minnesota will review and revise, if appropriate, the baseline data, long-term goal and interim measurements of progress when updated ACCESS data becomes available.

**Timeline for Students to Achieve English Language Proficiency**

The progress toward English language proficiency indicator uses a path-to-proficiency model based on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test and will calculate targets for English learners in grades 1-12. The first step is to determine the time expected to achieve proficiency, based on the student’s starting grade and ACCESS composite proficiency level.

The model categorizes the student’s first ACCESS composite proficiency level as beginning, intermediate or advanced. It then uses the following table to set the maximum amount of time expected for the student to achieve proficiency.

Level of First ACCESS Score	Grade of First ACCESS Score	Years to Reach Proficiency (Including Year of First ACCESS Score)
Beginning	Kindergarten	7
Beginning	1-8	6
Beginning	9 or higher	7

Level of First ACCESS Score	Grade of First ACCESS Score	Years to Reach Proficiency (Including Year of First ACCESS Score)
Intermediate	Kindergarten	7
Intermediate	1-3	5
Intermediate	4-8	6
Intermediate	9 or higher	7
Advanced	Kindergarten	3
Advanced	1 or higher	2

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) will receive one additional year in their timelines if they are at a beginning or intermediate proficiency level, but not if they are initially at an advanced proficiency level. Under Minnesota state law, the definition of SLIFE can only apply to students in grade seven or higher who have at least two years less schooling than their peers and function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics.

These expectations have been set based on historical data about the time required for English learners in Minnesota to be reclassified as no longer requiring English language development services based on their level of English language proficiency.

2. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goal for increases in the percentage of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency in [Appendix A](#).

See [Appendix A](#) for these measurements.

### **Consistent Attendance Long-Term Statewide Goal**

Minnesota is setting an additional goal in the ESSA state plan to reach a 95 percent consistent attendance rate overall, with no group below 90 by the year 2020.

Consistent attendance will be used as the state’s school quality or student success indicator in the short-term, with plans to expand this indicator in the future. A student is considered a consistent attendee if they attend school at least 90 percent of the time. This is the inverse of the commonly used definition of chronic absenteeism as missing 10 percent or more of days enrolled.

A measure of consistent attendance is not the same as average attendance rates. A school could have high overall average daily attendance, but some students or student groups could be chronically absent. This goal will shed light on the urgency to ensure every Minnesota student is consistently attending school.

Consistent attendance is one indicator, among many that were discussed by stakeholders, of school climate and student engagement. A welcoming school environment and meaningful supports should be in place to improve attendance for all students, but particularly to decrease the number of students that are missing school more than 10 percent of the time. Consistent attendance data can provide an early warning sign that a student may be at risk of falling behind academically and off track for graduation.

This is also an equity issue. Low consistent attendance rates—or high chronic absenteeism rates—are more prevalent among students of color and American Indian students, students with disabilities, English learners and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This needs to change. The goal to reach a 95 percent consistent attendance rate overall with no group below 90 by the year 2020 is rigorous and ambitious. Meeting this goal requires significant improvement for student groups that demonstrate particularly low attendance. Every Minnesota school will have consistent attendance data publicly reported for *every student group* in order to track progress toward the statewide goal.

Minnesota looks forward to elevating work with schools related to consistent attendance and providing supports to identify and address local root causes for why students are not in school, the challenges these students face, and effective strategies to support them. Among the many potential strategies to support increasing attendance based on local needs, access to student support services was communicated as a priority among stakeholders. To increase engagement and improve academic performance, every Minnesota student should have access to a team of student support personnel, including counselors, social workers, nurses, school psychologists and others.

The ambitious consistent attendance long-term, statewide goal and interim measurements of progress are included in [Appendix A](#).

iv. Indicators (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B))

- a. Academic Achievement Indicator. Describe the academic achievement indicator, including a description of how the indicator (i) is based on the long-term goals; (ii) is measured by proficiency on the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments; (iii) annually measures academic achievement for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; and (iv) at the state’s discretion, for each public high school in the state, includes a measure of student growth, as measured by the annual statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments.

The academic achievement indicator is based on the statewide reading/language arts and math Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) administered in grades 3-8 and once in high school.

Minnesota will use an achievement rate as its academic achievement indicator, and the index will be calculated at all school levels, including elementary, middle and high schools. This rate will award schools 1.0 points for every student in either the “meets standards” or “exceeds standards” achievement level. The number of points at a school will be divided by the number of students enrolled at the school who attended for at least half an academic year. As a result, students who score at the “does not meet standards” or “partially meets standards” achievement levels and students who do not participate in testing will be included in the denominator of the rate calculation but will not be awarded any points in the calculation. Students who do not participate in the test will be identified in state records and in communication with families as not participating; they will not be described as failing to meet standards.

Achievement rates will be calculated separately for math and for reading/language arts, and the two subjects will receive equal weight in the system of annual meaningful differentiation.

While Minnesota has historically used a proficiency index rate in accountability which assigns one-half point to students partially meeting standards and one point to students meeting or exceeding standards, the state will

move to a calculation of achievement that only gives points to students meeting or exceeding standards (not partially meeting standards). This helps to differentiate the academic achievement indicator from the academic progress indicator described in the sections below. An achievement rate that is similar to percent proficient has also been described by some stakeholders as more transparent to families and communities.

- i. Minnesota will track progress on an annual basis for this indicator and report school and district performance relative to the statewide academic achievement goal overall and for each student group. This indicator is based on the same measurement (an achievement rate) as Minnesota’s long-term goals. This is important, because Minnesota will be able to provide school performance on this indicator relative to the state’s long-term goals. Minnesota’s system of annual meaningful differentiation has been designed such that schools where each student group is meeting Minnesota’s state goals will not be identified for support until nearly every school in the state is meeting those goals.
- ii. The achievement rate will be calculated separately for the statewide reading/language arts and statewide mathematics assessments, and is based on the achievement levels set for those tests, with full points given only for students achieving proficiency, as indicated by reaching either the “meets standards” or “exceeds standards” achievement levels.
- iii. This indicator will annually measure academic achievement for all students and separately for each student group. The rate will be calculated at the group level first (including for the “all students” group), and then a school average will be calculated by averaging student group rates, awarding equal weight to each student group in the school. This will allow the indicator to be disaggregated by student group.

