



# Priority and Focus Schools Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

REVISED June 28, 2017

**1. To better understand how I got on the priority/focus list, where can I find the methodology?**

The methodology used to determine the priority/focus identification for school year 2017-2018 can be found at:

[http://tea.texas.gov/Student\\_Testing\\_and\\_Accountability/Monitoring\\_and\\_Interventions/School\\_Improvement\\_and\\_Support/Priority,\\_Focus,\\_and\\_Reward\\_Schools/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Monitoring_and_Interventions/School_Improvement_and_Support/Priority,_Focus,_and_Reward_Schools/)

**2. What resources will I receive as a priority/focus school?**

Schools identified as priority/focus will be eligible to receive supplemental federal funds through the 2017-2018 1003 School Improvement Priority/Focus grant. This grant will be released in September 2017 with a grant period that will run from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018. Pre-award costs will be allowed as of June 26, 2017 and only for travel costs and registration fees incurred to attend required training. The application will also include a limitation of 60% on salaries (class-object code 6100).

**3. If my campus is identified as a priority/focus school for school year 2017-2018, and my campus was a priority/focus school in school year 2016-2017 that has unused 1003(a) Priority and Focus school funds from school year 2016-2017, will the campus receive those unused funds as carry-over when the new 1003 School Improvement Priority/Focus grant opens for school year 2017-2018?**

No. All unused priority/focus funds from school year 2016-2017 must be spent on or before the grant end date of September 30, 2017. All unused funds will return to the Agency.

**4. How long will this list be in effect?**

The priority/focus list released on June 26, 2017 will be in effect for one year only. During school year 2017-2018, the state will prepare to implement the requirements under ESSA for school year 2018–2019 and utilize school year 2017–2018 as a transition year. During the transition year, the agency will identify new priority and focus campuses for school year 2017-2018 only, continue to develop an aligned system of state and federal identification and interventions, and provide technical assistance and resources.

**5. If our district has a campus that is a TTIPS school but also priority school can they receive priority and focus funds and TTIPS funds?**

No. Schools awarded the Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) grant are unable to receive funds from both the TTIPS grant and 1003 Priority/Focus school grant. Additionally, in the event the Agency offers an additional TTIPS cycle, any campus applying to participate in any future TTIPS cycles and who is awarded while still identified as a priority/focus school will forfeit the use of 1003 School Improvement Priority/Focus funds on the TTIPS awarded campus.

**6. Since this is a district level grant, what are the recommended allocation amounts per school?**

Recommended allocation amounts per campus are as follows:

| Priority School    |                      | Focus School       |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Number of Students | Estimated Allocation | Number of Students | Estimated Allocation |
| 1-500              | \$65,000             | 1-500              | \$15,000             |
| 501-1000           | \$90,000             | 501-1000           | \$20,000             |
| 1001-2500          | \$140,000            | 1001-2500          | \$25,000             |
| 2501-3500          | \$190,000            | 2501-3500          | \$30,000             |
| 3501+              | \$240,000            | 3501+              | \$30,000             |

**7. Is there an exit process for schools on the 2017-18 priority/focus school list**

There will not be an exit process for schools identified as priority/focus for school year 2017-2018. Because this year will serve as a transition year, this list will only be in effect for a single year. A new list will be released for school year 2018-2019.

**8. Our district is considering changing the campus number of a school currently identified as priority and/or focus. Will that school be able to keep priority/focus funds if the campus number is changed?**

Allocations for the 1003 School Improvement Priority/Focus grant are determined based on the number of identified priority/focus schools in a district. If the decision is made to change the campus number of a school identified as priority/focus, that school will no longer be identified as a priority/focus school and that school will no longer be eligible to receive priority/focus funds. The school will forfeit the use of 1003 School Improvement Priority/Focus funds as a result of the change in campus number.

**9. Will additional schools be added to this list?**

No, not for the 2017-2018 school year. A new priority and focus list will be released in Fall 2018. Schools identified as priority/focus for school year 2017-2018 will keep their identification for one year only.

**10. Can a campus or district appeal the label of priority/focus?**

No. A district is unable to appeal the label of priority/focus.

Schools will remain priority and focus schools regardless of their 2017 State Accountability rating released in August 2017. However, priority schools at a Met Standard rating in August will see a reduction in required interventions.

Priority and focus schools are required to designate a District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI) and begin and/or continue engaging in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) continuous improvement framework that is aligned around the ESEA turnaround principles and the Critical Success Factors (CSFs). The district is responsible for assisting identified schools in all aspects of the school improvement process which include data analysis, needs assessment, and developing, implementing, and monitoring a plan for improvement.

## **11. How are state and federal accountability systems aligned?**

Regarding intervention and resources, schools currently identified for improvement under state accountability receive intervention requirements and resources through the framework of the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS), which includes the continuous improvement process of data analysis, needs assessment, improvement planning, and implementation and monitoring. Schools identified for improvement under federal accountability receive these same intervention requirements and resources through the TAIS framework. Additionally, schools identified for improvement under federal accountability receive funding through the 1003 School Improvement Priority/Focus grant.

Regarding identification, the list of priority schools released on June 26, 2017 includes 351 campuses. Those 351 campuses include a combination of TTIPS schools from Cycles 3, 4 and 5; Title I schools with graduation rates less than 60%; and the lowest achieving Title I campuses based on state accountability identification of *Improvement Required* and reading/math safeguard performance in the seven federal student groups at the federal safeguard target of 87%. Of the 351 priority campuses, 317 are currently identified as *Improvement Required*.

## **12. Will Priority/Focus schools require the support of a professional service provider (PSP)?**

Priority schools have the option to choose their PSP via a list provided by the PSP Network or from the services of an Education Service Center (ESC) who has been approved to operate a TEA-approved PSP pilot. The PSP Network will provide recommendations of PSPs within the area/region to priority schools. Schools within the region of an ESC operating a PSP pilot, or an ESC who has expressed an interest in serving at that capacity, are encouraged to partner with their local ESC.

Focus schools will not require the support of a PSP and will not have required submissions to the agency if they are at a Met Standard rating in the 2017 State Accountability release.

## **13. When will the required interventions for Priority/Focus schools be released?**

In an effort to further align state and federal required interventions, the agency will be releasing campus intervention requirements along with the release of state accountability ratings.

## **14. Why was this new identification released in June and not in August with the new state accountability ratings?**

Historically, federal accountability identification has occurred in early Fall. Acknowledging that August and September are busy months and in order to give districts, campuses, and ESCs the most opportunity to engage in planning the support of these campuses prior to the start of school, early identification was necessary.