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 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 (e.g. homeless, migrant, English Learners, etc.)

## **Kentucky Department of Education process for selecting schools for the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program, Category 3**

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) reviews student performance data to identify Distinguished ESEA Schools in Category 1 and Category 2. Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, we will begin accepting applications for schools from Category 3. While a review of student performance data from 2019-20 will still be used to identify possible Distinguished ESEA Schools in Categories 1 and 2, an application process will be used to potentially select a school from Category 3. Since each ESEA can still only identify two schools per year (one per category), those schools could be identified in Category 1, 2, or 3.

For a school to qualify for the National ESEA Distinguished School award for Category 3, it must:

* Have a poverty rate of at least 35% for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 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 (which may include high academic growth) for two or more consecutive years;
* Meet or exceed state-determined accountability criteria based on two or more consecutive years of achievement data;
* Demonstrate excellence in serving special populations of students (e.g. homeless, migrant, English Learners, etc.);
* Submit a completed application signed by the school principal and district superintendent by the deadline of **Sept. 17, 2021**; and
* Agree to a site visit and interview of the principal and selected staff by KDE if the school is identified as a finalist.

After completing site visits for finalists, KDE will decide if a school from Category 3 will be selected that year and if so, will make the final selection. Two National ESEA Distinguished Schools (one from Category 1, 2 and/or 3) will be notified by email of their selection in November.

# Application for National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program, Category 3

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.

Population of students nominated for Category 3 recognition (must be a student population in a program under the Every Student Succeeds Act) to include the following. Please check only one:

Students experiencing homelessness

English Learners

Migrant students

Neglected and delinquent students

Students in foster care

Students from low-income families

Other (please specify): 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?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Which special population of students does your school demonstrate excellence in serving? Describe the demographics of this population at your school. Include any connections to the community or relevant events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as applicable.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe the needs of this student population. How did your school determine these needs?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe the services and strategies the school staff uses to meet the needs of this population. Also address each of the following in your response:
   1. Teaching and learning based on the approved state curriculum
   2. Use of evidence-based instructional strategies
   3. Opportunities provided for each student to succeed
   4. Established partnerships with parents, families, and communities

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe how you provide sustained research-based professional learning for staff who work with this population of students.

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.

1. Describe the indicators and outcomes at your school that demonstrate the strategies your school uses are effective. You may want to include data from assessments, graduation rate, surveys, or other indicators that show excellence in serving this group of students. Please address the closing of achievement gaps in your response.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Please include any other information that you would like us to know about your school (optional).

Click or tap here to enter text.

Assurances:

Our school has a poverty rate of at least 35% (as documented in GMAP) for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.

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

Signature of school principal (electronic signature is acceptable):

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of district superintendent (electronic signature is acceptable):

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please email the completed, signed application to [Tonia Hickman](mailto:tonia.hickman@education.ky.gov).

The signed, completed application is due by close of business on **Sept. 17, 2021.**

*(tr)*