This approach to weighting student groups emphasizes the importance of paying attention to each student group at a school. Especially in states like Minnesota where high overall performance has been known to mask low performance of smaller student groups, this attention is an important equity issue. One concern raised about this approach is that schools with small populations of white students and/or students not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch will see their average school outcomes distorted. However, an analysis of such schools finds that the smaller the population of white students or students not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the more similar their outcomes are when compared with students of color, American Indian students, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. As a result, this approach to weighting appears to meet its goal of encouraging attention to small groups underperforming relative to the rest of their school without having a detrimental effect on accurately identifying schools for support.

For example, consider the following school’s academic achievement in math:

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>All Students</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRP)</b>	<b>Not-FRP</b>
<b>Number of Students</b>	100	75	25	20	80
<b>Math Achievement Rate</b>	83	83.7	81	75	85

The school’s average academic achievement rate would be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(83 + 83.7 + 81 + 75 + 85)}{5}$$

The result of that calculation is 81.5, which would be used as the average math achievement rate at the school.



- iv. This indicator will not include a measure of student growth in high schools.
  - d. Indicator for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools (Other Academic Indicator). Describe the Other Academic indicator, including how it annually measures the performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. If the Other Academic indicator is not a measure of student growth, the description must include a demonstration that the indicator is a valid and reliable statewide academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance.

For elementary and middle schools, Minnesota will use a transition matrix growth-to-proficiency model that awards points based on students progressing in achievement levels on the state math and reading/language arts tests. Schools will receive a score in each subject.

Students will receive points based on the change in their achievement levels between their previous test and their current test. Students who show the most progress in increasing achievement levels will receive the most points.

To determine the number of points awarded for each possible transition between levels, the likelihood of each transition was calculated based on recent historical data. A draft set of values based on the order of likelihood was shared with stakeholders, who offered additional feedback about the perceived difficulty of making each transition. This feedback was then used to refine the points assigned to each possible transition.

The matrix will award points to each student using the following values:

<b>Current Level (across) → Previous Level (down) ↓</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standards</b>	<b>Partially Meets Standards</b>	<b>Meets Standards</b>	<b>Exceeds Standards</b>
<b>Exceeds Standards</b>	0	0	0	3
<b>Meets Standards</b>	0	0	2	5
<b>Partially Meets Standards</b>	0	2	6	9
<b>Does Not Meet Standards</b>	0	8	12	15

Student points will be totaled at the group level first (including for the “all students” group), and then divided by the number of students with scores to find the student group average. A school average will then be calculated by averaging the student group averages, awarding equal weight to each student group in the school. This will allow the indicator to be disaggregated by student group.

For example, consider the following school’s academic progress in mathematics:

Student Group	All Students	White	Black	Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRP)	Not-FRP
Number of Students	100	75	25	20	80
Number of Points	392	299	93	64	328
Student Group Average	3.9	4.0	3.7	3.2	4.1

The school's average would be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(3.9 + 4.0 + 3.7 + 3.2 + 4.1)}{5}$$

The result of that calculation is 3.8, which would be used as the average math progress at the school.

- e. Graduation Rate. Describe the graduation rate indicator, including a description of (i) how the indicator is based on the long-term goals; (ii) how the indicator annually measures graduation rate for all students and separately for each subgroup of students; (iii) how the indicator is based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate; (iv) if the state, at its discretion, also includes one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, how the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is combined with that rate or rates within the indicator; and (v) if applicable, how the state includes in its four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and any extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates students with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed using an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D) and awarded a state-defined alternate diploma under ESEA section 8101(23) and (25).

The graduation rate indicator will separately use a school's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and seven-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Students who drop out after less than half an academic year at a school will be counted at the school they attended for the greatest share of their high school years.

Minnesota strives to ensure every student receives the support they need in order to obtain a high school diploma. While the primary goal is to reach on-time graduation (within four years), some students may take additional time. Stakeholders were particularly interested in incorporating a seven-year graduation rate into the accountability system to include students that are most likely to receive a regular high school diploma after four years, including some students with disabilities receiving transition services, recently arrived English learners and at-risk students.

It is important to note that the four-year rate is weighted higher than the seven-year graduation rate in the system, as described in the method for identification below. In addition, Minnesota will continue to use the four-year graduation rate in WBWF accountability and to identify low graduation rate high schools for support.

- i. Minnesota will track progress on an annual basis for this indicator and report school and district performance relative to the statewide graduation goal overall and for each student group. This indicator is based on the same measurement (the cohort-adjusted graduation rate) as Minnesota's long-term goals. This is important, because Minnesota will be able to provide school performance on this indicator relative to the state's long-term goals. Minnesota's system of annual meaningful

differentiation has been designed such that schools where each student group is meeting Minnesota’s state goals will not be identified for support until nearly every school in the state is meeting those goals.

- ii. Each rate (four-year and seven-year) will be calculated at the student group level first (including for the “all students” group), and then a school average will be calculated by averaging student group rates, awarding equal weight to each student group in the school. This will allow the indicator to be disaggregated by student group.

For example, consider the following school’s four-year graduation rates:

Student Group	All Students	White	Black	Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRP)	Not-FRP
Number of Students	100	75	25	20	80
Graduation Rate	84.1	85.4	80.2	68.5	88

The school’s average would be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(84.1 + 85.4 + 80.2 + 68.5 + 88)}{5}$$

The result of that calculation is 81.2, which would be used as the average four-year graduation at the school.

