

## 2023 ESSA Designation Rules – Version 4.1

v. 12.18.23

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires each state to determine a process for designation of schools most needing support. These supports fall into three categories:

- **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)** – Lowest performing five percent of *Title I schools*, any public high schools with graduation rate below 67%, and any public schools with consistently underperforming student groups for a state determined period of time. For some cohorts, it’s 3 years and for others, it’s 4 years.
- **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)** – Any public school with one or more student group(s) performing at or below the performance level of all students in the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools (i.e. CSI schools).
- **Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)** – A public school with one or more consistently underperforming student groups. “Consistently underperforming” comes from the ESSA law and is defined by NDE as any student group performing below 25% of Title 1 schools across all accountability indicators.

This document outlines the business rules for identification of these schools.

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## Section 1: Indicators

The ESSA school designations use the same indicators as those for AQuESTT classifications, as noted in the table below. The descriptions below indicate how cut scores for each indicator in each stage are set. For more information relating to the calculation of the individual indicators, please see AQuESTT Classification Business Rules document at [www.aquestt.com/resources](http://www.aquestt.com/resources).

<b>ESSA Indicator</b>	Academic Achievement	English Language Proficiency/Progress	Academic Progress	Graduation Rate	School Quality & Student Success
<b>AQuESTT Indicator</b>	Status	Progress toward English Language Proficiency	Growth Non-Proficiency	4- and 7-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	Chronic Absenteeism Science Status
<b>Filter Process</b>	Stage 1 (For High Schools Non-Proficiency is included here)		Stage 2 (Elementary/Middle Schools Only)	Stage 2 (High Schools Only)	Stage 3

### Academic Achievement

1. For Achievement (Status), scores for all eligible schools are sorted from highest to lowest, and the requisite number of schools based on the designation type (CSI/TSI/ATSI) are selected.

### English Language Proficiency/Progress

2. Progress Toward English Language Proficiency measures the percent of students progressing towards proficiency (both full and partial credit). A school must meet the n-size of 10, where there are at least 10 students who have an eligible ELP Growth Score. Scores are sorted from highest to lowest to determine the requisite number of schools to move to the next stage based on their designation type. For CSI, this is all students in each school who participate in ELPA 21 testing. For TSI/ATSI, this is for each eligible student group who also participates in the ELPA 21 testing.

### Academic Progress

3. Academic Progress consists of two indicators: Growth and Non-Proficiency. Scores are sorted for each indicator independently, from highest to lowest to determine the requisite number of schools to move to the next stage based on the designation type.

## Graduation Rate

4. For Title I high schools only, 4- and 7-year graduation rates will be combined as outlined in the [AQuESTT Classification Business Rules](#). Graduation rates are sorted from highest to lowest, with the requisite number of schools moved to the next stage based on the designation type. Note: Per ESEA Section 1111(D)(i)(II), for CSI, any public high schools with 4-year graduation rates below 67% are automatically selected. This rate is set by the U.S. Department of Education.

## School Quality and Student Success

5. School quality and student success indicators are Chronic Absenteeism Rate and Science Status scores. Scores are sorted for each indicator independently, from highest to lowest to determine which schools will be identified based on the designation type. Specifically for CSI, these indicators are combined into a standardized score.

## Weighting:

The order of stages in the decision process establishes the priority and weight placed on each indicator. Indicators in Stage 1 are of greater weight than those in Stage 2, and those in Stage 2 are of greater weight than those in Stage 3.

1. **Stage 1:** For Title I elementary and middle schools (CSI) and any eligible student group (TSI/ATSI), the first stage of indicators includes academic achievement in math, academic achievement in English language arts, and progress toward English language proficiency. For high schools, non-proficiency is also included in this stage. These indicators have equal weight to one another meaning low performance in any of them moves a school to the next stage.
2. **Stage 2:**
  - 2.1. For Title I elementary and middle schools (CSI), the second stage includes the two measures of academic progress (Growth & Non-Proficiency). These indicators have equal weight to one another meaning low performance in both, separately, moves a school to the next stage.
  - 2.2. For any eligible student group (TSI/ATSI), the second stage includes the two measures of academic progress (Growth & Non-Proficiency). These indicators have equal weight to one another meaning low performance in both, together, moves a school to the next stage.
  - 2.3. For Title I high schools and any eligible student group in a high school (TSI/ATSI), the second stage includes a 4-year and 7-year graduation rate. Of the two, 4-year graduation rate is considered to carry greater weight (51%), while 7-year will be weighted 49%. Low performance in this stage moves a school to the next stage.

