District of Columbia
FINAL SUBMISSION
February 28, 2012

# ESEA FLEXIBILITY WAIVER APPLICATION

Office of the
State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

Office of the
State Superintendent of Education

**From:** Hosanna Mahaley, State Superintendent

**Date:** 2/28/12

**Re:** ESEA Flexibility Application, U.S. Department of Education

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Dear Stakeholders,

Today is a monumental step toward creating an inclusive view of what successful student growth in the District of Columbia can look like, and as State Superintendent, I am pleased to present the District of Columbia's federal waiver application to the U.S. Department of Education for flexibility regarding the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Over the course of several months, OSSE leadership has worked collaboratively with numerous area stakeholders and held over 50 in-person and online public engagement events to submit the strongest possible application, including focus groups with parents, teachers and administrators, meetings with District community coalitions and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and planning sessions with groups including the State Board of Education, D.C. Public Schools, neighborhood associations and the Public Charter School Board.

We have developed a waiver application that is meaningful, comprehensive and progressive in moving education forward in the District of Columbia and believe our flexibility request reflects both student needs and the actual progress taking place in schools throughout our city.

Thank you all for your support and continued commitment to education in the District of Columbia; we look forward to your feedback.

Sincerely,

Hosanna Mahaley

Hosanna Mahaley, State Superintendent of Education

810 First Street, NE, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20002
Phone: 202.727.6436 Fax: 202.727.2019 www.osse.dc.gov

# ESEA Flexibility

## Request

Revised September 28, 2011
This document replaces the previous version, issued September 23, 2011.
(The document was formatted to ease usability on October 14, 2011)

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

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Expiration Date: March 31, 2012

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0708. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 336 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

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# INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is offering each State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant State and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The Department invites interested SEAs to request this flexibility pursuant to the authority in section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which allows the Secretary to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA and requests a waiver. Under this flexibility, the Department would grant waivers through the 2013–2014 school year, after which time an SEA may request an extension of this flexibility.

## REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The Department will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate SEA requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

An SEA seeking approval to implement this flexibility must submit a high-quality request that addresses all aspects of the principles and waivers and, in each place where a plan is required, includes a high-quality plan. Consistent with ESEA section 9401(d)(1), the Secretary intends to grant waivers that are included in this flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. An SEA will be permitted to request an extension of the initial period of this flexibility prior to the start of the 2014–2015 school year unless this flexibility is superseded by reauthorization of the ESEA. The Department is asking SEAs to submit requests that include plans through the 2014–2015 school year in order to provide a complete picture of the SEA's reform efforts. The Department will not accept a request that meets only some of the principles of this flexibility.

High-Quality Request: A high-quality request for this flexibility is one that is comprehensive and coherent in its approach, and that clearly indicates how this flexibility will help an SEA and its LEAs improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

A high-quality request will (1) if an SEA has already met a principle, provide a description of how it has done so, including evidence as required; and (2) if an SEA has not yet met a principle, describe how it will meet the principle on the required timelines, including any progress to date. For example, an SEA that has not adopted minimum guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with principle 3 by the time it submits its request for the flexibility will need to provide a plan demonstrating that it will do so by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. In each such case, an SEA's plan must include, at a minimum, the following elements for each principle that the SEA has not yet met:

1. Key milestones and activities: Significant milestones to be achieved in order to meet a given principle, and essential activities to be accomplished in order to reach the key milestones. The SEA should also include any essential activities that have already been completed or key milestones that have already been reached so that reviewers can understand the context for and fully evaluate the SEA's plan to meet a given principle.

2. Detailed timeline: A specific schedule setting forth the dates on which key activities will begin and be completed and milestones will be achieved so that the SEA can meet the principle by the required date.

3. Party or parties responsible: Identification of the SEA staff (*e.g.*, position, title, or office) and, as appropriate, others who will be responsible for ensuring that each key activity is accomplished.

4. Evidence: Where required, documentation to support the plan and demonstrate the SEA's progress in implementing the plan. This *ESEA Flexibility Request* indicates the specific evidence that the SEA must either include in its request or provide at a future reporting date.