- iii. The indicator uses the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.
  - iv. Minnesota will also use a seven-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. The system for differentiating schools first sorts schools by the four-year rate before using the seven-year rate to prioritize within the set of schools with lower four-year rates.
  - v. Minnesota does not award alternate diplomas. Only students with a regular high school diploma, per the ESSA law, are counted as graduates in the graduation rates.
- d. Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) Indicator. Describe the Progress in Achieving ELP indicator, including the State’s definition of ELP, as measured by the State ELP assessment.

Minnesota uses the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test to measure English language development. English language proficiency (ELP) on the ACCESS test in Minnesota is defined as achieving a composite score of 4.5 and a minimum of 3.5 in at least three of the four domains. For the purposes of calculating this indicator, the composite score of 4.5 is used as the definition of proficiency.

A path-to-proficiency model based on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test will calculate scores for English learners in grades 1-12.

At the student level, the model will use a four-step process the first time a student is included.

**Step 1. Determine the maximum amount of time** expected to achieve proficiency, based on the student’s starting grade and ACCESS composite proficiency level.

**Step 2. Set annual targets for the student**, based on the understanding that progress tends to be quicker at lower levels and slower at higher levels.

**Step 3. Calculate the points a student received in the current year**, based on their score relative to their target for the year.

**Step 4. Update annual targets**, based on the current year’s score.

**Step 1. Determine the maximum amount of time**

The model categorizes the student’s first ACCESS composite proficiency level as beginning, intermediate or advanced. It then uses the following table to set the maximum amount of time expected for the student to achieve proficiency.

Level of First ACCESS Score	Grade of First ACCESS Score	Years to Reach Proficiency (Including Year of First ACCESS Score)
Beginning	Kindergarten	7
Beginning	1-8	6
Beginning	9 or higher	7
Intermediate	Kindergarten	7
Intermediate	1-3	5
Intermediate	4-8	6
Intermediate	9 or higher	7
Advanced	Kindergarten	3
Advanced	1 or higher	2

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) will receive one additional year in their timelines if they are at a beginning or intermediate proficiency level, but not if they are initially at an advanced proficiency level. Under Minnesota state law, the definition of SLIFE can only apply to students in grade seven or higher who have at least two years less schooling than their peers and function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics.

These timelines have been set based on historical data about the time required for English learners in Minnesota to be reclassified as no longer requiring English language development services based on their level of English language proficiency.

**Step 2. Set annual targets**

Students receive a growth target for each year along their path to proficiency. The targets will require faster growth at lower levels of proficiency. These targets are set based on the knowledge that ACCESS scores tend to improve faster at lower scale scores than at higher ones.

### Step 3. Calculate points

The student's points are based on the percentage of their target they reached for the current year. For example, a student who progressed 80 percent of the way from their initial score to this year's target would receive 80 points. A student who meets or exceeds their target for the year receives 100 points.

### Step 4. Update annual targets

If the student exceeded their target for the year, their remaining targets are updated accordingly. The student's score from this year is treated as their new starting point. The timeline remains the same. For example, if the student had six years to reach proficiency this year, next year they will only have five left.

If the student missed or exactly met their target for the year, their remaining targets stay the same.

After the first time a student is included, only two steps are needed:

**Step 1. Calculate the points** a student received this year, based on their score relative to their target for the year.

**Step 2. Update annual targets**, based on this year's score.

At the school level, once each student has received points, the total number of student points is divided by the number of students expected to have a growth calculation that year (that is, those students expected to take the ACCESS test and receive at least their second ACCESS score) who were also enrolled for at least half the academic year.

Minnesota will track progress on an annual basis for this indicator and report school and district performance relative to the statewide progress toward English language proficiency goal overall and for each student group.

- e. School Quality or Student Success Indicator(s). Describe each School Quality or Student Success Indicator, including, for each such indicator: (i) how it allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance; (ii) that it is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide (for the grade span(s) to which it applies); and (iii) of how each such indicator annually measures performance for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. For any School Quality or Student Success indicator that does not apply to all grade spans, the description must include the grade spans to which it does apply.

Minnesota has a short-term and long-term plan for developing and using indicators of school quality or student success. Based on the limitations of existing data systems and with an eye toward building on opportunities in other data systems, Minnesota will initially use consistent attendance—defined by the percentage of students in a student group who are not chronically absent—as its indicator of school quality or student success for all school levels, including elementary, middle and high schools. In the future, it will add indicators of a well-rounded education, as well as measures of career and college readiness.

Specifically, beginning with the identifications made after the 2020-21 school year, Minnesota intends to add a measurement of equitable well-rounded instruction for all students, including in high school courses focused on career readiness and those focused on college readiness, as reported in the Minnesota Common Course

Catalogue (MCCC). As those indicators are developed, Minnesota’s state plan will be amended to use them, through the process defined by 1111(a)(6) of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

With respect to chronic absenteeism, a student will be determined to be chronically absent if their attendance rate is at or below 90 percent during the days they were enrolled at a school. A student must be enrolled for at least half an academic year to be included in a school’s calculation. The consistent attendance rate will be calculated by subtracting the percentage of chronically absent students from 100 percent. For example, if 3 percent of English learners at a school are chronically absent, the consistent attendance rate for English learners at that school would be 97 percent.

Stakeholders have expressed an interest in including in-school suspensions as a part of the consistent attendance measure. MDE will continue a close analysis of the data in the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) and Disciplinary Incident Reporting System (DIRS) to determine options and opportunities to use in-school suspension data in a meaningful way within the consistent attendance indicator. MDE is committed to supporting districts with positive behavior interventions. Considering in-school suspensions as a part of this accountability indicator may be one lever to incentivize sound discipline practices in an effort to ensure students of color and American Indian students are not disproportionately suspended when compared to their white peers.

