

Vidalia City Schools

301 Adams Street
Vidalia, Georgia 30474

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Superintendent
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Assistant Superintendent
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Dear Parents)/Guardian(s):

In November, 2011, the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) submitted to the US Department of Education (US ED) an application requesting flexibility through waivers of 10 Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA) requirements and their associated, regulatory, administrative and reporting requirements. Two of the ten requested waivers directly affected Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and Public School Choice (Choice). The waiver allows local educational agencies (LES) greater flexibility in designing a flexible learning program tailored to the needs of their school and will have the capacity to serve more students in need for additional academic support.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, the GADOE transitioned from needs improvement (NI) distinctions based on adequate yearly progress (AYP) reports to Reward, Priority, Focus and Alert Schools distinctions based on the ESEA Flexibility Waiver formulas. Title I Schools will now implement specific programs and interventions based on Reward, Priority, Focus and Alert School status. In addition, the GADOE ESEA flexibility waiver outlines Georgia's new single statewide accountability system, the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). The CCRPI will serve as a comprehensive report card for all school in Georgia.

Title I schools not making AYP will transition from AYP to ESEA flexibility waiver formulas and may be identified as Priority or Focus school. Both will be required to implement and develop flexible learning programs (FLP) beginning June 2012; if they meet one of the criteria set forth in the ESEA waiver as described below.

Please note: Priority Schools and Focus Schools will be identified and served with support interventions for three years.

Priority and Focus Schools

Georgia's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver provides Georgia flexibility in the implementation of school improvement requirements found in ESEA section 1116(b) to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, its Title I schools that fail, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP. Under Georgia's approved ESEA Flexibility Waiver, the state identifies Title I schools based on two categories of school improvement: Priority Schools and Focus Schools.

A Priority School is a school that, based on the most recent data available, has been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the state. The total number of Priority Schools in a state must be at least 5-percent of the Title I schools in the state.

A Priority School is

- a school among the lowest 5-percent of Title I schools in the state based on the achievement of the all students group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, combined, and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the all students group;
- a Title I participating or Title I eligible high school with a graduation rate less than 60-percent over a number of years; or
- a Tier I or Tier II school under the School Improvement Grant 1003(g)(SIG) program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention model.

A Focus School is a Title I school in the state that, based on the most recent data available, is contributing to the achievement gap in the state. The total number of Focus Schools in a state must equal at least 10-percent of the Title I schools in the state.

A Focus School is

- a school that has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup or subgroups and the lowest-achieving subgroup or subgroups or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in graduation rates; or
- a school that has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates.

JR Trippe Middle School is the only Title I School that received a designation as a Focus school. As such, JR Trippe Middle School has developed a Flexible Learning Plan and receives assistance from First District RESA School Improvement Specialist. JR Trippe Middle School also has 5% set aside in Title I budget to address the needs of students to help close the achievement gap.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact: Lucy Claroni, Assistant Superintendent, (912) 537-3088, ext. 204 or lclaroni@vidalia-city.k12.ga.us

Thank you,

Ginger B. Morris

Ginger B. Morris
Federal Programs Director