

MORE THAN A GOLD STAR

States seeking waivers from provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act had to outline the performance and improvement criteria by which they would single out schools for rewards. The specifics varied widely among waiver recipients, which so far include 34 states and the District of Columbia, as reflected in this sampling. (In most cases, states specified the schools in their waiver applications; their lists may have been adjusted subsequent to the application.)

STATE	HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS	HIGH-PROGRESS SCHOOLS	REWARD	SCHOOLS
Delaware	Criteria vary with successive school years. For 2012-13, schools must be in the top 10 percent in terms of proficiency on state math and English/language arts tests, both for each tested subgroup and the population as a whole. During the previous two years, the school must have been in the top 25 percent statewide, both for all students and for each tested subgroup. Gaps between subgroups and other students must be shrinking.	Average annual growth of 2 percent for all students. Have reduced gaps between student population as a whole and subgroups between 2011 and 2012.	Certificate, ceremony, and possible monetary reward of up to \$10,000 depending on availability of funds.	2
Kansas	Top 10 percent of all Title I schools based on attainment over four years. Cannot have significant gaps between the student population as a whole and subgroups.	Top 10 percent of all Title I schools based on growth over four years. Cannot have significant gaps between the student population as a whole and subgroups.	Recognition at state board meeting. If funding is available, schools will receive "gifts" such as banners or plaques. Districts with reward schools can attend state-sponsored professional-development events at a reduced fee. Staff from districts with reward schools can serve as mentors to "priority" or "focus" schools.	66
Kentucky	Schools scoring in the 90th percentile or higher overall for accountability purposes. Must meet annual measurable objectives (AMOs); must have graduation rates of 60 percent or higher. Can include Title I and non-Title I schools.	The top 10 percent of Title I and non-Title I schools, as measured by the difference between one year of student achievement and the previous year. Can include "focus" and "priority" schools. Can include Title I and non-Title I schools.	Allowed to display a state education-department-authorized logo on their websites corresponding to their status. May receive financial reward, or professional-development opportunities, or the chance to partner with a low-performing school, if funding is available.	215 Total 152 Title I
Louisiana	Schools that receive a letter grade of A and demonstrate at least 5 points of growth.	Demonstrate that at least 35 percent of the students in the nonproficient supersubgroup meet or exceed expected growth in English/language arts and/or mathematics. Schools that receive a B, C, D, or F on their report cards must earn at least 10 points of growth per year.	Unspecified financial rewards, which may vary if the state's Title I allocation increases. Public recognition in a press release and a statewide celebration.	440*
Mississippi	Must be in the top 20 percent of schools in the state when it comes to achievement for all students and subgroup students over a three-year period. Must be in the top 20 percent on graduation rates for current year. Achievement gap between subgroup students and others must be among the lowest 25 percent in state. Must meet AMOs for all students and subgroup students for the current year.	Gain for overall student achievement is in the top 10 percent in the state, based on current year vs. two previous years. Gain in graduation rates in the top 25 percent in the state, based on current year vs. two previous years. The school must be in the bottom 25 percent of schools in the state when it comes to achievement gaps, or among the top 25 percent of schools in the state when it comes to closing achievement gaps.	Monetary rewards for Title I schools that have significantly closed the achievement gap, or have exceeded their AMOs for two or more years. Opportunity for staff to serve on state task forces. Can apply for exemptions from some state standards, including for libraries, science labs, teacher-student ratios, and the number of lesson preps a teacher can have.	38*
New Jersey	All Title I and non-Title I schools that have a schoolwide proficiency rate of 90 percent or higher; high schools that have a graduation rate of 90 percent or higher. Additionally, each subgroup at the school must rank in the top 10 percent in performance statewide.	The state examined each school's median growth on state assessments over a three-year period and assigned it a score of 1 through 99. Title I and non-Title I schools that received a 65 or better are considered high-growth. "Focus" schools can't be considered "reward" schools. Schools that do not make adequate yearly progress can receive rewards.	Up to 10 high-achieving, high-poverty "reward" schools that do not use selective admissions criteria will receive grants of up to \$100,000. Other Title I schools will receive monetary rewards in the form of bonus Title I money. Other reward schools will get a plaque, and a visit from the governor or commissioner. Staff will be asked to present at statewide professional-development conferences and will be eligible for scholarships to obtain national-board certification.	57*
New York	All schools must make AYP and must be in the top 20 percent of performers statewide for the past two years, along with other factors dealing with student growth. Cannot have seen a widening of achievement gaps in past three years. High-achieving high schools must have 80 percent of students receiving a regents (more rigorous) diploma, and must exceed the state average when it comes to regents diplomas or meet a career and technology standard. High schools also must exceed the state average when it comes to students who scored at low levels on state math and English tests as 8th graders, but graduate within four years.	All schools must be in the top 10 percent of schools in state when it comes to growth of test scores from one year to another, and have made AYP with all groups for the past two years, along with other factors dealing with student growth. High schools must be in the top 10 percent in student-achievement gains. Sixty percent of students must earn a regents diploma, and must exceed the state average when it comes to regents diplomas or career and technology endorsements. High schools also must exceed the state average for students who scored at low levels on state math and English tests as 8th graders, but graduated within four years.	Public recognition and opportunity to compete for a dissemination grant of up to \$100,000 to share best practices. Bonus points in state grant competitions. Possible regulatory flexibility.	250*
Tennessee	Top 5 percent of high schools on end-of-course exams in English, biology, and algebra. Top 5 percent of elementary schools on state tests in math, reading, language arts, and science. Achievement gaps must be smaller than the state median, or must be narrowing.	Top 5 percent of schools with the greatest growth on state tests, based on those tests (for elementary and middle schools) and end-of-course exams (for high schools). Achievement gaps must be smaller than the state median, or must be narrowing.	Public recognition through an annual list. In-state grant competition for ideas that can be scaled up statewide and disseminated, and for which only "reward" schools can compete. Chance to serve as ambassadors and mentors to other schools.	169

* Number of schools identified after the application process.
SOURCES: State waiver applications; *Education Week*