Minnesota will track progress on an annual basis for this indicator and report school and district performance relative to the statewide consistent attendance goal overall and for each student group.

- i. Consistent attendance rates in Minnesota tend to vary at both the student group and school level. Sample calculations find that school-level consistent attendance averages, calculated as described in (ii), were below 50 for at least some schools at all grade levels. This allows consistent attendance rates to be a source of meaningful differentiation between schools. Additional analysis demonstrates that the rates of lowest and highest performers differ greatly.
- ii. Minnesota collects student-level attendance and enrollment data from schools and districts statewide through the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS), which allows for computation of absenteeism based on uniform submission standards. Dividing a student’s average daily attendance by their enrollment allows for a standardized comparison of chronic absenteeism that is valid and reliable.
- iii. The consistent attendance rate (that is, the percentage of students in a group who were not chronically absent) will be calculated at the student group level first (including for the “all students” group), and then a school average will be calculated by averaging student group rates, awarding equal weight to each student group in the school. This will allow the indicator to be disaggregated by student group.

For example, consider the following school’s chronic absenteeism and consistent attendance rates:

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>All Students</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRP)</b>	<b>Not-FRP</b>
<b>Number of Students</b>	100	75	25	20	80
<b>Chronic Absenteeism Rate</b>	3.4	3.1	4.3	7	2.5
<b>Consistent Attendance Rate</b>	96.6	96.9	95.7	93	97.5

The school's consistent attendance average would be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(96.6 + 96.9 + 95.7 + 93 + 97.5)}{5}$$

The result of that calculation is 95.9, which would be used as the consistent attendance average at the school.

vi. Annual Meaningful Differentiation (*ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)*)

- a. Describe the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the State, consistent with the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA, including a description of (i) how the system is based on all indicators in the State's accountability system, (ii) for all students and for each subgroup of students. Note that each state must comply with the requirements in 1111(c)(5) of the ESEA with respect to accountability for charter schools.

Minnesota will use a stage-based decision process to meaningfully differentiate between all public schools, including charter schools.

This stage-based decision process will include all indicators, and will evaluate each student group against each indicator. The order of stages in the decision process has been designed to grant substantial weight to each indicator and greater weight to the academic indicators. The stage-based decision process will be applied in a consistent order when identifying:

- Category A schools: The lowest 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds.
- Category C schools: All public schools where any student group is performing similarly to the schools in Category A.
- Category D schools: Schools receiving Title I, Part A funds, where any student group does not exit from Category C after three years.
- Category E schools: All public schools where any student group is consistently underperforming.

Additionally, Category B schools will be all public high schools with a four-year graduation rate below 67 percent overall or for any student group.

All of these category names (e.g., "Category A") are placeholders that have been used during plan development. They will be replaced with more descriptive names before the system is used.

The process includes several components:

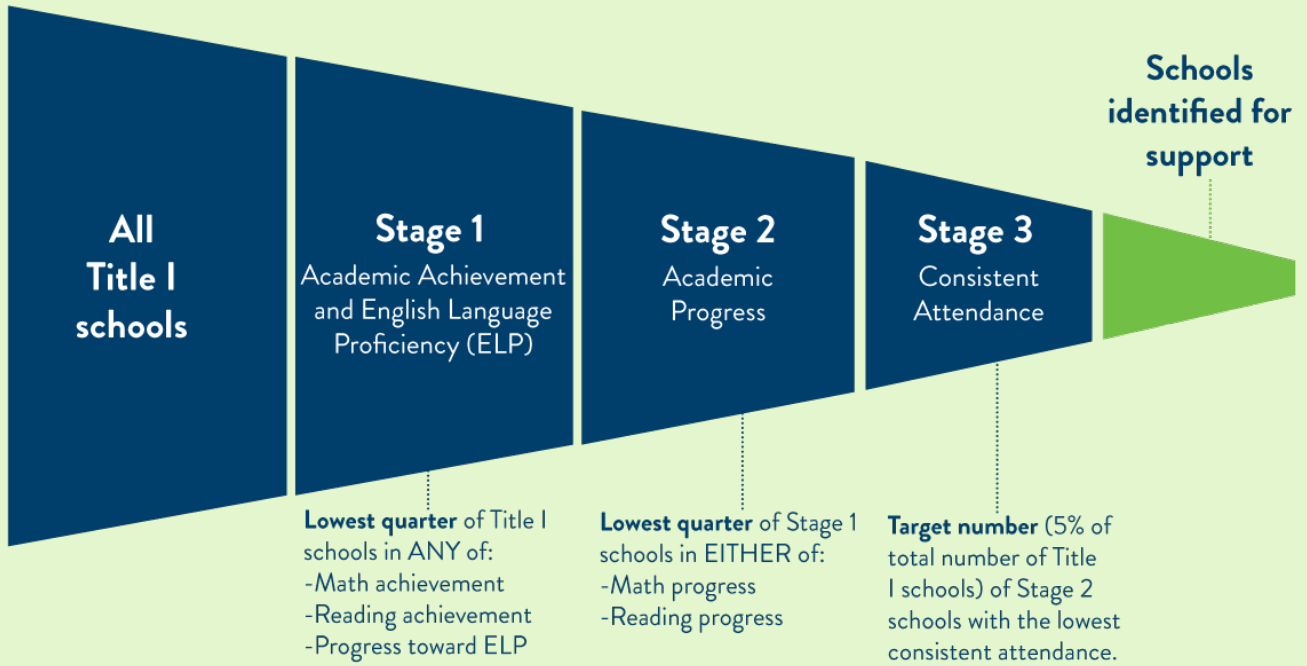
- Calculation of each indicator separately for each student group (including the "all students" group) at each school. "Each indicator" refers to:
  - Academic achievement in math.
  - Academic achievement in reading/language arts.
  - Academic progress in math (for elementary and middle schools).
  - Academic progress in reading/language arts (for elementary and middle schools).
  - Four-year graduation (for high schools).
  - Seven-year graduation (for high schools).
  - Progress toward English language proficiency (ELP).
  - School quality or student success, in the form of consistent attendance.