3. **Stage 3:**

- 3.1. For the CSI designation, the third and final stage uses a combined score of Nebraska's School Quality and Student Success Indicators: reduction in chronic absenteeism and science status.
- 3.2. For the TSI and ATSI designations, low performance on both the chronic absenteeism and science status indicators leads to a school designation.
- 3.3. **Combining the SQSS Indicators:** In the final stage of the CSI designation process, the School Quality and Student Success Indicators must be combined because they employ different scales. As such, each of the indicators is standardized, and the NDE creates a final score from the sum of the standardized scores. Standardized scores are calculated by first transforming values for each indicator into z-scores as follows:

$$z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

Next, each z-score is transformed into a new standardized scale distribution with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 as follows:

$$x = \mu + z\sigma$$

These new standardized scores for the Reduction in Chronic Absenteeism and Science Status are then averaged and the totals are sorted from highest to lowest.

## Section 2: Definitions/Clarifications

- **Title I:** Those schools classified as either Title I Schoolwide or Targeted during the school year from which the Status data is derived.
- **Title I school buildings with multiple grade bands:** For purposes of Title I accountability, the NDE will use codes established by the U.S. Department of Education National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) to identify the building under consideration for CSI status. For example, Nebraska Elementary School consists of grades Pre-k through 8, is in one physical building, and has one NCES code. For state accountability purposes, the school district identifies Pre-k through 6 as the elementary school and grades 7-8 as the middle school. For federal accountability purposes, only one school is considered for CSI.
- **Student Group:** For the purposes of federal accountability, student group means students who have identified as:
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Economically Disadvantaged
  - English Learners
  - Hispanic/Latinx
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - Students with Disabilities
  - Two or More Races
  - White
- **N-size:** In order to be considered for TSI or ATSI, a school must have had at least 10 students in the student group who have a valid NSCAS or NSCAS-ACT score for math or English language arts and meet the full academic year requirement, as outlined in the [AQuESTT Classification Business Rules](#).

The N-size of a TSI/ATSI student group only considers students during the current school year, and does not aggregate multiple years like some accountability indicators do (ex. Graduation). For indicators that require two or more years of data, there must be 10 students in each year under consideration.

- **Participation adjustment:** Per ESSA, schools and student groups with lower than 95% participation rate in ELA and Mathematics combined will have their Academic Achievement indicator (Status) adjusted. The NDE will calculate the number of students necessary for the school or student group to have a 95% participation rate, and add that number to the denominator when calculating status (percent proficient).

As an illustration, if a school has 100 eligible students, and only 85 participate in ELA and math assessments, the denominator will artificially be increased to 95. If 50 of the 85 students scored proficient, the Status score will be 50/95 or 52.5%. Since Non-Proficiency is also considered an Academic Achievement Indicator for High Schools, the same adjustment to the denominator will need to be made.

- **Newly Opened Schools:** Available data are collected and reported on schools that are newly opened. However, new schools are excluded from designation processes for the first two years. By the third year, new schools will be included in designation calculations since they will have the requisite data for each indicator (eg. three years of data for the Non-Proficiency Indicator, baseline and reduction goals for chronic absenteeism).