5. Resources: Resources necessary to complete the key activities, including staff time and additional funding.

6. Significant obstacles: Any major obstacles that may hinder completion of key milestones and activities (*e.g.,* State laws that need to be changed) and a plan to overcome them.

Included on page 19 of this document is an example of a format for a table that an SEA may use to submit a plan that is required for any principle of this flexibility that the SEA has not already met. An SEA that elects to use this format may also supplement the table with text that provides an overview of the plan.

An SEA should keep in mind the required timelines for meeting each principle and develop credible plans that allow for completion of the activities necessary to meet each principle. Although the plan for each principle will reflect that particular principle, as discussed above, an SEA should look across all plans to make sure that it puts forward a comprehensive and coherent request for this flexibility.

Preparing the Request: To prepare a high-quality request, it is extremely important that an SEA refer to all of the provided resources, including the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, which includes the principles, definitions, and timelines; the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, which includes the criteria that will be used by the peer reviewers to determine if the request meets the principles of this flexibility; and the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions,* which provides additional guidance for SEAs in preparing their requests.

As used in this request form, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Each request must include:

- A table of contents and a list of attachments, using the forms on pages 1 and 2.
- The cover sheet (p. 3), waivers requested (p. 4-5), and assurances (p. 5-6).
- A description of how the SEA has met the consultation requirements (p. 8).
- An overview of the SEA's request for the ESEA flexibility (p. 8). This overview is a synopsis of the SEA's vision of a comprehensive and coherent system to improve student achievement and the quality of instruction and will orient the peer reviewers to the SEA's request. The overview should be about 500 words.
- Evidence and plans to meet the principles (p. 9-18). An SEA will enter narrative text in the text boxes provided, complete the required tables, and provide other required evidence. An SEA may supplement the narrative text in a text box with attachments, which will be included in an appendix. Any supplemental attachments that are included in an appendix must be referenced in the related narrative text.

Requests should not include personally identifiable information.

Process for Submitting the Request: An SEA must submit a request to the Department to receive the flexibility. This request form and other pertinent documents are available on the Department's Web site at: http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

> *Electronic Submission*: The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's request for the flexibility electronically. The SEA should submit it to the following address: ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

*Paper Submission*: In the alternative, an SEA may submit the original and two copies of its request for the flexibility to the following address:

Patricia McKee, Acting Director
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in processing mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

## REQUEST SUBMISSION DEADLINE

SEAs will be provided multiple opportunities to submit requests for the flexibility. The submission dates are November 14, 2011, a date to be announced in mid-February 2012, and an additional opportunity following the conclusion of the 2011–2012 school year.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING FOR SEAS

To assist SEAs in preparing a request and to respond to questions, the Department will host a series of Technical Assistance Meetings via webinars in September and October 2011.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact the Department by e-mail at ESEAflexibility@ed.gov.

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Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA's flexibility request.


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# COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

| Legal Name of Requester: Office of the State Superintendent of Education | Requester's Mailing Address: 810 First Street NE, 5th Floor Washington, DC 20002 |
|---|---|
| State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request<br><br>Name: Dr. Kayleen Irizarry<br><br>Position and Office: Assistant Superintendent, Elementary and Secondary Education<br><br>Contact's Mailing Address:<br>810 First Street NE, 5th Floor<br>Washington, DC 20002<br><br>Telephone: (202) 741-0258<br><br>Fax: (202) 741-0227<br><br>Email address: kayleen.irizarry@dc.gov | |
| Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Hosanna Mahaley | Telephone: (202) 727-3471 |
| Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X Hosanna Mahaley | Date: 2-27-12 |
| The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility. | |

## WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☐ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its

LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools.

*Optional Flexibility:*

An SEA should check the box below only if it chooses to request a waiver of the following requirements:

☐ The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

## ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools. (Principle 2)

☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.

**If the SEA selects Option A or B in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:**

☒ 14. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

## CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

In recent years, the District of Columbia (DC) has been hailed as a leader in many areas of school reform, including educator recruitment, retention, evaluation, and training; robust charter school options, innovation, and collaboration; and universal preschool. The District of Columbia has both the experience and political will to achieve exceptional outcomes. Our strong reform agenda is backed by aligned leadership and support at all levels. The list of factors that position the District of Columbia for success is extensive and includes a vibrant charter-school sector that currently educates 41 percent of publicly educated pupils, a head start on transforming the traditional school system under mayoral control, improved state-level capacity, a supportive network of leading local and national partners, and District-wide interest and urgency around the work that remains to be done.