- Calculation of a school average for each indicator, based on student group performance as described in “Indicators.”
- The student groups used for this purpose are:
  - American Indian
  - Asian
  - Black
  - Hispanic
  - Pacific Islander
  - Two or more races
  - White
  - Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
  - Students not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (only for schools with the minimum n-size of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch)
  - English learners
  - Students who are not English learners (only for schools with the minimum n-size of English learners)
  - Students with disabilities
  - Students without disabilities (only for schools with the minimum n-size of students with disabilities)
- Comparison of the average performance of all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds, for the purpose of identifying Category A schools for comprehensive support.
- Comparison of each student group in each school to the lowest quarter (or half, for graduation indicators) of each indicator at each of three stages in the process of identifying Category A schools, for the purpose of identifying Category C and Category E schools. (For more information on this, see “Identification of Schools.”)

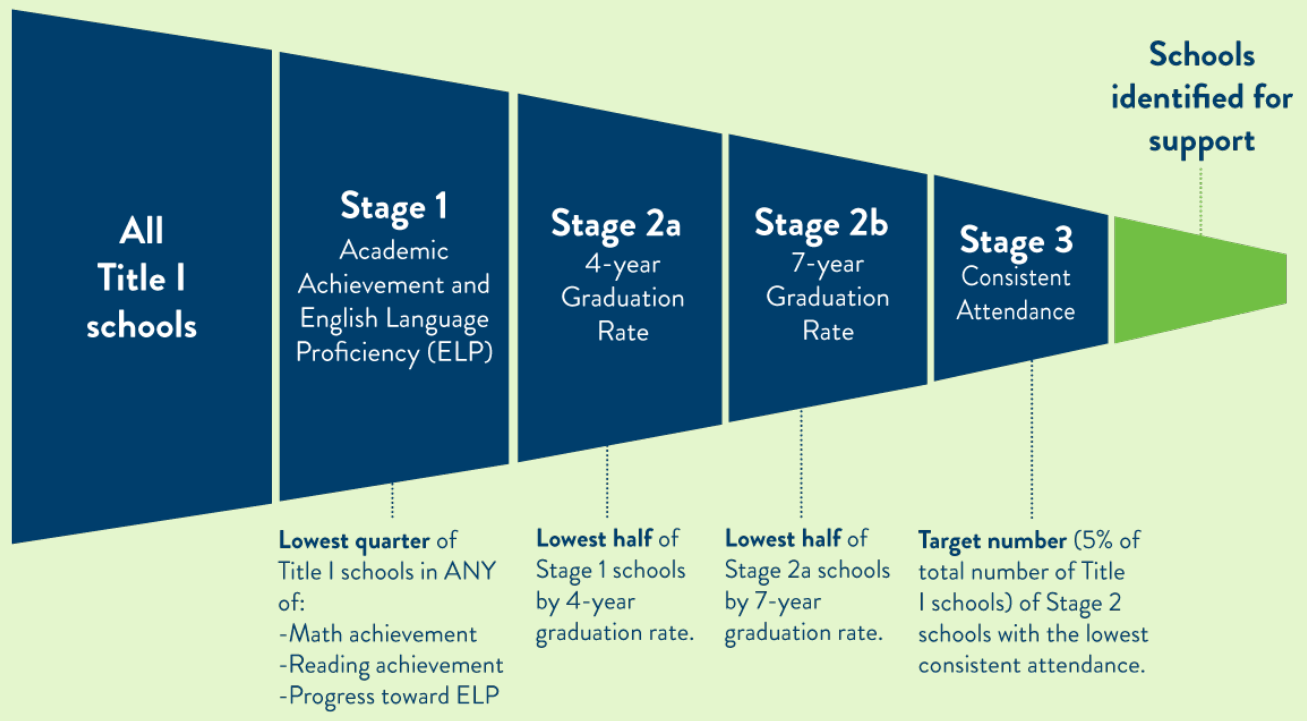
When identifying schools for support, the indicators are clustered into stages of the decision process. The stages are then placed in an order. The examples that follow show what this looks like for Categories A, C and E. Category A is drawn only from Title I schools, while any public school can be identified for Category C or E.



## Comprehensive Support and Improvement: Elementary and Middle Schools.



## Comprehensive Support and Improvement: High Schools.



Additional information about how these stages are used to identify schools is provided in section 4.vi, “Identification of Schools.”

All of these category names (e.g., “Category A”) are placeholders that have been used during plan development. They will be replaced with more descriptive names before the system is used. Whether or not a school is identified for support, its performance overall and the performance of each student group with the minimum number of students will be publicly reported for each indicator. These will be displayed in an easy-to-understand data dashboard, to be developed over the course of the 2017-18 school year with significant engagement from families, community members and educators.

- b. Describe the weighting of each indicator in the State’s system of annual meaningful differentiation, including how the academic achievement, Other Academic, Graduation Rate, and Progress in ELP indicators each receive substantial weight individually and, in the aggregate, much greater weight than the School Quality or Student Success indicator(s), in the aggregate.

The order of stages in the decision process establishes the weight placed on each indicator and allows the state to prioritize and place much greater weight on the academic indicators in the first and second stages.

The first stage of indicators includes academic achievement in math, academic achievement in reading/language arts, and progress toward English language proficiency. These achievement and English language proficiency indicators are considered to have equal weight to one another and greater weight than subsequent indicators, as low performance on any of them causes a school to progress to the next stage of differentiation.

For elementary and middle schools, the second stage includes the other academic indicator, academic progress in math and academic progress in reading/language arts. These other academic indicators are considered to have equal weight to one another and much greater weight than the subsequent indicator, as low performance on either of them causes a school to progress to the next stage of differentiation.