## Section 3: Designation Filters

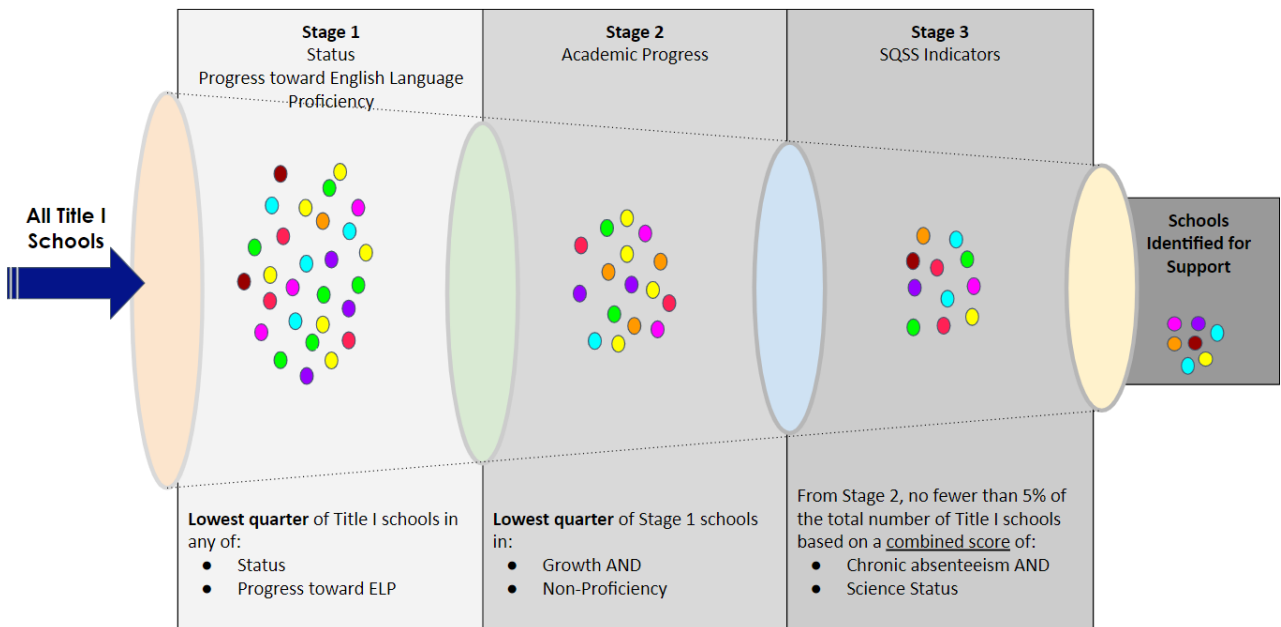
### Comprehensive Support and Improvement

Schools will be designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement if they meet any of the three criteria below:

- the school is in the lowest 5 percent of overall performance of Title I schools\*, or
- the school has a 4-year cohort graduation rate of less than 67%, as set by USDE, or
- has maintained identification as an Additional Targeted Support and Improvement school for three years with the same student group.

\*Since AQuESTT classification, by design, does not allow for the ranking of schools, the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools will be identified using all indicators in the AQuESTT system.

