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August 26, 2019

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All State District Superintendents

**FROM:** Jonathan Moore, Ed.D.  
Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement

**SUBJECT:** NSPF Elimination of Notifications

**History:**

In September 2018, the Nevada Department of Education made school designation announcements under the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) 2.0 and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan:

- Designations for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) were made at all school levels (elementary, middle and high) based on SY2017-18 performance.
- Elementary and middle schools were designated for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) for the first time.<sup>1</sup>
- Nevada high schools were assigned star ratings for the first time under NSPF 2.0.

In December 2018, after seeking clarification from the U.S. Department of Education regarding requirements for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) designations, a subset of the elementary and middle schools designated for TSI were reclassified as ATSI due to very low subgroup performance. A school is designated ATSI if the performance of any one subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification for CSI.

When the State ESSA Plan criteria for school Designations were applied in September 2018, it was found that 597 of the state's schools would receive a Designation of CSI or TSI. After a thorough analysis of the data and consideration of resources to ensure continued supports to improve student academic achievement and school success, the Department revised the state-determined Designation criteria for CSI, TSI, and ATSI as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> High schools did not receive TSI designations in 2018 as they require two consecutive years of data in the NSPF Academic Achievement Indicator and SY2017-18 was the first year the ACT was included as the College and Career Readiness Assessment that contributes to that Indicator as adopted by the SBE in accordance with NRS 390.610.

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI):
  - *Original criteria:* The State ESSA Plan required CSI Designation of the lowest 5<sup>th</sup> percentile of schools by index score, 1-star schools, and “downward-trending” schools (a 2-star school whose current year index score is less than the prior year index score).
  - *Revised criteria applied:* The lowest 5<sup>th</sup> percentile of schools by index score and 1-star schools were identified as CSI. “Downward-trending” schools received a “CSI Notification” as a warning that they were close to a CSI Designation, but were not identified.
- Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI):
  - *Original criteria:* The State ESSA Plan, section 4.2 Identification of schools (pg. 65), required TSI Designation of a school if student subgroups did not meet targets two years in a row (“consistently underperforming”) for the Academic Achievement Indicator **or** two or more of the remaining Indicators including English Language Proficiency, Graduation Rates and Student Engagement.
  - *Revised criteria applied:* The ESSA requires the system of annual meaningful differentiation of schools be based on all indicators in the state’s accountability system. The criteria, as stated, could have excluded the Academic Achievement Indicator, which is a federally required component of the system, as part of the TSI determination. The criteria were revised so that student subgroups had to be consistently underperforming in the Academic Achievement Indicator **and** two or more of the remaining Indicators for a school to be identified as TSI. As a result, schools with student subgroups that were consistently underperforming in the Academic Achievement Indicator **or** two or more of the other Indicators received a “TSI Notification” as a warning that they were close to a TSI designation, but were not identified.
- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)
  - *Original Criteria:* ATSI Designations were originally a third and separate category that would have been considered after identification of CSI and TSI. Since both TSI and ATSI were based on subgroup performance, the ADAM office requested clarification, and received approval, from the U.S. Department of Education to include ATSI as a subset of TSI.
  - *Revised criteria applied:* Schools were Designated ATSI as a subset of the schools identified as TSI.

**Final CSI/TSI Designations:**

The application of the revised CSI and TSI criteria reduced the number of schools identified in 2018 from the original projection of 597 to 260. The following table reflects the total number of schools designated in each of the support and improvement categories:

<b>2018 Designations</b>	<b>Number of Schools Identified</b>
CSI	147
TSI	9
TSI/ATSI	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>

**CSI/TSI Notifications:**

Schools that met the original State ESSA Plan criteria for either CSI or TSI designation, but not the revised criteria, received a CSI Notification, TSI Notification, or CSI/TSI Notification. The following table shows the number of schools that received a Notification indicating they had met the original designation criteria:

<b>2018 Notifications</b>	<b>Number of Schools Notified</b>
CSI Notification	2
TSI Notification	172
CSI/TSI Notification	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>

In summary, of the 805 schools represented in the NSPF for 2018, the number and percentage of schools with Designations and Notifications are as follows:

- Designated Schools (CSI, TSI, and TSI/ATSI): 260 (32.2% of all schools)
- Notified Schools: 194 (CSI, TSI and CSI/TSI) (24.1% of all schools)

**Elimination of Notifications:**

*As a result of policy amendments and consultation with stakeholders, beginning with the 2019 school designation process, the Department will no longer issue Notifications to schools.* The reasons for this change are as follows:

- The Department has proposed amendments to the State ESSA Plan and updated the NSPF procedures to reflect the revised school designation criteria. The original criteria on which the 2018 Notifications were made are no longer in place.
- Notifications are of limited benefit to schools. A Notification is not a formal designation, it is not tied to funding consequences nor does it provide access to supports.
- Districts indicated a preference to provide early warnings to schools rather than having the Department do so.
- Stakeholders expressed that Notifications were confusing. This was shared by districts including Clark, Douglas, Lyon, Nye, and Washoe County School Districts.
- According to the Every Student Succeeds Act, the purpose of school designations is to provide meaningful differentiation of schools by identifying schools that are in need of additional

supports to ensure improvement. Making Notifications in addition to formal designations decreases the meaningfulness of designations and detracts from focusing supports where they are most needed.

**For questions related to the Nevada School Performance Framework, please contact Peter Zutz, Director of the Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management at [pzutz@doe.nv.gov](mailto:pzutz@doe.nv.gov).**

**For questions related to school designations, please contact Dr. Seng-Dao Keo, Director of the Office of Student and School Supports at [skeo@doe.nv.gov](mailto:skeo@doe.nv.gov).**