

FY 2009 QUESTION NUMBER: 34

QUESTION:

Provide information on the difference between focus schools, schools in transition, and Title I schools. What schools fall into each of the three categories?

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE: 1-3, 1-37

ANSWER:

A school is considered a focus school when its student population does not meet the level of poverty that would qualify for Title I designation, but does have a higher level of poverty than a majority of the schools in MCPS. The level of poverty for focus school designation is finalized after the budget is approved, and the number of schools we are able to support is determined. These schools receive allocation for reduced class size for Kindergarten through Grade 2, as do Title I schools, but do not receive any other services or staffing uniquely provided through the Title I grant.

The attached January 4, 2008, memorandum to the members of the Board of Education from Dr. Weast provides information regarding Title I and Transition schools. Title I of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB Act) delineates the process for identifying schools as eligible for funding based on the October 31, 2007, Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) ranking of schools. Schools with a FARMS ranking above 75 percent must receive funds. Local districts make the decision on how many additional schools above the district FARMS average to serve based on several factors, but primarily on the overall Title I allocation. The NCLB Act allows districts to continue to provide Title I funds to schools that fall below the district-established Title I cut-off percentage for one-year as a way to avoid having schools constantly entering and exiting the Title I program. If a school continues to fall below the district cut-off point for a second year, MCPS provides local transition funds at the 50 percent level for the first year and 25 percent level for the second year.

Attached is a list of current focus schools, schools in transition, and Title I schools.