While we have made much progress, significant challenges remain. Despite the renewed focus on raising achievement, many of our schools and students still struggle. Statewide, only 45 percent of our students are proficient in reading and 47 percent in math, with stubbornly persistent performance gaps between subgroups. For students with special needs, only 16 percent are meeting proficiency and 19 percent in math. English language learners (ELLs) perform slightly better, with 25 percent meeting proficiency levels in reading and 36 percent in math. With the District of Columbia's 2011 proficiency targets set between 70 and 74 percent, only 25 of 187 schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks in both reading and math last year, many because of the "safe harbor" provision that gives credit to schools able to reduce by 10 percent the number of students not meeting proficiency targets. Based on the graduation cohort calculation, which the District of Columbia will employ for the first time this year, we expect a graduation rate of about 51 percent of students graduating within 4 years.

In addressing these challenges, it helps to understand the District of Columbia's unique context. Its 68 square miles of land contain 54 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) – one large, traditional district, D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), and 53 independently operated charter LEAs. Together, these 54 school districts educate 77,000 students mostly from low-income families of color. In 2011, the District of Columbia led the nation in postsecondary participation, with 71%

of 17-24 year-old young adults either residing in or relocating to the district having a college degree or enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Yet, many are not graduates of the DC elementary and secondary education sector. Furthermore, the District of Columbia has a stratified education gap in residents wherein income and educational attainment differs between the upper Northwest and most of the city east of Rock Creek Park.

For decades, DCPS served as both the state and local education agency. In 2007, the Public Education Reform Act (PERA) created the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) to provide leadership in policy for all schools and act as the State Education Agency (SEA) for the District of Columbia. The same law established a State Board of Education, with advisory, approval, and public-engagement mandates. As OSSE continues to provide statewide support, we are committed to ensuring that all students in the capital of the world's most powerful nation have a fair shot at the American dream.

Pursuing ESEA Flexibility is the right approach for improving education in the District of Columbia. Our proposal seeks to reduce by half the number of students who do not meet proficiency within six years. At a minimum, we expect our students to reach proficiency at a rate of 72.5 percent in reading, and 73.5 percent in math, by 2017. Likewise, we expect the graduation rate to increase to 70 percent for students graduating within four years and to 90 percent for students graduating within six years by 2017.

Flexibility will give us the opportunity to boost proficiency, narrow or close achievement gaps, reward successful schools, and support LEAs and schools to enable sustained and sustainable improvement. Toward that end, OSSE plans to build upon the substantial work already undertaken as part of the Race to the Top grant, PARCC consortium leadership, and School Improvement Grant turnaround efforts. Beginning in school year 2012/13, the District of Columbia's new accountability framework will include composition. Science will be added in SY 2013/14.

OSSE will continue to help LEAs and schools transition to the Common Core State Standards; provide differentiated rewards, interventions, and supports by implementing a new accountability index that measures proficiency and growth; and assist LEAs in developing and implementing improved teacher and leader evaluation systems. The waivers from certain ESEA provisions will free up resources - both time and funds - so that school communities can craft interventions and programs tailored to meet their students' unique needs as well as help parents make more informed school choices. OSSE is committed to establishing annual benchmarks and monitoring LEA and school progress toward them.

Developing a high quality, comprehensive ESEA Flexibility application and ensuring its

successful implementation necessitated an aggressive public-engagement campaign to solicit community and stakeholder input. OSSE conducted extensive outreach for several months to meaningfully engage a critical and diverse group of education stakeholders. They ranged from classroom and special education teachers, to parents, students, administrators, nonprofit partners, political and business leaders, early childhood educators, and residents. In addition to hosting focus groups, OSSE worked in partnership with the State Board of Education to hold dozens of community meetings throughout the District of Columbia's eight Wards.

