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**To:** District Superintendents, Superintendents of Public Schools, and Principals of Charter Schools

**From:** Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner 

**Subject:** Accountability Status of Identified Schools for 2015-16

**Date:** June 2015

The purpose of this memo is to provide information about the forthcoming release of Focus and Priority accountability determinations based on the 2013–14 New York State Accountability Report.

On June 8, 2015, the Department will publically release final accountability designation data for the identified Focus Districts, Focus Schools and Priority Schools, which will be posted at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html>.

The list containing the preliminary accountability status of the identified schools in your district has been posted on the Department's Information and Report Services (IRS) portal at <http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/pref/PortalApp>. The 2013-14 assessment data used to determine the accountability status of schools and districts is available in the New York State Report Card at: <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>. For your reference, the criteria for identification of Priority Schools, Focus Districts, and Focus Schools can be found on the Department's website at the following link: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEAMaterials.html>.

If your district appealed a preliminary accountability designation, your superintendent/Charter School Principal has been notified by e-mail regarding the result of the appeal.

### **Next Steps for Focus Districts with Focus Schools and/or Priority Schools**

Commissioner's Regulations require that each Focus District use the results of a diagnostic tool of quality indicators to inform the creation of a District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP). Commissioner's Regulations require that each Priority and Focus School use the results of a diagnostic tool to inform development of the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). Each Priority or Focus School was required, during the 2012-13 to 2014-15 school years, to participate annually in either an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) School Review, a District-led Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) Review, or a School Review focused on DTSDE Tenet 3 with District Oversight. The results of these reviews must inform the development of the 2015-16 school year SCEP. Districts should not wait for official Integration Intervention Team reports when developing their DCIP and SCEPs. Plans should be developed using the data that is most readily available to the district and schools. Additional information on the completion of the DCIP and SCEPs can be accessed online at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/fdip/home.html>.

DCIPs and SCEPs must:

- Specifically address the areas of need identified through the use of the diagnostic tool of quality indicators (e.g., the IIT School Review, the district-led DTSDE Review, or the School Review focused on DTSDE Tenet 3).
- Be updated annually as approved by the Board of Education (in New York City the Chancellor or her designee) and implemented no later than the first day of school when students are in attendance.
- Be developed in consultation with parents, school staff, and others pursuant to Commissioner's Regulations Part 100.11.
- Include an analysis of achievement of prior year goals.
- Be made widely available through public means, such as posting on the Internet or distribution through public agencies.

DCIPs and SCEPs for the 2015-16 school year are due to the Department by **Friday, July 31, 2015**, with the exception of newly identified Focus Schools (i.e., "replacement" Focus Schools) whose SCEPs are due 90 days after the district is notified of the school's identification. If your district requires assistance in developing a DCIP or SCEP, please contact Ms. Erica Meaker, Associate in Education Improvement Services at (518) 473-0295 or via e-mail at [fdip@nysed.gov](mailto:fdip@nysed.gov) to receive further instructions. Additional information on the completion of the DCIP and SCEPs may be accessed online at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/fdip/home.html>.

According to Commissioner's Regulations, once a school is identified as Focus or Priority, the district must inform parents of students enrolled in the school of the school's designation. Additionally, all Title I schools designated as Priority or Focus Schools, except for public charter schools, are required to offer Public School Choice (PSC). Districts must provide all enrolled students in these schools with the option to transfer to another public school within the district that is not a Priority or Focus School. Parents must be notified of the available PSC options no later than 14 days before the start of the 2015-16 school year.

All Priority Schools were required to implement a whole school reform model by the 2014-15 school year. Districts may have met this requirement through implementation of a 1003(g) School Improvement Grant intervention model, a School Innovation Fund model, or through implementation of a Whole School Reform Model aligned to the United States Department of Education's (USDE) Turnaround Principles.

Please note: On March 31, 2015, the Department submitted an ESEA Waiver application to the USDE for the 2015-16 to 2018-19 school years. Subject to approval by the USDE and the adoption of conforming regulations by the Board of Regents, the Department intends to sunset the 2015-16 list of Priority Schools, Focus Districts and Focus Schools during the 2015-16 school year. As outlined in the application, New York State will identify new Priority Schools, Focus Districts and Focus Schools on or about January 31, 2016. Schools whose 2014-15 performance places them among the lowest five percent in the state that are not improving will be identified as Priority Schools. Schools in Focus Districts that are among the lowest ten percent in the state for an accountability subgroup and that are not improving will be identified as Focus Schools. Schools that were identified as Priority or Focus under the State's approved ESEA Waiver in 2012

and are re-identified as Priority or Focus under the ESEA Waiver for 2015-16 through 2018-19 school years are subject to a more rigorous level of intervention. All districts with a Priority or Focus School will be identified as Focus Districts. For more information on the ESEA Waiver application, please visit the following website:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEAFlexibilityWaiver.html>.

In addition, schools that are identified as Priority Schools may also be subject to the school receivership provisions of the newly enacted Section 211-f of Education law. The Board of Regents at their June meeting will be considering adoption of emergency regulations to implement the provisions of the school receivership legislation. Districts with Priority Schools will shortly receive additional information regarding this program.

Should you have any questions and/or need additional information, please contact the Office of Accountability via telephone at (718) 722-4553 or e-mail at [accountinfo@nysed.gov](mailto:accountinfo@nysed.gov).

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