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Sent time: Friday, February 10, 2012 3:37:21 PM
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Subject: ESEA Waiver Summaries
Attachments: tn.pdf fl.pdf in.pdf nj.pdf ok.pdf

ED released several documents related to yesterday's waiver announcement. One was a summary of the improvements made from the initial submission to approval. Attached are those for the CFC states.

--John

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY TENNESSEE TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, Tennessee made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Tennessee provided additional evidence to show that English Learners have access to the full range and depth of coursework provided in Tennessee schools and that the State will use assessment accommodations so that English Learners can effectively demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

- Tennessee addressed concern about potentially allowing districts and schools to adopt lower performance targets than those set by the State by (1) indicating that a similar goal-setting process had worked well under its Race to the Top plan; (2) explaining that lower targets could be set only for a compelling reason, must be high enough to allow the State to meet its targets, and would be subject to State approval; and (3) agreeing to report all district and school targets to the Department, which will allow for Department review to ensure that targets are ambitious but achievable.
- Tennessee made several significant changes to ensure meaningful subgroup accountability, including (1) requiring aggressive corrective action for any district or school in which an individual subgroup does not make progress on a majority of measures; (2) demonstrating that its gap closure targets are rigorous (based on data from the 2010–2011 school year, 105 of 135 districts would be identified); (3) adding graduation rate targets for subgroups; and (4) committing to raise over time the performance threshold that triggers focus school identification based on the low performance of a single subgroup (in addition to continuing to identify schools with the largest achievement gaps).
- Tennessee provided an assurance that the priority school interventions would be aligned with the turnaround principles and implemented for a minimum of three years.
- Tennessee provided an assurance that it would implement required focus school interventions by the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year and modified its focus school exit criteria to clarify that a school may not exit focus status if it fails to make progress in the achievement of the subgroup or subgroups of students which led to its initial identification.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- Tennessee described how the performance of English Learners and students with disabilities counts in its teacher evaluation system by (1) highlighting the measures used to evaluate teacher performance; (2) describing how teachers consider students' unique learning needs and adjust instruction to meet those needs; and (3) emphasizing that the State was continuing to assess and strengthen requirements in this area.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY FLORIDA TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, Florida made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles for ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

- Florida committed to revising its inclusion policies for students with disabilities and English Learners so that these students are fully included in all elements of Florida’s A through F grading system. As a result of this change, schools will be held accountable for ensuring that all students with disabilities and all English Learners reach college- and career-ready standards.
- Florida strengthened how it holds high schools accountable for graduation rates. Interventions are required in schools with low graduation rates even if they are A, B, or C schools. Regional teams across the State will monitor these schools to ensure that each plan addresses graduation rate. Florida also provided data to demonstrate that A and B schools generally have higher graduation rates than C, D, or F schools.
- Florida provided additional protections for subgroup performance in schools not identified as focus or priority. Any school not already receiving interventions that has one or more ESEA subgroups that miss student performance targets for two years in a row, or that has achievement gaps significantly greater than D schools, will receive direct support from the State’s regional teams through such activities as coaching, feedback on instruction, alignment of resources, and progress monitoring to ensure adequate improvement. Florida is further investing in the teachers and principals in these schools by providing training that focuses on the implementation of and support for research-based best practices.
- Florida intensified supports to schools targeted for interventions. For example, all priority schools will implement one of the four School Improvement Grant models or a “hybrid model” that is at least as rigorous as these models for at least three years, regardless of whether a school earns a higher grade. The State will also provide continued monitoring and support for schools that improve to help them sustain their progress.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- Florida provided information on its plans to develop and implement principal evaluation and support systems. Specifically, the State will continue to strengthen its Principal Leadership Standards to ensure that principal evaluation and support systems across the State reflect current research in this area and include student performance components.

- Florida described how it will use the results of the first year of district implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems for continuous improvement. Further, the State will expand options for system components over time, including measures of student growth in non-tested grades and subjects.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY INDIANA TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, Indiana made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Indiana demonstrated the outreach it has already conducted and that it will conduct regarding its college- and career-ready standards. For example, Indiana described its Learning Connection portal, which hosts communities of practitioners and through which practitioners can access resources and discuss salient topics in weekly forums.
- Indiana described the steps it is taking to ensure that English Learners and students with disabilities will be able to achieve college- and career-ready standards and fully participate in aligned assessments. Technical assistance centers in the State that specialize in students with disabilities and English learners will support this effort.
- Indiana clarified that, as a governing member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium, the State will fully implement college- and career-ready standards and will administer assessments aligned to those standards in accordance with the timeline required by ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

- The State has two combined subgroups: the “top 75 percent” and the “bottom 25 percent.” Indiana clarified that its combined subgroups will be incorporated into its accountability system and will not replace traditional ESEA subgroups.
- Indiana has established annual achievement targets for each ESEA subgroup, the two combined subgroups, and the “all students” group. Annually, each school will be evaluated based on whether each of these groups meets its targets in reading/language arts and mathematics, separately, and for high schools, whether each group meets its targets for college- and career-readiness and graduation rates.
- Indiana will require all schools to implement interventions focused on any ESEA subgroup that fails to meet any of its targets, even if the subgroup that fails to meet its targets does not meet the minimum subgroup size of 30 students. These interventions will scale up over time and include modifying a school improvement plan to include strategies focused on improving subgroup performance and having that plan approved by the State, notifying

parents regarding the subgroup's performance, technical assistance focused on the school's needs, and increased monitoring if subgroup performance continues to lag.