All told, more than 600 individuals participated in over 55 public events. OSSE also solicited public input via a variety of media and provided opportunities for stakeholders to readily access information about the District's ESEA Flexibility proposal. Most crucially, stakeholders had multiple ways to convey comments or concerns, whether electronically, by mail, or in person at community forums and the State Board of Education's public meetings, which are televised and rebroadcast throughout the month. These multiple opportunities generated more than 700 public comments that strengthened our waiver proposal.

The outreach plan centered on a commitment to keeping the District's public-education community informed of, and involved in, consideration and development of the ESEA Flexibility application to ensure it addressed the needs and concerns of the District's stakeholders. A parallel goal of OSSE's outreach and consultation efforts was to create and fortify partnerships with individuals and groups who will implement, support, develop, or be affected by the educational strategies identified in this application.

OSSE's extensive stakeholder engagement not only helped shape the draft application made available for public comment, it resulted in several changes to the final application for submission. While early group discussions provided information about commonly held concerns and perceptions, the public comment period centered on specific strategies proposed in the draft that demanded greater detail and clarity. In developing the final application, OSSE staff drew on this input to ensure that the District' education plan identified strategies that address issues or problems brought forward by the community, such as how schools will be held accountable for educating all students and not given a "pass" to lower expectations for, or ignore, certain populations. The final application was crafted to improve students' achievement, increase graduation rates, close achievement gaps, and develop globally competitive citizens who are prepared for college and career success while creating a more robust accountability system that strengthens parental engagement and preserves autonomy and flexibility for LEAs and schools.

**Engagement with Teachers, Principals, and Union Leaders**

As noted above, the District of Columbia operates in an education landscape that includes one large Local Education Agency (LEA), D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), and multiple public charter LEAs that are responsible for the oversight of teachers and school administrators. To ensure that District public school teachers and their representatives were partners in the development of the ESEA Flexibility application, OSSE facilitated open forums, extended office hours, and provided online opportunities for teachers to participate in the development of the ESEA Flexibility application. OSSE met with representatives of the Washington Teachers Union (WTU) and the Council of School Officers, which is the association for DCPS principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders. Additionally, teacher-centered focus groups were held to ensure that the waiver application addressed the needs and concerns of District of Columbia educators. Teachers also participated in several of the focus groups detailed in the community engagement efforts included in this application. The outcome of these teacher-centered outreach efforts is summarized below.

Teachers expressed general consensus for reforms such as 1) revised school-level performance targets; 2) performance targets that cut the gap in non-proficiency by 50 percent over the next six years; and 3) the implementation of a school rating system that considers multiple measures.

Some participants felt annual measurable objectives (AMOs) should extend beyond the core subjects of mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) in order to ensure that our public schools produce global citizens who are as academically accomplished and competitive as their peers around the world. Teacher retention and parental involvement were identified as critical components of school climate that should be included in a rating system. Participants also emphasized the importance of implementing evaluations based on assessments that are aligned to schools' curricula and that incorporate such critical barriers to success as chronic truancy.

Some teachers suggested phasing in assessments as PARCC objectives are achieved. Others expressed concerns that growth measures may not capture improvement for students whose performance falls several grades below actual grade level, and that untested grades and subjects present special challenges in teacher evaluation. Options such as end-of-year tests, a portfolio of several assessments, and external assessments (for example ACT or SAT for high school) were discussed as measurements that could inform student performance and teacher evaluations.

Overall, there was clear support for multiple measures of teacher effectiveness and for reporting that will equip the community to recognize, reward, and learn from effective schools and teachers. Teachers encouraged the adoption of strategies that would not prove to be overly burdensome on LEAs, such as the adoption of pre-existing assessments and existing data sets. Teachers also expressed a desire for increased flexibility overall and cautioned against introducing unintentional rigidity by limiting the means of measuring student performance. It was suggested that growth measures be very lightly weighted in teacher evaluations, given that assessments for non-tested grades are of a different nature. Teacher union representatives suggested that assistant principals and possibly lead teachers be included in the teacher and leader evaluation requirements as crucial members of the leadership team.

Participants cautioned against holding schools and staff to the same goals without providing equitable support. Further discussion centered on concerns that accountability systems tend to be implemented and then removed once significant improvement is documented despite the need for supports to sustain and grow academic achievement.

