

# How are Priority Schools identified?



## Background

As part of its approved [ESEA Flexibility Request](#), the Kansas State Department of Education agreed to identify 5 percent of the lowest-performing Title I buildings as Priority Schools. Low performance is defined as persistently low academic performance across 4 years of reading and mathematics assessments.

## The Assessment Performance Index (API)

KSDE uses an index to summarize schools' academic performance. The API rewards schools for improving student performance across all performance categories. Each time a student moves into a higher assessment category, the API awards more points to the school.

To calculate each school's API, the number of students scoring at each performance level, in math and reading, are combined. Then the total at each level is multiplied by the points for that level. The grand total is then divided by the total number of students. The school's API score is the resulting average. In the example below, the school's API score is 655.

performance level	points per level	# of students	total points
exemplary	1,000	55	55,000
exceeds standard	750	90	67,500
meets standard	500	82	41,000
approaching standard	250	30	7,500
academic warning	0	4	0
<b>totals</b>		<b>261</b>	<b>171,000</b>

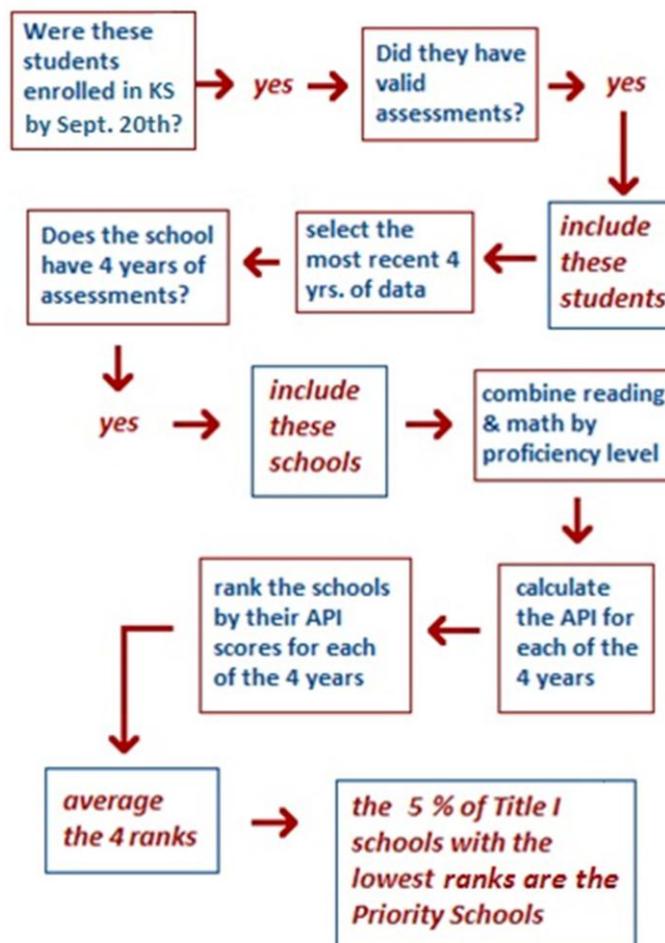
**Assessment Performance Index (API) = 171,000 ÷ 261 = 655**

To identify Priority Schools, KSDE creates a student file with all the students who were enrolled in the state by September 20<sup>th</sup> and had valid assessments. We select the most recent four years of data, combine the reading and math, and aggregate the counts of students at each performance level, for each school, and each year.

Only those Title I buildings with four years of data are included.

Then KSDE calculates the API for each of the four years and ranks the schools according to their API scores. The average of four years of rankings is used to create a cumulative API rank. The 5 percent of Title I schools with the lowest cumulative API rank are identified as Priority Schools.

## Steps in Identifying Priority Schools



## Priority School Requirements

Priority Schools are required to implement interventions aligned with the *Turnaround Principles* as described in the [ESEA Flexibility agreement with the federal government](#). During 2012-2013, Priority Schools will focus on analyzing their needs and planning for the next year. In 2013-2014, they must begin implementing the *Turnaround Principles* and continue to do so for at least three years. Even if a school exits Priority School status, it must continue to implement the *Turnaround Principles* for three years.

## Exiting Priority School Status

A building can exit Priority School status by making its Improving Achievement AMO and Reducing the Non-Proficient AMO for two consecutive years.

## More Information

E-mail questions to: [waiver@ksde.org](mailto:waiver@ksde.org)