- Indiana clarified that every priority school must implement interventions aligned with all of the turnaround principles beginning in the 2012–2013 school year. Indiana also modified its exit criteria to clarify that a school cannot exit priority status if it is able to raise its grade only because of the performance of the top 75 percent subgroup.
- Indiana clarified that each focus school must implement interventions aligned with the turnaround principles most relevant to the school's identification. Indiana also changed its exit criteria to clarify that a school cannot exit focus status unless it raises the achievement of the subgroup that caused the school to be identified.
- Indiana has demonstrated that, by identifying reward, priority, and focus schools based on the State's grading system, it has identified schools that meet the ESEA flexibility definitions of those schools.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- Indiana has redesigned its Title II, Part A application to leverage these Federal funds and align that program with its goals for supporting teachers to improve their instructional practice.
- Indiana will update guidance materials based on what it learns through a pilot of its evaluation system as it transitions to statewide implementation of evaluation systems that meet the State's guidelines.
- Indiana explained that its support of districts in their implementation of the required teacher and principal evaluation and support systems includes leveraging the Teacher Incentive Fund grant, training teacher preparation programs on RISE, the State's evaluation model, and partnering with Regional Educational Service Centers to deliver training on RISE and build capacity statewide.
- Indiana clarified how it will include all teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities and teachers of English Learners, in the evaluation systems.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY NEW JERSEY TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, New Jersey made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- New Jersey provided additional information on professional development sessions that will occur over the coming year to help teachers transition to college- and career-ready standards, including sessions that include content focused on the needs of English Learners and students with disabilities.
- New Jersey elaborated on its plans to collaborate with institutions of higher education to review the rigor of current end-of-course high school assessments to determine the college-readiness of students who pass those assessments.
- New Jersey provided additional information about the adoption of its college- and career-ready- and Universal Design for Learning-aligned model curriculum, which will include strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English Learners, and low-achieving students.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

- New Jersey provided additional detail about its proposed accountability system and performance reports that include clear reporting about whether schools meet performance targets.
- New Jersey clarified that all priority schools will begin implementing interventions aligned to all the turnaround principles in the 2012–2013 school year.
- New Jersey provided examples of interventions for focus schools, including those that target the needs of English Learners and students with disabilities, and clarified that all focus schools will begin implementing interventions in 2012–2013 school year.
- New Jersey will identify schools with a low-performing subgroup that is not meeting performance targets over a number of years. These schools must have an improvement plan approved by the Regional Achievement Director and would receive technical assistance to address the subgroup’s needs.

- New Jersey strengthened its exit criteria for priority and focus schools to reflect improvement in overall student achievement for priority schools and improvement in subgroup achievement for focus schools.
- New Jersey provided additional detail on its Quality School Review process and the role played by the Regional Achievement Centers. These centers will support the State's capacity to provide technical assistance by targeting their efforts primarily on priority and focus schools.
- New Jersey will report graduation rates by diploma recipients and high school exit exam for each subgroup.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- New Jersey will develop guidelines for teacher and principal evaluations based on lessons learned from its current pilot and regular meetings with educators, parents, and national experts. Implementation of this system begins in the fall of 2012.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY OKLAHOMA TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, Oklahoma made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Oklahoma detailed its plans to develop a new State Longitudinal Data System that will better track how all students are performing over time and will provide timely student-level data to educators to use to support student learning, and will connect more strongly multiple data systems across P-20 education.
- Oklahoma explained its plans to prepare educators so that they will be ready to implement new college- and career-ready standards. Oklahoma's priorities for professional development include hiring coaches; providing curriculum-mapping software; collaborating among higher-education faculty and PreK-12 educators; and collaborating among Career and Technical educators, PreK-12 educators, and business representatives. The Oklahoma Association of Colleges of Teacher Education is involved with these efforts.
- Oklahoma described in more detail its plans to ensure that students with disabilities and English Learners have access to rigorous content aligned with college- and career-ready standards. For example, all students with disabilities, including those students who take alternate assessments, are a focus of the transition plan to college- and career-ready standards and the aligned assessments. Oklahoma will require each priority, focus, and targeted intervention school to develop a Language Instruction Educational Plan for each English Learner and provide professional development for all educators on improving outcomes for English Learners.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

- Oklahoma clarified that measuring student growth in reading and mathematics includes the performance results for all students and for students with disabilities.
- Oklahoma detailed the timeline for the development and approval of its A-F school grading system by spring 2012. The State also demonstrated how it will identify reward, priority, focus, and targeted intervention schools and included an interim plan for identifying and intervening in these schools if final approval of its school grading system is delayed.
- Oklahoma indicated that graduation rate will comprise a significant amount of the 33 percent of its A-F school grading system attributed to measures other than test scores and that its system

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will recognize schools for recovering dropouts and for graduating students who take more than four years.

- Oklahoma streamlined the use of performance data by setting the expectation that to meet targets for reading and mathematics, the required scores and the minimum 95 percent participation rate for each assessment must be met.
- Oklahoma described the criteria it will use to determine the capacity of districts with priority schools to turn around those schools or turn over the operation of the schools to the State.
- Oklahoma clarified how it identifies focus schools based on the lowest-achieving three subgroups in the State and demonstrated that more schools are identified through this methodology than would be identified based on individual subgroups with a minimum “n” greater than 25.
- Oklahoma has differentiated specific interventions and supports for all schools in the bottom 25 percent of the State in student achievement, in addition to those identified as priority or focus schools.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- Oklahoma provided more detail on its plan for developing and adopting guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year.
- Oklahoma included a number of recommendations made by the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System Commission that will inform the substance of Oklahoma’s teacher and leader evaluation guidelines.
- Oklahoma included a tentative timeline for training educators and piloting its teacher and leader evaluation system during the 2012–2013 school year and its process for reviewing information from the pilot in order to make recommendations regarding any needed changes to the State Board of Education by July 2013.