Though supportive of reasonable and achievable objectives differentiated by school, participants expressed concern about having sufficient time to demonstrate progress prior to having to implement prescriptive measures or being labeled as low-performing. For example, secondary teachers were concerned about being held accountable for incoming grades after approximately seven months of instruction. Similar concern also was expressed by rapidly growing charter schools; educators worried about the appropriateness of using assessment data for newly-arrived students to evaluate teacher or school effectiveness.

Throughout the development of the ESEA Flexibility proposal, OSSE also chaired multiple meetings with DCPS, the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB), the sole charter-school authorizer, and charter school administrators. Administrators expressed concern about which indicators were to be included in the new accountability system, particularly the inclusion of current science and composition assessments, and the supports and interventions to be provided. While amenable to increased accountability, charter school administrators cited the preservation of flexibility to implement innovative programs and strategies—an authority granted under local charter school rules—as critical. Participants also were concerned about the addition of indicators that would impose added data collection and reporting burdens on LEAs and schools without providing meaningful information to education stakeholders. These concerns are addressed in detail throughout this document.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

In addition to inviting public comment via the state agency's website and at community meetings, OSSE ensured that select stakeholders affected by the District of Columbia's education program had opportunities to participate in smaller focus groups to discuss their unique needs and perspectives. The SEA worked to identify and leverage existing opportunities to obtain input, including consulting with existing advisory groups. Participants included experts and/or advocates representing specific Wards (geographical regions) and groups, including homeless families, charter schools, delinquent students, youth leadership, faith and community-based organizations, parents, students, teachers, LEA administrators, institutes of higher learning, special education experts, local businesses, community liaisons, private schools, English language learners, and elected representatives.

While initial efforts to seek input for the ESEA Flexibility application from the larger community focused on town hall meetings, the SEA strategy was subsequently revised to ensure that appropriate forums and media were utilized for each critical stakeholder group to ensure maximum outreach and stakeholder participation. Some neighborhoods, for example rely on flyers to get word out about a public forum; others use E-mail alerts. To eliminate geographical, economical or temporal barriers to participation, focus groups and forums were held in a variety of settings across the District of Columbia, including during evening PTA meetings at schools and in neighborhood association meetings. This community-based approach resulted in transparent public forums in local settings that captured the ideas and concerns of hundreds of stakeholders who otherwise might not have had an opportunity to participate.

Information regarding the ESEA Flexibility application also was made available to the public through a number of media outlets, including the OSSE website (accessed by more than 700 unique users), press releases, Facebook and other social networking sites (600+ tweets on Twitter), E-mail blasts, blogging, print media, public service announcements on the District of Columbia's public access channel, and extended open house and office hours at OSSE. SEA newsletters published to address the ESEA Flexibility option were widely distributed to more than 2,200 recipients. Stakeholders could participate by phone, through written or electronic mail, by webinar, by teleconference, and/or during in-person meetings. More than 55 meetings, town halls, and focus groups were held with stakeholders to discuss reforms related to the ESEA Flexibility request. An open comment period on the resulting draft application began January 18th through February 14, 2012. In addition, OSSE provided further transparency by briefing the State Board at its televised monthly public meeting on both the initial draft

proposal and revisions suggested from these public feedback sessions.

The strategy of holding focus groups representing unique stakeholder communities produced critical feedback. Participants received an overview of the ESEA Flexibility option and were advised that focus group results would be used to inform the application process. To facilitate and guide discussion, SEA facilitators asked open-ended questions that became increasingly specific. Participants were encouraged to share opinions, concerns, priorities, and perspectives relevant to the group, and to the four principles of ESEA Flexibility. Discussions addressed how proposed reforms will change the future of public education in the District of Columbia. Finally, participants were told how they could provide further input via E-mail, phone, or in person.

Our outreach efforts resulted in significant, meaningful input from a diverse group of education stakeholders from across the District of Columbia. In the course of developing this application, OSSE worked collaboratively with elected bodies, including the State Board of Education, the Council of the District of Columbia, and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions to solicit and encourage public input. Efforts to engage stakeholders and garner robust discussion regarding the proposed plan continued until February 22, 2012. A summary of the critical of feedback received from District of Columbia education stakeholders is described below.