### CSI: Title I Elementary and Middle Schools

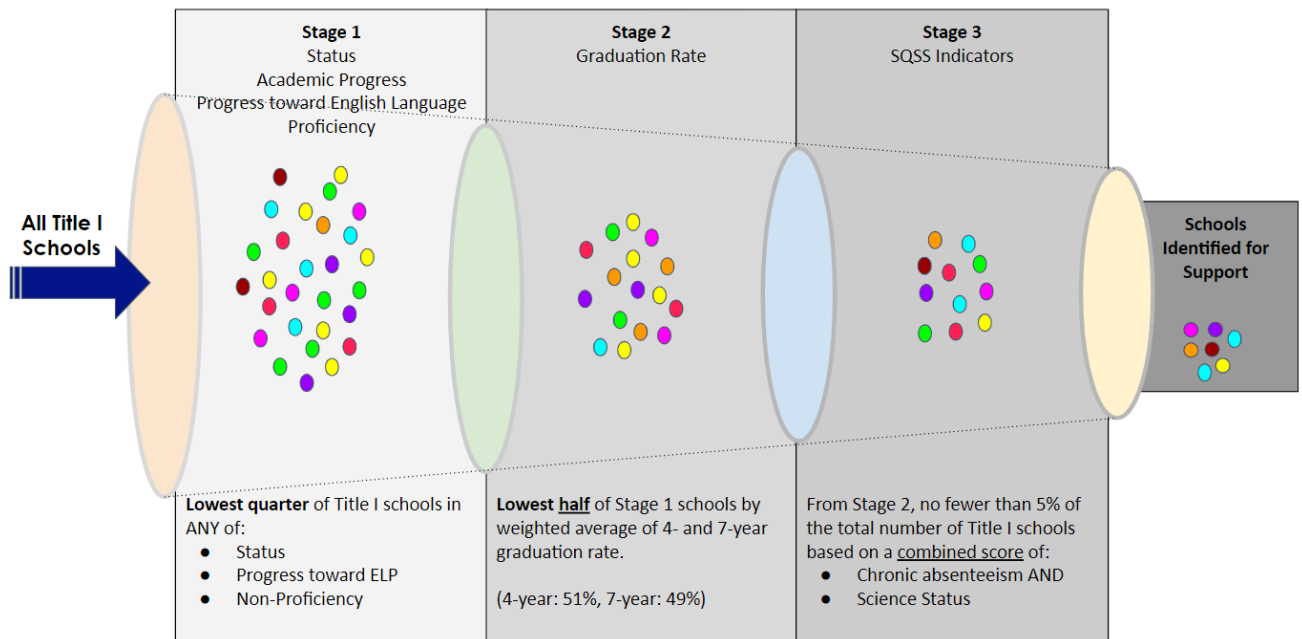


Cut Points for Indicators (2022-2023 Data)

<b>Stage 1</b>	Status	44.25
	Progress toward ELP	36.07
<b>Stage 2</b>	Growth	60.49
	Non-Proficiency	-2.77
<b>Stage 3</b>	SQSS (Chronic Absenteeism and Science Status)	-0.83

- US Department of Education Elementary/Middle School Stage 2 Interpretation:** Based on Nebraska’s approved State plan, our understanding is that in stage 2 of its CSI methodology for identifying the lowest performing 5 percent of elementary/middle Title I schools, Nebraska is determining which schools are in the lowest quarter of the stage 1 schools on the Growth indicator and which schools are in the lowest quarter of stage 1 schools on the Non-Proficiency indicator. The stage 1 schools that are in the lowest quarter in both of these indicators, separately, are then moved into stage 3. This is distinct from Nebraska’s procedures for stage 3 where it combines the scores of the Chronic Absenteeism indicator and the Science Status indicator in order to determine the lowest 5 percent of stage 2 schools on both indicators.

**CSI: Title I High Schools**



\*ANY public high school can also be identified for CSI if its graduation rate is below 67%.

**Cut Points for Indicators (2022-2023 Data)**

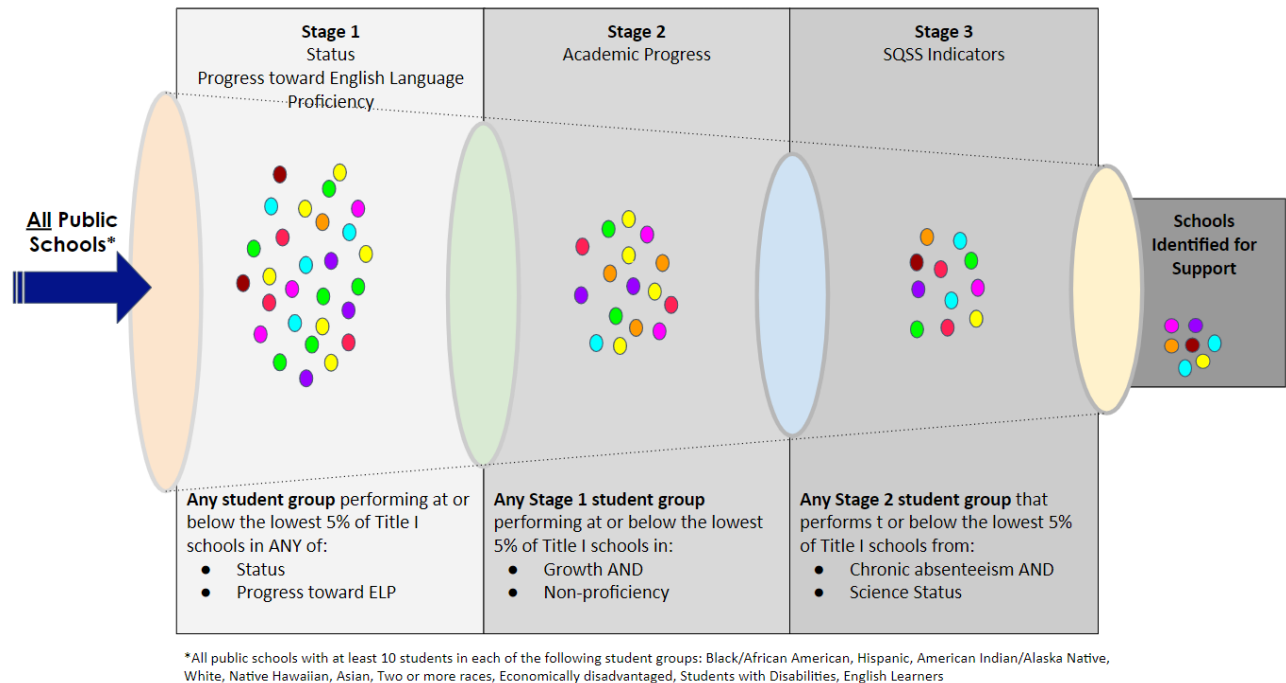
<b>Stage 1</b>	Status	12.21
	Progress toward ELP	20.21
	Non-Proficiency	2.08
<b>Stage 2</b>	Combined Graduation Rate	84.14
<b>Stage 3</b>	SQSS (Chronic Absenteeism and Science Status)	-2.95



