



# Priority Schools: Parental Notification Requirements

Presented by:  
Michigan Department of Education

# Presentation Overview

- Update schools on 2013-14 requirements for Parent Notification of Priority School status and considerations
- Address details that need to be included in communications with parents
- Provide information about samples / templates that districts can use to communicate aspects of Priority School status

# Update on ESEA Flex

- Districts with Title I Priority Schools (identified in the 2013 cohort) are required to send a letter to parents of students in the Priority School
- In past years, the letter was combined with information regarding the Choice / Transfer option, but that has been lifted after amendments to Michigan's ESEA Flexibility Waiver
- For more information about Choice / Transfer and transportation, see the accompanying presentation and FAQ document

# Priority Schools: Letter of Identification & Notification

Who gets a letter, and what is the purpose?

- Parents of students enrolled in the Title I Priority School from 2012-13 who are eligible to return
- Parents of students that are expected to enter this Priority School in the coming year (i.e. entering kindergarten, entering middle school from an elementary, School of Choice students, etc.)
- The letter must identify the school as a Priority School, the reason for this identification, and the school and district plans to improve achievement

# Priority Schools: Timeline for Letters of Notification

- Letters must be sent so that PARENTS RECEIVE LETTERS NO LATER THAN AUGUST 20, 2013
- Letters must be provided to parents of students that enroll AFTER the normal start of the school year
- If the Priority School is receiving Title I funds, the district will need to submit the letter as evidence of compliance later this year through the Grants Electronic Monitoring System (GEMS) - details of this will follow

# Priority Schools: Choice & Transfer Considerations

Choice and Transfer and transportation are no longer required of Priority Schools. However, if a district elects to provide or pay for transportation costs to allow students in an identified Priority School from past years to continue to attend...

- Details of the choice and transfer and/or transportation options made available must be included in letters to parents
- This does not need to be in the Priority School Identification Letter - it can be a separate letter
- Information is available at the Priority School site

# Priority Schools: Letter Content and Considerations

The notification letter should **first** address the reason the school was identified as a Priority School

- Priority schools are those in the bottom 5% of the list of all schools in the state using the “Top-to-Bottom” metrics
- Top-to-Bottom metrics are based upon student achievement, improvement (year-to-year and over a four-year span), and achievement gaps within the school
- Priority Schools are part of a statewide effort to reform low performing schools, addressed both in Michigan law (MCL 380.1280c) and Michigan’s ESEA Flexibility
- If addressing data, identify school specific achievement issues without getting bogged down in metrics

# Priority Schools: Letter Content and Considerations

Much of the letter should focus on what the school and district will do to close these gaps and improve student achievement. Examples may come from:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on Priority schools and other Priority school information,
- Sample letters to parents regarding Priority school considerations and requirements, and
- Presentations on the required letter to parents for Title I Priority Schools, Priority school supports, and other related information.



# Priority Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate district requirements of Priority Schools that focus on rapid turnaround, such as:

- Possible replacement of principal and development of leadership capacity around turnaround strategies
- Implementation of teacher and leader evaluation to support (or remove) struggling educators
- Screening of staff to replace low-performing personnel (specific to “turnaround” reform model)
- Implementation of instructional reviews focusing on short term gains and data review by teachers

# Priority Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate initiatives required of Priority Schools that support student achievement, such as:

- Professional learning for educators on research based interventions to support achievement
- Increased instructional time and quality focusing on student engagement and learning of core content
- Increased teacher collaboration time to provide daily or weekly opportunities to develop and implement strategies to support individual students
- Parent and community engagement strategies to build community support

# Priority Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate requirements of Priority Schools that support student achievement, such as:

- Implementation of a multi-tiered system of support that includes scaffolded instruction for students with disabilities and English Language Learners
- Implementation of the Superintendent's Dropout Challenge to assist students at risk of dropping out of school at some point in the future
- Use of data from state or other assessments, research-based instructional initiatives, and the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum to find potential gaps or strategies that can help students meet Career and College Ready standards

# Priority Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate information about supports for Title I Priority Schools that address achievement, such as:

- Formation of a School Support Team with the ISD to develop and implement new strategies for instruction and improve teaching
- Collaboration with Michigan State University (through MI-Excel) to analyze data to better understand the school's strengths and challenges
- District monitoring and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan
- MDE programs focusing on rapid turnaround

# Priority Schools: More Information on Parent Notification

- For more information, contact:

Statewide System of Support

MDE Office of Education Improvement and  
Innovation (OEII)

517-373-4226