

2005-2006 Guidance for Chief State School Officers
The No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Program
U.S. Department of Education



Application Process

OMB Control Number: 1860-0506
Expiration Date:

What are the eligibility requirements for a nominated school?

The Chief State School Officer (CSSO) must ensure that the schools meet the criteria for recognition before sending their names to the Secretary. The nomination criteria, including assessments, must pertain equally to all schools nominated from the individual state. The CSSO may also wish to verify that the schools are indeed eligible after the schools have completed their applications, but before they are submitted.

Based on state data, the CSSO certifies that the nominated schools meet one of two criteria:

- 1) Schools that draw at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds show dramatic improvement in test scores to high levels in at least the past three years in reading (language arts or English) and mathematics.

“Dramatically improved” is defined by the CSSO of each state. All student groups, including disadvantaged students, must show dramatic improvement as shown by disaggregated data.

“High levels” is defined by the CSSO of each state, but at a minimum includes improving student achievement to at least the 60th percentile of schools in the school’s grade category (elementary, middle, high school) on state assessments in the highest grade tested in the last year tested even if the school makes AYP.

A student from a *“disadvantaged background”* is defined as one who is eligible for free or reduced-priced meals at the school, is limited English proficient, is a migrant student, or is a student receiving services under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001.

- 2) Regardless of its demographics, the school achieves in the top 10 percent of schools in the state in the school’s grade category as measured by state tests of reading (language arts or English) and mathematics in at least the last grade tested in the last year tested.

At least one-third of the schools nominated by each state must have in the year the school applies 40 percent of the students from disadvantaged backgrounds, whether the schools show dramatic improvement in closing the achievement gap or are high performing (in the top 10 percent). For example, if a state nominates seven schools, at least three must be high poverty schools. States may not submit schools that have been in school improvement status within the last two years.

Additionally schools must meet the following requirements:

1. The nominated school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Even if the state separates the school into grade levels for administrative purposes, schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school. The same rules apply for K-12 schools as for other schools, for example, they must meet the assessment criteria in reading and mathematics in at least the highest grade tested in the last year tested.)
2. The nominated school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2005-2006 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the nominated school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum and it is taught to the same groups of students for the entire year.
5. The nominated school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2000 and has not received the 2003, 2004, or 2005 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
6. The nominated school or district is not refusing the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
7. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
8. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
9. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

Please see pages 2-7 in the NCLB-BRS application for definitions and a further explanation of the nomination process. Note that if a school only has the data from one test given in the first grade of a school, for example, in grade 6 for a 6-9 school or grade 9 for a 9-12 high school, the results of that one test do not by themselves qualify the school for nomination.

Can the state set up a screening process for applications before the schools send them to the Secretary?

It would be very helpful if States reviewed all school applications before the schools submit to the Department to ensure that the test results are accurately stated and that the narrative sections reflect the quality expected by the CSSO. This review would serve to verify that the school meets the assessment eligibility requirements of the NCLB-BRS Program. The CSSO is encouraged to have the state assessment director or the director's designee verify that the schools' test results are accurate and consistent with state reported data. States can place additional criteria on the process of picking the schools to nominate to the Secretary. If they wish, states may collect all hard copies of the applications for the state and forward them to the Department. In any case, the state should collect for itself one copy of the application from the school in case questions arise about the applications during the review process.

What exactly does the state need to do to nominate schools?

By November 7, 2005, the state should send the Department the following information.

1. Basic information on each nominated school, that is, name of the principal, the school name, addresses, and telephone number.
2. The schools should be delineated into three separate groups, with at least one-third of the schools having at least 40 percent disadvantaged students:
 - a) Group A - schools in the top 10 percent of the state with at least 40 percent disadvantaged students;
 - b) Group B - schools with at least 40 percent disadvantaged students that have dramatically improved student achievement to high levels.
 - c) Group C - schools in the top 10 percent of the state with fewer than 40 percent disadvantaged students.
3. The certification document from the CSSO.
4. A brief explanation of the criteria used to nominate the schools.
5. A very brief explanation of the state's assessment system. If the information is on the state's website, reference the web address where the information may be found.
6. A brief description of the state's definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP).
7. The Internet addresses where the overall state performance on each assessment can be found, as well as the individual schools' assessment results are posted. If this site is a secure site, please provide the necessary password and PIN needed to access it.
8. What is the average per pupil state expenditure for all schools? \$_____

9. What are the terms used in your state to describe the different levels of student performance? For example, below basic, basic, proficient, exemplary.

Which of those terms identifies the state's category for "meeting the standard"?

10. To determine the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the state standard at the 90th and 60th percentiles of schools in the state, proceed through the following steps:

Schools in the Top 10 Percent in Reading (or English)

- Step 1: Identify the highest grade tested in reading in the state for the most recent year.
- Step 2: Determine the percentage of students in each school in the state meeting or exceeding the state standard in the highest grade tested in each school in your state.
- Step 3: Rank order all of the schools in the state from the highest to the lowest, based on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard in that grade.
- Step 4: From the list of rank ordered schools in Step 3, identify the schools in the top 10 percent.
- Step 5: From the schools in the top 10 percent, identify the school with the lowest percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard.
- Step 6: Record in Column B in the table below the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard in the school identified in Step 5. *Note that the lowest school in the top 10 percent of all schools is the same as the school in the 90th percentile of all schools.*
- Step 7: Repeat the procedure for each grade tested in reading.

For mathematics, repeat the above steps.

Schools in the Top 40 Percent in Reading (or English)

- Step 1: Identify the highest grade tested in reading in the state for the most recent year.
- Step 2: Determine the percentage of students in each school in the state meeting or exceeding the state standard in the highest grade tested in each school in your state.
- Step 3: Rank order all of the schools in the state from the highest to the lowest, based on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard in that grade.
- Step 4: From the list of rank ordered schools in Step 3, identify the schools in the top 40 percent.
- Step 5: From the schools in the top 40 percent, identify the school with the lowest percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard.
- Step 6: Record in Column C in the table below the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard in the school identified in Step 5. *Note that the lowest school in the top 40 percent of all schools is the same as the school in the 60th percentile of all schools.*
- Step 7: Repeat the procedure for each grade tested in reading.

For mathematics, repeat the above steps.

READING (or ENGLISH)

Column A	Column B	Column C
Grade	Percentage of students meeting the state standard at the 90th percentile when schools are ranked according to percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard	Percentage of students meeting the state standard at the 60th percentile when schools are ranked according to percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

MATHEMATICS

Column A	Column B	Column C
Grade	Percentage of students meeting the state standard at the 90th percentile when schools are ranked according to percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard	Percentage of students meeting the state standard at the 60th percentile when schools are ranked according to percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		