For high schools, the second stage includes four-year graduation rate, followed by seven-year graduation rate. Of the two, four-year graduation rate is considered to carry greater weight, as schools are evaluated on their seven-year rates after they are evaluated on their four-year rates. Both graduation rate indicators are considered to have much greater weight than the subsequent indicator, as low performance on both of them causes a school to progress to the next stage of differentiation.

The third and final stage uses consistent attendance, which is Minnesota’s school quality or student success indicator in the short term. Since this stage comes last, it carries the least weight; it differentiates between schools that are already low on the academic indicators.

- c. If the States uses a different methodology or methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in 4.v.a. above for schools for which an accountability determination cannot be made (e.g., P-2 schools), describe the different methodology or methodologies, indicating the type(s) of schools to which it applies.

Minnesota will not use a different methodology for annual meaningful differentiation for other types of schools. Those schools that do serve exclusively early grades are still included in the system on the basis of their progress toward ELP and consistent attendance indicators.

vii. Identification of Schools (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D))

- a. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the State’s methodology for identifying not less than the lowest-performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in the State for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

At the time of writing, 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in Minnesota would describe 34 elementary schools, nine middle schools, and seven high schools. The lowest 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are referred to elsewhere in this plan as “Category A” schools. That term is a placeholder used during plan development, and it will be replaced by a more descriptive name before the system is used.

To identify **the lowest-performing 5 percent of all elementary and middle schools** receiving Title I, Part A funds, the state will use the following rules in the elementary/middle school stage-based decision process described in section 4.v, “Annual Meaningful Differentiation,” keeping elementary schools and middle schools separate:

**Stage 1 – Achievement and ELP:** Rank all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in each of math academic achievement, reading/language arts academic achievement, and progress toward English language proficiency. If a school is in the bottom quarter of one or more of these indicators, it moves to Stage 2.

**Stage 2 – Progress:** Rank all schools that moved out of Stage 1 by math academic progress and reading/language arts academic progress. If a school is in the bottom quarter of one or both of these indicators, it moves to Stage 3.

**Stage 3 – Consistent Attendance:** Rank all schools that moved out of Stage 2 by consistent attendance. The lowest 35 elementary schools and the lowest nine middle schools would be identified for comprehensive support and improvement. (These numbers may change slightly as the number of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds changes so that they continue to represent 5 percent of schools receiving those funds in each grade span.)

To identify **the lowest-performing 5 percent of high schools** receiving Title I, Part A funds, the state will use the following rules in the high school stage-based decision process described in section 4.v, “Annual Meaningful Differentiation”:

**Stage 1 – Achievement and ELP:** Rank all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in each of math academic achievement, reading/language arts academic achievement, and progress toward English language proficiency. If a school is in the bottom quarter of one or more of these indicators, it moves to Stage 2a.

**Stage 2a – Four-Year Graduation:** Rank all schools that moved out of stage 1 by their four-year graduation average rates. If a school is in the bottom half of that ranking, it proceeds to Stage 2b.

**Stage 2b – Seven-Year Graduation:** Rank all schools that moved out of Stage 2a by their seven-year graduation average rates. If a school is in the bottom half of that ranking, it proceeds to Stage 3.

**Stage 3 – Consistent Attendance:** Rank all schools that moved out of Stage 2b by consistent attendance. The lowest seven schools would be identified for comprehensive support and improvement. (This number may change slightly as the number of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds changes so that it continues to represent 5 percent of high schools receiving those funds.)

Two additional types of schools are eligible for support based on a similar process that is used to identify Category A schools.

- Any Title I school that is not identified for Category A because of consistent attendance (i.e., a school with low performance on Stage 1 and Stage 2 indicators but with consistent attendance higher than the threshold used to identify Category A schools) will be identified for targeted support and improvement.
  - This is in addition to those schools identified for targeted support and improvement based on student group performance across all indicators as described below.
- If a Title I school is in the lowest 25 percent of Title I schools for any Stage 1 indicator (math achievement, reading achievement, or progress toward English language proficiency) and is not otherwise identified for support under ESSA, its district is eligible for support under the WBWF.

If a school is missing all of the indicators in a given stage, it will automatically move to the next stage.

When identifying Category A schools, an average of the previous three years' data will be used before the 2018-19 school year for the academic achievement, academic progress, graduation and consistent attendance indicators. Initially, only one year of progress toward English language proficiency data will be able to be calculated given the introduction of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test in 2016 and guidance from the WIDA Consortium to only use data from 2017 onward to calculate progress. Additional years of data will be used for the progress toward English language proficiency indicator as they become available, with up to three years of data used to make identifications.

Whenever multiple years of data are averaged, the data will be calculated for each year individually, and an average of the individual years' data will then be calculated.

When the first identifications are made before the 2018-19 school year, they will use 2017-18, 2016-17 and 2015-16 data for test-based indicators. Data from 2016-17, 2015-16 and 2014-15 will be used for the graduation and consistent attendance indicators, due to state data collection and quality control practices.

- b. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the State's methodology for identifying all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one third or more of their students for comprehensive support and improvement, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

Regardless of whether they fall into other categories, all public high schools in the state (not just those receiving Title I, Part A funds), and every student group in those schools that meets the minimum cell size of 20, will be evaluated based on their four-year graduation rate. Using an average of the most recent three years' data, if the four-year graduation rate for a school, or for any student group at that school, is below 67 percent, that school will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement as a Category B school. The "Category B" term is a placeholder used during plan development, and it will be replaced by a more descriptive name before the system is used. These schools will be identified for the first time before the 2018-19 school year. When the first identifications are made, they will use data from 2016-17, 2015-16, and 2014-15, due to state data collection and quality control practices. Data will be calculated for each year individually, and an average of the individual years' data will then be calculated.