## Additional Targeted Support and Improvement

Schools that have student groups that would, on their own, be identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement will be identified for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement. The identification process utilizes the following method:

### ATSI: Elementary and Middle Schools

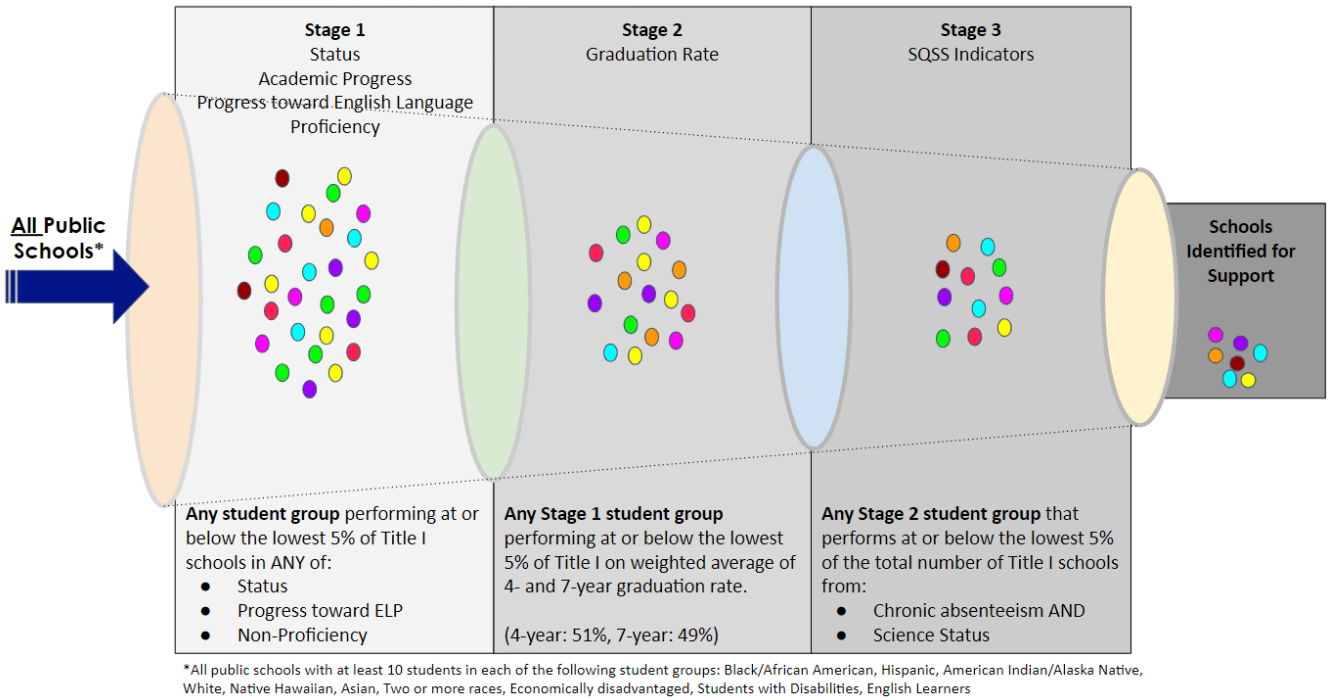


### Cut Points for Indicators (2022-2023 Data)

*These cut points represent the highest indicator score of the Elementary and Middle schools that were designated as CSI in the year they were designated.*

