The [National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators ((NAESPA)](http://www.eseanetwork.org) – formerly the National Title I Association – has been selecting examples of superior, federally-funded school programs for national recognition through the [National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program](https://www.eseanetwork.org/ds) since 1996. This program publicly recognizes qualifying Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funded schools for the outstanding academic achievements and growth of their students, highlights efforts of selected schools that have successfully leveraged ESEA federal education funds to improve education for all students, and nationally recognizes educators’ hard work and dedication to continuous school improvement processes.

Every year, states can identify up to two Distinguished ESEA Schools in three possible categories:

* Category 1: Exceptional student performance and academic growth for two or more consecutive years
* Category 2: Closing the achievement gap between student groups for two or more consecutive years
* Category 3: Excellence in serving special populations of students under the Every Student Succeeds Act (i.e., homeless, migrant, English learners, students in foster care, students in neglected and delinquent facilities, or students from low-income families)

## **Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) process for selecting schools for recognition by the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program, Categories 1, 2 and 3**

KDE is accepting applications from schools for recognition in Categories 1, 2 and 3. The application begins on p. 3 of this document. KDE will review applications and select finalists for a school visit.

To qualify for the National ESEA Distinguished School award, a school must:

* Have a poverty rate of at least 35% for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. The unadjusted percentage of low-income students listed in the district’s Title I application in GMAP (Grant Management and Application Planning System) will be the source for this data. Your district’s Title I coordinator can tell you your school’s unadjusted percentage of low-income students in GMAP or you can view your district’s application by searching for it from the [landing page in GMAP](https://gmap.education.ky.gov/default.aspx?ccipSessionKey=637636986055810055);
* Receive funds under at least one program in the Every Student Succeeds Act;
* Demonstrate high academic achievement for two or more consecutive years;
* Meet or exceed state-determined accountability criteria based on two or more consecutive years of achievement data;
* Submit a completed application (available within this document) signed by the school principal and district superintendent by the deadline of **Aug. 8**; and
* Agree to a site visit by KDE if the school is identified as a finalist. The site visit will include classroom observations and interviews with the principal, selected staff and students.

Additionally, for recognition in Categories 2 or 3, the school must:

* Demonstrate excellence in closing the achievement gap between student groups for two or more consecutive years (Category 2); or
* Demonstrate excellence in serving special populations of students (i.e., homeless, migrant, English learners, students in foster care, students in neglected and delinquent facilities, or students from low-income families (Category 3).

After completing site visits for finalists, KDE will make the final selections. Two National ESEA Distinguished Schools (from Category 1, 2 and/or 3) will be notified by email of their selection in November.

Contact [Tara Rodriguez](mailto:tara.rodriguez@education.ky.gov) with any questions by email or phone at (502) 564-3791, ext. 4042.

**Application for National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program**

Please fill in the following information about the school and district:

Name of school: Click or tap here to enter text.

School principal name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Principal’s email address: Click or tap here to enter text.

School phone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

School district name: Click or tap here to enter text.

District superintendent name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Please answer each of the following questions.

1. Provide a brief overview of your school. What would you like others to know about your school? Include any connections to the community and other relevant information.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe the demographics of the student population at your school.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. In which category described on the first page of this document (Category 1, 2 or 3) does your school excel? Provide a brief explanation in support of your response and include data or other evidence when possible.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe the services and strategies the school staff uses to meet the needs of the students at your school. Address each of the following in your response:
   1. Teaching and learning based on the approved curriculum
   2. Use of evidence-based instructional strategies
   3. Opportunities provided for each student to succeed
   4. Established partnerships with parents, families and communities
   5. Wraparound, extracurricular activities and other supports available for students

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe the indicators and outcomes at your school that demonstrate the strategies being used are effective. You may want to include data from state or district assessments, graduation rate, surveys or other indicators. Support your response with at least the previous two years of data as evidence (include charts as necessary). If using data sources other than the Kentucky School Report Card, please submit those sources to KDE along with the completed application.
   1. Discuss student performance and academic growth at your school for the last two or more consecutive years
   2. Discuss your school’s progress in closing the achievement gap between student groups for two or more consecutive years. Which school practices contribute to this success? Where are there opportunities for improvement?
   3. Describe any student populations that have responded especially well to the strategies at your school (must be a student population in a program under the Every Student Succeeds Act as outlined on p. 1 of this document). Which student population(s) has been most positively impacted and what results have you seen in the data?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe how you provide sustained evidence-based professional learning for staff.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Explain how federal education funds are used to support the initiatives you have previously described, including the coordination of ESEA programs with other education programs.

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Assurances:

Our school has a poverty rate of at least 35% (as documented in GMAP) for the current and last school year.

Our school receives funds under at least one program in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

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Signature of school principal Date

(electronic signature is acceptable)

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Signature of district superintendent Date

(electronic signature is acceptable)

Please email the completed, signed application to [Tara Rodriguez](mailto:tara.rodriguez@education.ky.gov) by close of business on **Aug. 8.**