- c. Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools. Describe the methodology by which the State identifies public schools in the State receiving Title I, Part A funds that have received additional targeted support under ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C) (based on identification as a

school in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)) and that have not satisfied the statewide exit criteria for such schools within a State-determined number of years, including the year in which the State will first identify such schools.

Any school identified for additional targeted Support (see “Additional Targeted Support”) in one identification cycle, which would be reidentified for additional targeted support in the next identification cycle (three years later) based on the same student group for which it was initially identified, is considered to not be meeting exit criteria and will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement. These schools will be identified for the first time before the 2021-22 school year, based on the group of schools identified for additional targeted support before the 2018-19 school year.

When these schools are identified, an average of the most recent three years’ data available will be used for each indicator. Data will be calculated for each year individually, and an average of the individual years’ data will then be calculated for each indicator.

These schools are referred to elsewhere in this plan as “Category D” schools. That term is a placeholder used during plan development, and it will be replaced by a more descriptive name before the system is used.

- d. Frequency of Identification. Provide, for each type of school identified for comprehensive support and improvement, the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. Note that these schools must be identified at least once every three years.

Category A schools (the lowest 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds) will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement before the 2018-19 school year and every three years thereafter.

Category B schools (all public high schools with a four-year graduation rate below 67 percent overall or for any student group) will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement before the 2018-19 school year and every three years thereafter.

Category C schools (all public schools where any student group is performing similarly to Category A schools) will be identified for additional targeted support before the 2018-19 school year and every three years thereafter.

Category D schools (Category C schools receiving Title I, Part A funds that do not meet the exit criteria) will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement before the 2021-22 school year and every three years thereafter.

Category E schools (all public schools where any student group is consistently underperforming) will be identified for targeted support and improvement before the 2018-19 school year and annually thereafter.

All of these category names (e.g., “Category A”) are placeholders that have been used during plan development. They will be replaced with more descriptive names before the system is used.

Every year, data will be publicly reported on each school’s performance overall and the performance of each student group with the minimum number of students. These will be displayed in an easy-to-understand data dashboard, to be developed over the course of the 2017-18 school year with significant engagement from families, community members and educators.

- e. Targeted Support and Improvement. Describe the State’s methodology for annually identifying any school with one or more “consistently underperforming” subgroups of students, based on all indicators in the statewide system of annual meaningful differentiation, including the definition used by the State to determine consistent underperformance. (*ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii)*)

The same stages of indicators used to identify Category A schools (the lowest 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds) will also be used to identify all public schools where any student group is consistently underperforming. Each student group will be compared against **the threshold used to define the bottom quarter of each indicator** (or the bottom half of the graduation rate indicators) when Category A schools were identified.

A student group will be considered consistently underperforming if, in three consecutive years it performed:

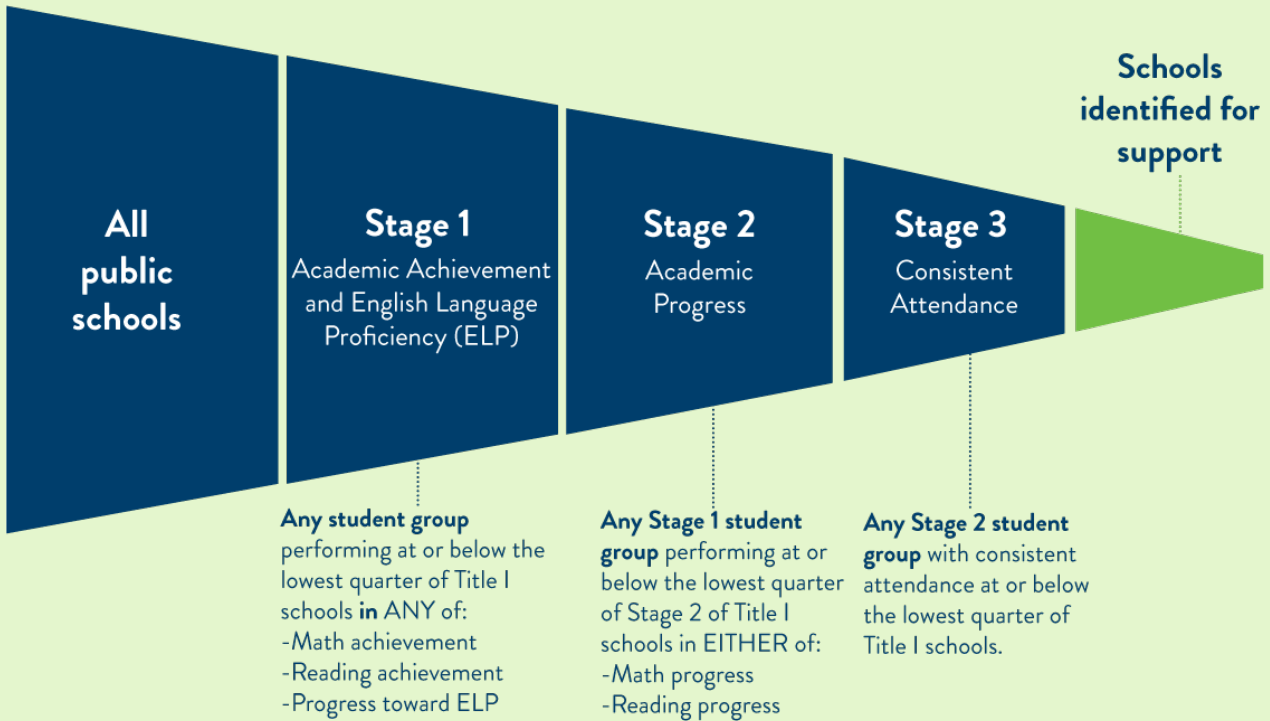
- Below the threshold of any Stage 1 indicator;
- Below the threshold of any Stage 2 indicator (or both Stage 2 indicators for high schools); and,
- Below the threshold of consistent attendance.