<b>Stage 1</b>	Status	52.87
	Progress toward ELP	58.00
<b>Stage 2</b>	Growth	70.98
	Non-Proficiency	-9.13
<b>Stage 3</b>	SQSS Chronic Absenteeism	2.30
	SQSS Science Status	55.84

## ATSI: High Schools



### Cut Points for Indicators (2022-2023 Data)

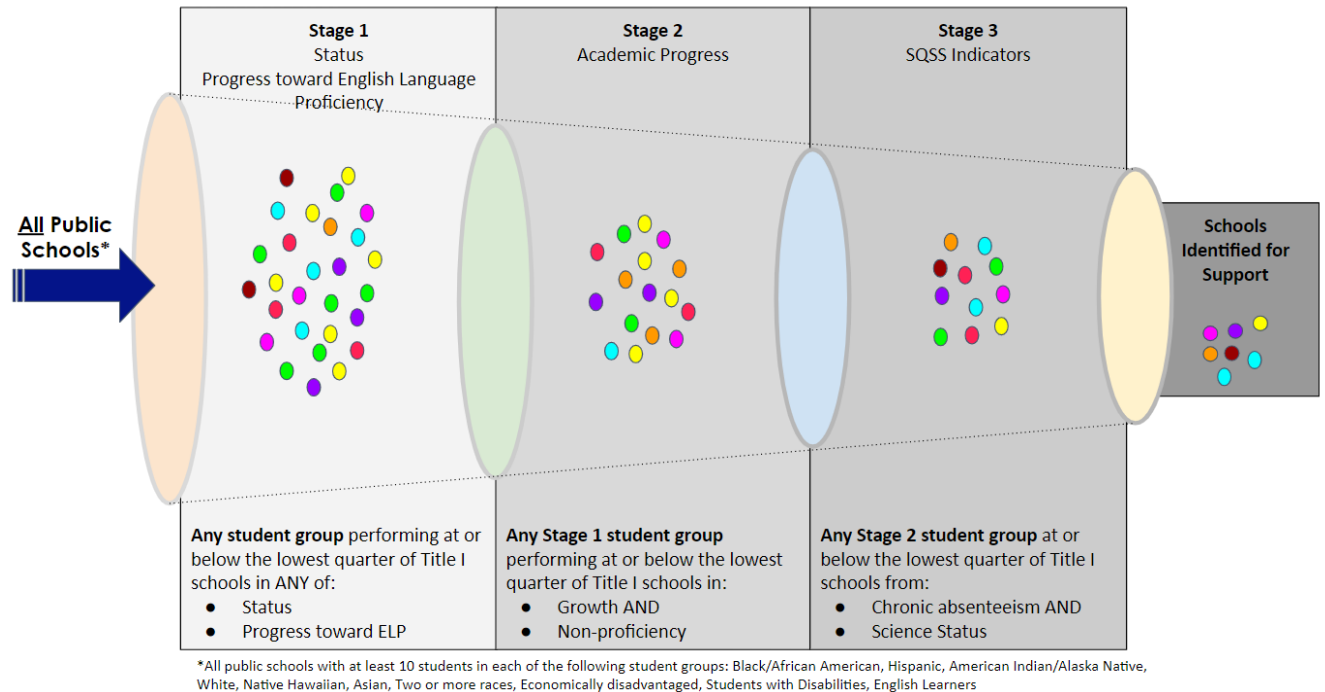
*These cut points represent the highest indicator score of the High Schools that were designated as CSI in the year they were designated.*

<b>Stage 1</b>	Status	0.0
	Progress toward ELP	17.71
	Non-Proficiency	10.42
<b>Stage 2</b>	Combined Graduation Rate	69.38
<b>Stage 3</b>	SQSS Chronic Absenteeism	-17.39
	SQSS Science Status	12.50

## Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)

To identify consistently underperforming student groups, all accountability indicators will be used to identify schools for Targeted Support. Schools will be identified for TSI using the below filter system:

