



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: October 4, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: School Business Administrators, Web User Administrators, Principals and School Leads
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Every Student Succeeds Act Accountability School Identification and Exit Process for 2023

This broadcast memo provides updates related to the identification of schools in need of comprehensive and targeted supports and the process for determining whether schools are eligible to exit status according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

In fall 2022, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) began implementing changes that were approved through the [COVID-19 State Plan Addendum](#) and required as a result of the United States Department of Education's (USED) FY 2019 Federal Performance Review. These changes were outlined in an [October 5, 2022 broadcast](#). The NJDOE will continue with the changes moving forward, unless otherwise noted in this broadcast.

School Identification and Exit

As a result of disruptions related to COVID and through USED's State Plan Addendum process, the NJDOE was approved through the COVID-19 State Plan Addendum to identify schools for support and improvement in both fall 2022 and fall 2023. Therefore, in fall 2023, the NJDOE will be identifying schools across the following five categories, using data from the 2022-2023 school year:

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI):
 - Overall Low Performing
 - Title I schools with a summative score in the bottom five percent of Title I schools
 - Low Graduation Rate
 - High schools with a federal four-year graduation rate of 67% or less
 - Chronically Low Performing
 - Title I schools identified for additional targeted support and improvement for three or more consecutive years.
 - This is the first year that the NJDOE will be identifying schools in this category.
- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI): Low Performing Student Group
 - Schools with at least one student group with a summative score that would be in the bottom five percent of Title I schools
- Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI): Consistently Underperforming Student Group
 - Schools with at least one student group that missed annual targets and performed below the state average for all available indicators for two years in a row

Schools identified for CSI or ATSI status in fall 2023 will remain in status for three years and will be eligible to exit status in June 2027. Schools identified for TSI status in fall 2023 will remain in status for one year and will be eligible to exit status in June 2025.

Additionally, the NJDOE will be reviewing the data for all schools that are currently identified for CSI, ATSI, and TSI status for the 2023-2024 school year to determine if they are eligible to exit status in June 2024 based on whether exit criteria are met. Details about exit criteria can be found on the [NJDOE Accountability webpage](#).

Academic Progress

New Jersey's ESSA State Plan was designed to put an emphasis on academic progress based on extensive stakeholder engagement. The NJDOE uses median student growth percentiles (mSGPs) to measure academic progress for non-high schools in the school accountability system. For 2021-2022, prior year assessment results were not available to calculate student growth percentiles (SGPs) due to the cancellation of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) in both 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, so the NJDOE used an alternate measure of academic progress for the identification in fall 2022.

SGPs will be calculated and reported again for the 2022-2023 school year, so the NJDOE will resume using mSGPs to measure academic progress for the fall 2023 identification.

Graduation

The NJDOE uses four-year and five-year graduation rates as part of the ESSA accountability system. Both four-year and five-year rates are reported and used to calculate summative scores. Additionally, states are required to identify any high schools with a four-year graduation rate of 67% or less for comprehensive support and improvement. New Jersey uses the previous year's graduation rates in the accountability system, so the Cohort 2022 four-year and Cohort 2021 five-year graduation rates will be used for the school accountability process in fall 2023.

The NJDOE was required to make changes to graduation rate calculations beginning in 2021 based on the USED's 2019 Federal Performance Review Report. This change was outlined in an [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#). In 2021, the NJDOE began reporting two versions of the adjusted cohort graduation rate: a state version that includes all students that earn a state-endorsed diploma as graduates (in the numerator) in the calculation and a federal version that aligns with [federal ESSA guidance](#) for calculating graduation rates.

To be included as a graduate in the federal version of the graduation rate, students must have met state course requirements and local attendance requirements for graduation. Additionally, students must meet the graduation assessment requirements in place based on the year they are graduating, regardless of their graduation cohort. For students graduating with the class of 2022, any student with disabilities who did not meet state course, local attendance, or state graduation assessment requirements because of modifications or exemptions in their IEP will not be included as a graduate (numerator) but will remain in the adjusted cohort (denominator) in the federal version of the calculation.

LEAs can review their Cohort 2022 four-year and Cohort 2021 five-year federal graduation rates in NJ SMART using the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile using the following parameters on the report:

- CDS Perspective = Accountable
- Calculation Type = Federal Level Rate
- 4 Year Graduation Cohort = 2022 (four-year) or 2021 (five-year)
- Graduation Rate = 4-Year rate or 5-Year rate
- School Year = 2021-2022
- Snapshot Date = August 31, 2022

Timeline for 2023 Accountability System

The NJDOE expects to share the 2023 ESSA Accountability Profiles with districts in November 2023. The ESSA Accountability Profiles allow districts to review their data for all indicators (Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Graduation Rates, Progress toward English Language Proficiency, and Chronic Absenteeism) at the district, school, and student group level for the 2022-2023 accountability process. The profiles also show a school's status in meeting annual targets or standards for each indicator, which can be utilized in helping to reidentify identify needs in a Title I schoolwide and/or school improvement plan.

In addition to the ESSA Accountability Profiles, the NJDOE will share student-level data for districts to review through NJDOE Homeroom. Districts will be notified through a broadcast when the accountability profiles and Homeroom data is available for review.

The NJDOE will finalize identification and exit decisions by December 2023 and notify districts by January 31, 2024, if they have been identified for the 2024-2025 school year or will be exiting in June 2024. The NJDOE will provide mandatory technical assistance training to staff from identified schools and districts. The NJDOE will not release identification and exit decisions publicly until the School Performance Reports are released in spring 2024.

Contact Information

Contact the Office of Performance Management with any questions about the accountability system at PerformanceManagement@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group