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

Stakeholders supported this outcomes-based principle across groups and emphasized the importance of including these expectations at the elementary level. The need for reporting, resources, and supports to address the dropout problem, attendance, and college preparation from preschool through graduation was expressed by several stakeholders, who also expressed a desire for data that provide information regarding the extent to which students will be nationally and internationally competitive. Parents encouraged the SEA to empower parents by providing teaching and training from pre-kindergarten through graduation. Several stakeholders stressed the importance of a well-rounded education that includes universal music education, before- and after-school services in high-need schools, equitable opportunities (i.e. gifted and talented programs) in all Wards, and greater emphasis on physical education. There was concern, too, about the lack of support and resources for high quality science education.

Participants also called for more opportunities for internships for all students in all geographic sections of the city to be inclusive of special education students. Some suggested that the current system of awarding Carnegie units as a graduation requirement be replaced by a competency-based concept of college- and career-readiness that would allow for alternate

pathways to college and career readiness.

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

Focus groups generally agreed that current AYP targets had become unreachable and were no longer meaningful. Informal polls of multiple groups revealed a strong preference for setting annual targets to reduce achievement gaps by 50 percent within six years, with special provisions for students with special needs or who are English language learners. Participants advocated the development and implementation of accountability measures that reflect inequities related to unique challenges, school-level funding, school supports, and other resources at each public school.

Differentiated Recognition and Accountability: Groups generally agreed that 1) a rating system with multiple indicators would provide more meaningful data; 2) the present accountability model does not accurately document school effectiveness; and 3) growth measures need to be incorporated into the accountability system. Stakeholders strongly encouraged leveraging existing reporting systems to create comparable information for parents and community stakeholders without placing undue reporting burdens on LEAs.

Growth Measures: Some participants felt growth measures were appropriate but that LEAs should be provided with flexibility in defining student growth, given that LEAs have unique assessments, and suggested that, where possible, OSSE could define and require LEAs to use standardized assessments. Conversely, several parents and community advocates asked that the accountability plan address the need to provide stakeholders with transparent, meaningful and *comparable* data for all LEAs.

Other Measures: Although some stakeholders preferred an accountability system that does not extend beyond federally-mandated elements, an equal number felt that items that reflect the capacity of District of Columbia students to be nationally and internationally competitive (e.g., writing, technology, etc.) should be included in the accountability plan. Most groups agreed on the importance of setting realistic, attainable goals, but many expressed strong concern that differentiated targets could be interpreted as an indication of student potential and could lower expectations for certain groups. Many participants were concerned about teacher retention and the impact on student achievement.

Parental Engagement: Parents and community advocates asked that the accountability plan clearly identify parent and community involvement as critical to the success of the new

education plan. There was a call to provide stakeholders with transparent, meaningful, and comparable data for all schools, including the amount of local funding directly provided to each school.

Support and Interventions: Parent and community representatives urged the inclusion of information regarding the distribution and availability of supports and resources for schools that would not be identified as priority or focus schools. Community advocates strongly expressed concern about how the District of Columbia could ensure that resources reached the neediest schools once federal funds were disbursed to LEAs. There were numerous calls to establish a common understanding that all schools must strive to meet Common Core State Standards while ensuring that the autonomy of charter schools was not impinged upon. The importance of developing strong school leaders was identified as critical, as was greater clarity regarding the role of OSSE in monitoring and enforcing the implementation of federal requirements at local schools. Parents called for clear statements about objectives, outcomes, and timelines. This information was seen as a catalyst for the empowerment of parents and as a critical component of partnerships between the SEA and the community.

**PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP**

Several groups felt that tremendous focus had been placed on hiring teachers with subject area expertise, while little attention had been given to the unique needs of a high poverty urban district and the skills that teachers need to succeed in these environments. Partnering with universities and LEAs to develop Bachelors of Education programs that prepare new teachers to succeed in high poverty urban environment was suggested as one way in which the District of Columbia could support effective instruction. (The University of the District of Columbia recently launched an urban teachers' residency program.) There was a call for better data on factors known to impact school effectiveness such as truancy and teacher retention. As noted above, the importance of developing strong leaders was also stated.

