

## **South Dakota Definition of Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools**

South Dakota developed its list of Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) schools using the following definitions. Academic achievement and lack of progress were based solely on results from the Dakota State Test of Educational Progress (DSTEP) reading and math assessments including the alternate, DSTEP-A. Proficiency includes any student who is proficient or advanced. The “all students” group includes all students who took the test that met the state’s definition of full academic year as per its approved accountability workbook.

In developing its PLA list, the state identified two groups of schools. The first group consists of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring as listed in the state’s NCLB Report Card for 2009. These 54 schools include elementary, middle, and high schools. Elementary schools are defined in ARSD 24:43:01:01 (38) as a school consisting of any combination of grades from kindergarten through eighth grade. ARSD 24:43:01:01 (41) defines a secondary school as one consisting of any combination of three or more consecutive grades, including ninth grade through twelfth grade. Secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I, Part A funds were the second group of schools identified. School eligibility for Title I services has been determined by each district through its chosen ranking procedure as documented in its consolidated application for the 2009-2010 school year.

Each state must consider two factors, proficiency and lack of progress, in identifying its list of PLA schools. The two factors, proficiency and lack of progress, were weighted equally. Secondary and elementary schools are also weighted equally. The state is not considering any other factors in addition to proficiency and lack of progress in identifying its persistently lowest-achieving schools. South Dakota has chosen not to expand its list to identify additional schools as eligible for School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds.

### **Proficiency**

Proficiency was determined based on academic achievement of the “all students” group on the DSTEP for 2009. Reading and math results were combined to develop a single percentage score for each school. The numerator was determined by calculating the total number of proficient and advanced students in the “all students” group in reading and in math for each school in 2009. The total number of proficient students in reading and mathematics were added together. The denominator was determined by calculating the total number of students in the “all students” group in the school who took the DSTEP reading and mathematics assessments in 2009 who met the state’s criteria for full academic year. The total number of students tested in reading and math were added together. The numerator was divided by the denominator to determine the percent proficient in reading and mathematics, combined, in the school. This score was used to rank each set of schools from highest to lowest in terms of proficiency of the “all students” group on the DSTEP reading and mathematics assessments combined.

## **Lack of Progress**

Lack of progress was determined to identify schools that are lowest achieving over multiple years. South Dakota computed lack of progress over both two and three years. In order to look at lack of progress, the steps described to determine proficiency as described above were repeated for the 2007 and 2008 DSTEP assessment results for each school. Rankings for 2007, 2008, and 2009 were added together for a total ranking. This total combined ranking score was used to rank each set of schools from highest to lowest in terms of lack of progress.

### **Tier I**

There are 54 Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the 2009-2010 school year. To determine the five lowest achieving schools within this group of schools, proficiency was first calculated for each school and rank ordered highest to lowest. The five schools were chosen from the bottom of that ranking. One of the schools identified through the proficiency ranking had only been in existence for two years. Therefore, when considering lack of progress, the ranking based on two years of data was used. The five schools at the bottom of this combined ranking over two years mirrored the ranking of proficiency. These five schools have been identified as Persistently Lowest Achieving (PLA) for this tier. None of the secondary Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring have a graduation rate of less than 60%.

### **Tier II**

There are 132 secondary schools eligible, but not receiving, Title I funds. School eligibility for Title I services has been determined by each district for the 2009-2010 school year. Five percent of the 132 secondary schools in this pool equals 6.6, or 7 schools. To determine the seven lowest achieving schools within this group of schools, proficiency was first calculated for each school and rank ordered from highest to lowest. At this point, five schools with less than ten students tested (consistent with the state's minimum "n" of 10 as per its approved accountability workbook) were excluded from the full list. This action is consistent with the waiver received by South Dakota to exclude schools with less than ten students tested in the school from further consideration. The seven schools at the bottom of that proficiency ranking were noted.

One of the schools identified through the proficiency ranking had only been in existence for two years. Therefore, when considering lack of progress, the ranking based on two years of data was used. Schools were again ranked according to their lack of progress over two years from highest to lowest. One secondary school was excluded from further consideration since its focus is on a particular group of students who are pursuing the General Educational Development (GED) program. The seven schools at the bottom of the lack of progress ranking were noted.

The state is required to consider both proficiency and lack of progress in identifying its PLA schools. For Tier II, the list of schools identified under proficiency was not the exact same seven schools identified through lack of progress. To make the determination of PLA secondary schools, the ten schools identified by either proficiency or lack of progress were ranked first by proficiency and then by lack of progress. These two ranking scores were added for a total combined rank score. The schools were rank ordered again by this combined score and the bottom seven schools noted. Seven schools, or five percent, were identified as PLA for Tier II. One secondary school was identified with a graduation rate less than 60% over the past three years but was excluded since its focus is to assist students who are pursuing the General Educational Development (GED) program.

### **Tier III**

Five of the 54 Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring were identified as Tier I schools. The remaining 49 are listed as Tier III schools.