### TSI: Elementary and Middle Schools

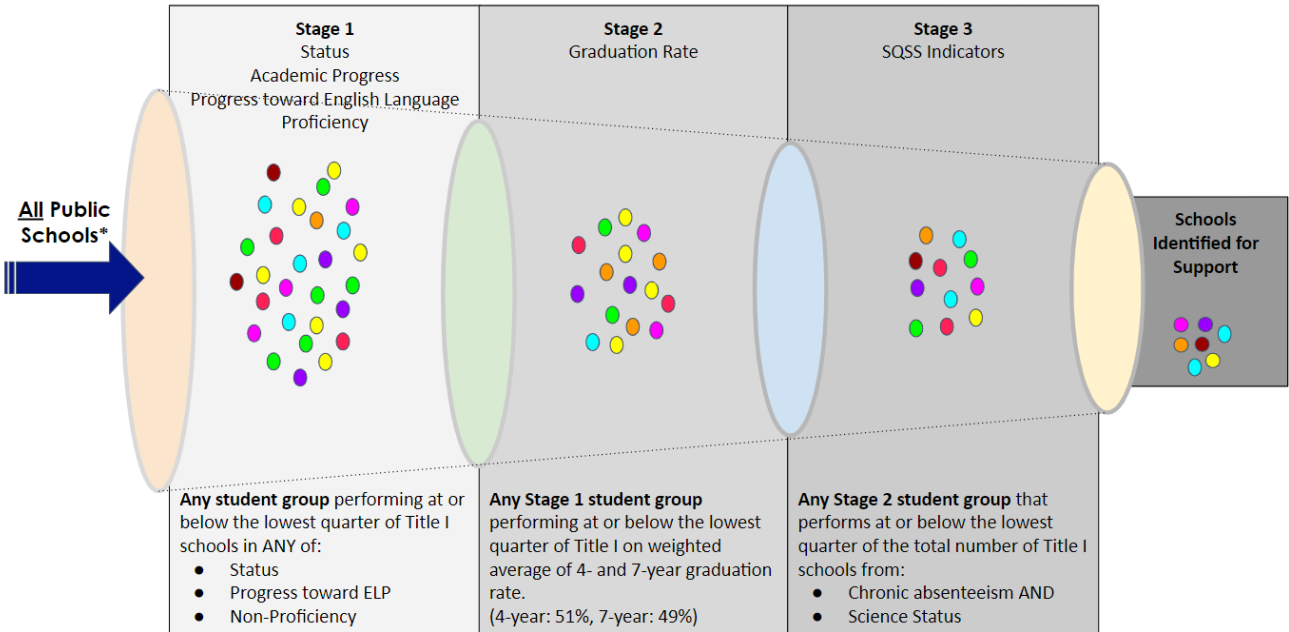


### Cut Points for Indicators (2022-2023 Data)

*These cut points represent the scores of the lowest quarter of Title I Elementary and Middle Schools in the 2022-2023 school year. The lowest quarter is determined for each indicator separately in order to set that indicator's target score.*

<b>Stage 1</b>	Status	44.25
	Progress toward ELP	36.07
<b>Stage 2</b>	Growth	64.67
	Non-Proficiency	-3.34
<b>Stage 3</b>	SQSS Chronic Absenteeism	-1.87
	SQSS Science Status	60.87

## TSI: High Schools



\*All public schools with at least 10 students in each of the following student groups: Black/African American, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, White, Native Hawaiian, Asian, Two or more races, Economically disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, English Learners

### Cut Points for Indicators (2022-2023 Data)

*These cut points represent the scores of the lowest quarter of Title I High Schools in the 2022-2023 data year. The lowest quarter is determined for each indicator separately in order to set that indicator's target score.*

<b>Stage 1</b>	Status	12.21
	Progress toward ELP	20.21
	Non-Proficiency	2.08
<b>Stage 2</b>	Combined Graduation Rate	76.78
<b>Stage 3</b>	SQSS Chronic Absenteeism	-6.04
	SQSS Science Status	17.74

## Section 4: Exit Criteria

Exit criteria means the conditions under which a school is no longer considered for a designation; these vary for each designation type and initial identification year.

### Targeted Support and Improvement

- TSI is an annual designation. If a school is not re-identified for TSI, then the school is no longer designated at TSI.

