

Florida's Differentiated Accountability Program

Legal Authority

Section 1008.33, Florida Statutes, establishes the differentiated accountability system of state support for school improvement, also known as DA, in which graded, non-charter schools and their districts are identified for escalating interventions, support and monitoring based on their school grade history.

Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., defines terminology and DA categories, assigns roles and responsibilities for DA support and interventions, and outlines timing for turnaround planning and implementation. The rule incorporates forms that outline requirements in more detail (see page 2).

DA Categories

Schools are categorized for DA support annually after school grades are released, typically in July; schools remain on the support list for the entire school year. DA Categories include:

- Focus schools, those that received a grade of "D" in the most recent grades release.
- Priority schools, those that received a grade of "F" in the most recent grades release.
- Former F schools, those that improved from a grade of "F" within the past three years and are being monitored by the Department

The Focus and Priority categories are assigned independently of turnaround status. Turnaround statuses are calculated using up to five years of consecutive school grades and are defined on page 3.

DA Structure

The DA regional teams are hired by FDOE and placed within five geographic regions across the state to build district capacity to analyze data and align their supports and resources to need. Each region is led by a regional executive director (RED). Each team supports the districts and schools that are annually designated for DA within the geographical boundaries of the respective region. The number of districts per region varies according to district size.

DA Supports

DA supports are intended to build capacity by focusing on systems and structures needed to accelerate and sustain school improvement and by employing a gradual release model. Supports are offered in consultation with the district to determine local needs, and typically include

facilitation of collaborative processes such as data and risk analyses, needs assessment, strategic planning and problem solving, performance management, professional development, and cross-district networking to share promising practices and lessons learned.

The regional teams review, provide feedback, and monitor progress on the implementation of school improvement plans (SIPs), district improvement and assistance plans (DIAPs), turnaround option plans (TOPs) and school improvement grant (SIG) 1003(g) plans.

The REDs and regional teams do not supplant the work of districts administrators; rather, they work to build district capacity during the school improvement process, so that absent DA support, the district can sustain improvements into the future.

DA Requirements

Form DA-1 (district checklist) requires a district with one or more Focus or Priority schools to:

- Use the department's online survey to develop and maintain a district improvement and assistance plan (**Form DIAP-1**) annually to document strategic goals, strategies and resources allocated for focus and priority schools based on need, such as designating a turnaround lead dedicated to supervising principals, ensuring effective leaders and teachers are in place, providing instructional coaches and time for common planning;
- Ensure that high impact teachers and coaches are recruited to and retained at focus and priority schools and ensure all vacancies are filled throughout the year;
- Use a timely, data-based approach to identifying and supporting the needs of individual students at focus and priority schools; and
- Use valid and reliable assessments to monitor progress on student assessments, including performance of subgroups, in focus and priority schools.

Form DA-2 (school checklist) requires each Focus, Priority, and Former F school to:

- Use the department's online survey to develop or update a school improvement plan (**Form SIP-1**) annually, with input of the school advisory council;
- Implement and monitor the SIP;
- Reflect on progress toward SIP goals and implementation of SIP strategies at the mid-year point
- Report on the SIP to the SAC three times a year; and
- Participate in an instructional review, facilitated by the district with the DA team, to review data, celebrate successes, identify needs, and collaboratively problem-solve to refine and support the school's implementation of the school improvement plan (not required for Former F schools).

Note: Priority schools receive at least one onsite visit by the regional team, whereas focus schools might be reviewed at a district-level meeting where multiple schools are discussed

Turnaround Statuses

Planning status means the district is using that school year to engage stakeholders in a needs assessment to determine a turnaround option and plan for implementation, using **Forms TOP-1** and **TOP-2** to document the process and plan.

- “Planning Year 1” schools have received a single F or two consecutive grades of D
- “Planning Year 2 or 3” schools have received a single F followed by a D or have received an extra planning year due to the school grades transition “hold harmless” provision

Implementing status means the district is implementing a Superintendent-signed, RED-reviewed and State Board-approved turnaround option plan (TOP).

- “Implementing Year 1” schools have received two consecutive grades of F or three consecutive grades below C
- “Implementing Year 2” schools are in their second consecutive year of implementing a turnaround plan because the grade did not improve to a C or higher after Year 1
- “Implementing Year 3” schools are in their third consecutive year of implementing a turnaround plan; typically, this occurs because a district requests additional time to implement the current option (see additional information on page 4)

Turnaround Option Plans

As outlined above, a TOP is required after a school has shown a significant decline or persistent underperformance. For non-charter schools receiving a grade of F or two consecutive grades below C, the district engages the community during a planning year to review the needs of the school and determine which of the five turnaround options would be most beneficial to implement should the next school grade not improve to a C or higher. The five options are described below:

- **District-managed turnaround** – The district takes a more active role in developing goals based on school needs and implementing strategies designed to reduce or eliminate barriers to the goals. The district commits to supporting and monitoring the implementation to ensure the appropriate resources are prioritized and used as intended at the school.
 - One of the key components of a DMT plan is to establish a strong leadership team at the site, which may require replacing the principal at the district’s discretion, and allowing for additional operational flexibility for that principal, meaning leniency on certain district level policies (such as hiring, budgeting, scheduling or transportation), as needed to remove any barriers to implementing the turnaround plan. The principal reports directly to a turnaround lead at the district to ensure direct lines of communication regarding the needs of the school for flexibility and support.
 - Additionally, districts provide detail on the strategies they intend to use to improve the quality of instruction in the school site, which may include, but is not limited to, changes to instructional staff, instructional programs, professional development, master scheduling, and/or progress monitoring systems.

- **Closure** – The district closes the school, reassigns students to higher-performing schools, and monitors their progress at the new school(s).
- **Charter** – The district contracts with a charter organization to operate the school; the CMO cannot rehire any teachers who are not effective or highly effective.
- **External Operation** – The district contracts with a school turnaround organization with a record of improving similar schools, who will manage the school on behalf of the district.
- **Hybrid** – The district selects from strategies within Florida’s turnaround options and/or other interventions with research to demonstrate their effectiveness in increasing student achievement in similar populations/settings.

Selecting a New Option (Districts Implementing Year 2 and Year 3)

If a school grade does not improve to a C or higher after two years of implementing a TOP, the district is required to select a new option for implementation in the following year. Districts with schools completing Year 2 of implementation must be concurrently planning for a new option, in the event the 2016 grade does not improve.

Additionally, in 2015-16, all districts with “Implementing Year 3” schools were given an automatic additional year of implementation due to the hold harmless provision. If the 2016 grade is not C or higher in these schools, the district will be required to implement a new option.

Districts are currently developing these plans for submission by June 20 and presentation at the July 20-21 State Board meeting. The new TOP must be substantively different from the previous plan and demonstrate how it will address the needs of the school to bring about the necessary improvements.