A school with a consistently underperforming student group will be identified for targeted support and improvement. These schools will be identified before the 2018-19 school year and annually thereafter.

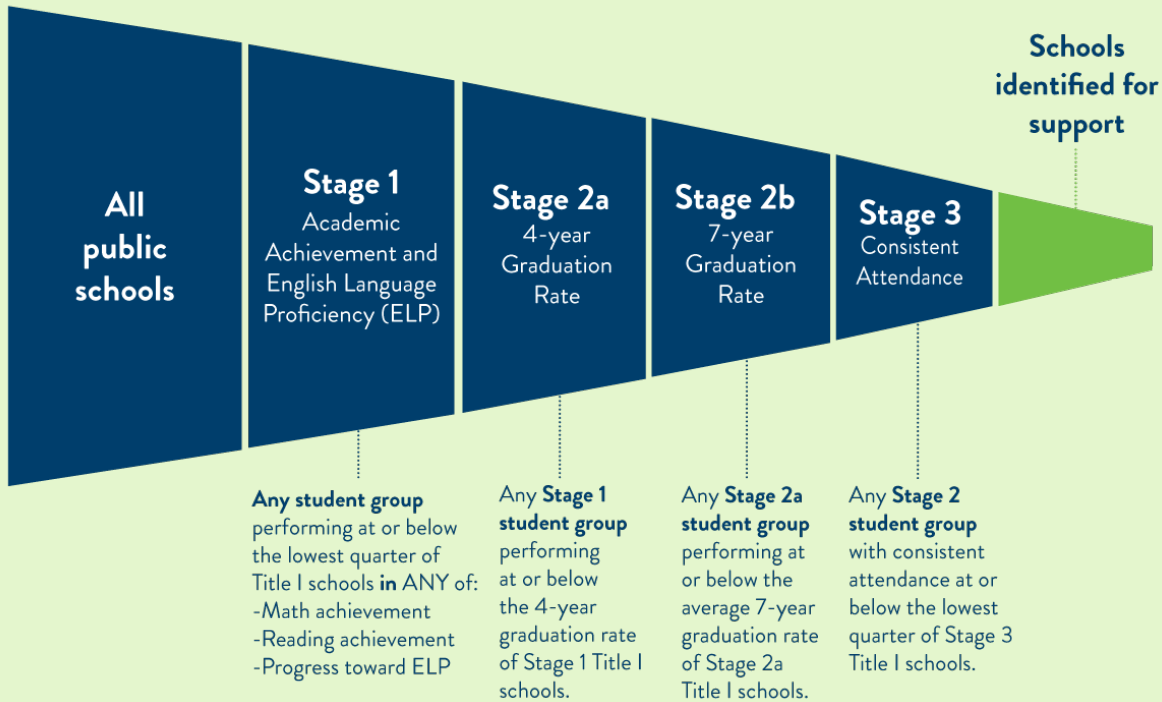
These schools are referred to elsewhere in this plan as “Category E” schools. That term is a placeholder used during plan development, and it will be replaced by a more descriptive name before the system is used.

The examples that follow show the process used to identify any public school for Category E.

## Student Group Accountability: Consistently Underperforming Elementary and Middle School Student Groups.



## Student Group Accountability: Consistently Underperforming High School Student Groups.



- f. **Additional Targeted Support.** Describe the State’s methodology, for identifying schools in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D), including the year in which the State will first identify such schools and the frequency with which the State will, thereafter, identify such schools. (*ESEA section 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D)*)

The same stages of indicators used to identify Category A schools (the lowest 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds) will also be used to identify all public schools where any student group is performing similarly to the lowest 5 percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds. Each student group will be compared against **the threshold used to define the bottom quarter of each indicator** (or the bottom half of the graduation rate indicators) when Category A schools were identified.

A student group will be considered performing similarly to Category A if, averaged over three years, it performed:

- Below the threshold of any Stage 1 indicator;
- Below the threshold of any Stage 2 indicator (or both Stage 2 indicators for high schools); and,
- Below the threshold of consistent attendance.

These schools will be identified before the 2018-19 school year and schools that do not demonstrate sufficient progress with the student group that was identified will move into Category D.

An average of the previous three years’ data will be used before the 2018-19 school year for the academic achievement, academic progress, graduation, and consistent attendance indicators. Initially, only one year of progress toward English language proficiency data will be able to be calculated given the introduction of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test in 2016 and guidance from the WIDA Consortium to only use data from 2017 onward to calculate progress. Additional years of data will be used for the progress toward English language proficiency indicator as they become available, with up to three years of data used to make identifications.

These schools are referred to elsewhere in this plan as “Category C” schools. That term is a placeholder used during plan development, and it will be replaced by a more descriptive name before the system is used.

- g. **Additional Statewide Categories of Schools.** If the State chooses, at its discretion, to include additional statewide categories of schools, describe those categories.

Other than the categories of schools outlined in the plan above, Minnesota will not be identifying additional statewide categories of schools under the ESEA. It will differentiate supports for identified schools based on their districts’ status under Minnesota’s state-level World’s Best Workforce law. As noted previously, Minnesota will also identify schools for recognition based on successes.

- viii. **Annual Measurement of Achievement (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(E)(iii)):** Describe how the State factors the requirement for 95 percent student participation in statewide mathematics and reading/language arts assessments into the statewide accountability system.

As described in 4.iv.a, “Academic Achievement Indicator,” Minnesota will base its calculation of academic achievement on the number of students enrolled for at least half an academic year in tested grades. Students



expected to test but who do not receive a valid score will be included in the denominator for calculations of academic achievement unless they have a documented medical excuse.

Students who score at the “does not meet standards” or “partially meets standards” achievement levels and students who do not participate in testing will be included in the denominator of the rate calculation but will not be awarded any points in the calculation. Students who do not participate in the test will be identified in state records and in communications with families as not participating; they will not be described as failing to meet standards.