

## **Approved Amendments to Maryland's ESEA Flexibility Request**

The following is a summary of amendments to Maryland Department of Education's (MSDE) approved ESEA flexibility request. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) approves the following amendments because MSDE's ESEA flexibility request, as amended, continues to be aligned with the principles of ESEA flexibility.

Please refer to ED's website: ([www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplans03/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplans03/index.html)) for MSDE's complete ESEA flexibility request.

### ▪ **Reward Schools (Element 2.C)**

Revision: MSDE revised its criteria for identifying highest-performing reward schools as a result of no longer making adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations. Specifically, rather than the "all students" subgroup and all relevant Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) subgroups making AYP, all of these subgroups must meet their respective annual measurable objectives. Further, a school must be designated in one of the two highest "strands" on the State's new five-strand school progress index for two consecutive years. Finally, the State removed reference to the specific years of assessment data upon which a school's identification as a reward school would be based because those years will be updated annually.

Revision: MSDE clarified that schools in a subset of its highest-performing reward schools (Superlative Highest Performing Reward Schools) will be recognized by the Maryland State Board of Education as time permits and that a select group of these schools will be featured and provided an opportunity to present at the State's annual Title I conference.

### ▪ **Priority Schools (Element 2.D)**

Revision: MSDE clarified the criteria by which a school would exit priority school status to indicate that a school must improve by two "strands" or be designated as a "Strand 2" school for two consecutive years on the State's new five-strand school progress index, in addition to no longer appearing in the bottom five percent of Title I schools or being identified as either a Title I-eligible high school or a School Improvement Grant (SIG) Tier II school. Further, a school will not maintain the status of priority school if it is no longer a Title I elementary or middle school.

### ▪ **Focus Schools (Element 2.E)**

Revision: MSDE clarified the criteria by which a school would exit focus school status to indicate that a school must improve by two "strands" or be designated as a "Strand 2" school for two consecutive years on the State's new five-strand school progress index, in addition to improving the performance of the subgroup(s) of students that led the school to being identified as a focus school. Further, a school will not maintain the status of focus school if it is no longer a Title I school.