### Additional Targeted Support and Improvement

Cohort 1: Identified in Fall 2019 (using 2018-2019 school year data)

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
  - b. Made sufficient growth in Stage 1: Status and ELP indicator (and Non-Proficiency for High Schools)
- ATSI schools in this cohort that do not meet exit criteria will be designated as CSI in Fall 2023.

Cohort 2 : Identified in Fall 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data)

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
  - b. Made sufficient growth in Stage 1: Status and ELP indicator (and Non-Proficiency for High Schools)
- ATSI schools in this cohort have four years to exit this designation and are eligible to exit every year through Fall 2026. ATSI schools that do not meet exit criteria will be designated for CSI in 2026 based on data from the 2025-26 school year.

Cohort 3: Identified in Fall 2023 (using 2022-2023 school year data)

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
  - b. Made sufficient growth in Stage 1: Status and ELP indicator (and Non-Proficiency for High Schools)
- ATSI schools in this cohort have three years to exit this designation and will be eligible to exit in Fall 2026. ATSI schools that do not meet exit criteria will be designated for CSI in 2026 based on data from the 2025-26 school year.

Across all cohorts, *Sufficient Growth* is defined yearly by analyzing progress made in Stage 1 by each designated student group in a school for the current accountability year and compared to the initial year identified.

If a school was identified for ATSI for a specific student group and no longer has 10 students in that student group, the school automatically exits ATSI designation.

### **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (Elementary, Middle, and High School)**

*Note:* If a school changes its Title I status while a CSI school, the school is still under consideration for CSI, and the exit criteria applies.

Cohort 1: Identified in Fall 2018, (using 2017-2018 school year data)

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for CSI, AND
  - b. Not in lowest 10% of Title I across Stage 1: Status and/or ELP indicator, AND
  - c. Made significant progress across all indicators
- CSI schools in this cohort that do not meet exit criteria are required to engage in more rigorous options as outlined by the NDE.

Cohort 2: Identified in Fall 2022 (using 2021-22 school year data)

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for CSI, AND
  - b. Not in lowest 10% of Title I across the first filter (Status & ELPA), AND
  - c. Made significant progress across all indicators
- Schools identified in this cohort will first be eligible for exit in Fall 2023 and are eligible to exit every year through Fall 2026. CSI schools in this cohort that do not meet exit criteria by Fall 2026 are required to engage in more rigorous options as outlined by the NDE.

Cohort 3: Identified in Fall 2023 (using 2022-23 school year data).

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for CSI, AND
  - b. Not in lowest 10% of Title I across the first filter (Status & ELPA), AND
  - c. Made significant progress across all indicators
- Schools identified in this cohort will be eligible for exit in Fall 2026. CSI schools in this cohort that do not meet exit criteria are required to engage in more rigorous options as outlined by the NDE.

Cut Points for 2022-2023 CSI Exits (Lowest 10% of Title I):

<b>Elem / MS</b>	Status	32.20
	Progress toward ELP	25.00

<b>HS</b>	Status	0.00
	Progress toward ELP	17.71

Across all cohorts, *Significant Progress* is defined as a positive change in performance across each indicator compared to the year in which the school was identified.

For high schools identified for CSI for low graduation rate

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Have a 4-year cohort graduation rate above 67 percent AND
  - b. Have two consecutive years of 4-year cohort graduation rate improvement.

For schools that do not exit ATSI and become CSI schools

- Exit Criteria:
  - a. Not re-identified for ATSI for the same student group
  - b. Made sufficient growth in Stage 1: Status and/or ELPA indicator

**More Rigorous Interventions**

If a CSI school has not met the exit criteria after three years of identification, the NDE will reevaluate their improvement plan, in consultation with the district, to determine if a

- significant revision of the progress plan is necessary,
- an entirely new progress plan is developed, or
- an alternative administrative structure is warranted.

All Not-Yet-Exited schools will be required to complete a new comprehensive needs assessment, engage in an external review of their classroom instructional practices, and receive technical assistance on data interpretation, root cause analysis, and rigorous goal setting and action planning. These schools will also receive periodic implementation site visits by an NDE cross-functional team to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and determine if any adjustments to their plans need to be made.