



## School Accountability

Although Tennessee's accountability system is focused on the district level, we also identify three types of schools as required by the U.S. Department of Education under our ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

- **Reward Schools** are made up of the top 5 percent of schools in the state for performance—as measured by overall student achievement levels—and the top 5 percent for year-over-year progress—as measured by growth in student achievement. These 10 percent of schools receive recognition for their success, and we aim to [learn from their successes](#). Reward Schools are identified every year based on the previous school year's results.
- **Priority Schools** are schools in the bottom 5 percent of the state in overall performance. These schools will receive one of four types of supports:
  - Placement in the state-run Achievement School District
  - Turnaround through a district-led Innovation Zone
  - Turnaround through an approved School Improvement Grant model and plan
  - District-led school improvement planning processes, subject to direct ASD intervention in the absence of improved results
- **Focus Schools** are the 10 percent of schools across the state with the largest achievement gaps between groups of students. This designation does not indicate low overall achievement levels. In fact, Focus Schools may be high-performing schools that are working to close gaps between groups of students.

Reward, Priority, and Focus lists were first identified in summer 2012, as part of Tennessee's approved ESEA Flexibility waiver. Reward Schools are named each year, based on the results from the immediate prior school year. Priority and Focus designations last for three years, so the 2012 Priority and Focus Schools will remain in that status through the 2014-15 school year. The new set of 2015 Priority and Focus Schools are being identified in summer 2014 to allow for a one-year planning period before beginning their interventions in 2015-16.

### About the Tennessee Department of Education

The Tennessee Department of Education strives to expand students' access to effective teachers and leaders, families' access to good schools, educators' access to resources and best practices and public access to information and data. We aim to be the fastest-improving state in the nation in terms of academic achievement by 2015.