**PRINCIPLE 4: REDUCING DUPLICATION AND UNNECESSARY BURDEN**

In considering differentiated measures of accountability, stakeholders asked for diligence in ensuring that duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements that have little or no impact on student outcomes be avoided. Although most supported the inclusion of a growth measure, some stakeholders did not want to see new measures added to the system because of the implied burden on LEAs. Most groups felt strongly that the ESEA Flexibility proposal should leverage the two existing systems of performance (D.C, Public Schools' school scorecard and the Public Charter School Board's performance management framework) while working to

address parent calls for comparable data across the public school system. Additionally, as noted previously, there were concerns about developing measures of non-academic and the potential burden on LEAs to develop new data collection and reporting strategies. Stakeholders asked that the OSSE data system be used to reduce the administrative burden on LEAs in capturing information for students who did not complete the formal transfer process but have transferred to other District of Columbia, Maryland, or Virginia schools.

**Summary**

Efforts to develop a high quality and comprehensive waiver application and ensure successful implementation once approved by the U.S. Department of Education necessitated an aggressive community and stakeholder engagement strategy. Outreach efforts led to energetic and creative discussions regarding all four principles. In developing the final application, OSSE staff drew on this feedback to ensure that that the District of Columbia's education plan as articulated in this application includes strategies that are aligned to challenges identified by a wide array of stakeholders.

In general, parents and other community-based stakeholders expressed support for many of the proposed elements of the waiver application while stressing the importance of continuing and regular communication between OSSE and District of Columbia stakeholders. Several stakeholders requested clear statements about objectives, outcomes, timelines, responsible agencies and staff. Continuing communication and collaboration were seen as a precursor to establishing trust and partnership with stakeholders, who spoke of the struggle to maintain ties with a system that has been restructured more than once in a short period of time. There was a call for greater clarity regarding the role of OSSE in monitoring and enforcing the implementation of federal requirements at local schools.

Outreach efforts also re-affirmed or resulted in partnerships that will be nurtured beyond the submission of this application. This is in keeping with OSSE's vision of an educational system that recognizes the vital role of parents and community members as partners in achieving excellent outcomes for all students. The ESEA flexibility waiver plan represents a fresh opportunity for parents, students, teachers, schools, OSSE, LEAs, community and business groups, and other District stakeholders to work collaboratively to re-assess, redefine, and redress existing barriers. That information now will be used to ensure that all components of the District of Columbia's education system, including standards, assessments, and accountability, are aligned so that our public schools serve as pipelines for preparing internationally competitive college- and career- ready adults.

## EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☒ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

## OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and

2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

In 2001, the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was a watershed moment for education in the United States. For the first time, state education agencies were required to develop standards and assessments to measure student proficiency, enforce a system of accountability for schools, measure performance based on subgroups of students, identify underperforming schools, and implement prescribed interventions in those underperforming schools.

While the core tenants of NCLB are still relevant and important, the "one size fits all" approach needs revision. To meet the law's key requirement of having all students proficient in reading and math by 2014, the District of Columbia set proficiency targets between 70 percent and 74 percent in 2011. Only 25 of 187 schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks in both reading and math. Of those 25 schools, over half made AYP due to the safe harbor provision giving credit to schools that were able to reduce by 10 percent the number of students not meeting proficiency targets. Current NCLB accountability requirements do not acknowledge schools for making great strides in student growth "below the bar" or for demonstrating progress in other indicators that measure college and career readiness—and that admissions officers and employers value. Moreover, the prescribed interventions rarely resulted in significant improvement in student outcomes.

We respect and support the original intent of the federal law, and want to build upon it so that we can more effectively measure school success. As with NCLB, we expect 100 percent of our students will reach proficiency in the Common Core State Standards. In our proposed new accountability system, we now also expect that 100 percent of our students will show growth each year.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) believes that students come first and what matters most is what happens in the classroom. OSSE also believes that the teachers and school leaders are best qualified to affect student learning. By removing barriers to education and providing the necessary supports to maximize student learning, then school leaders and teachers who are best qualified to provide solutions can improve student outcomes. That is the fundamental premise behind this proposed action plan.

ESEA flexibility will revitalize our current accountability system and set higher standards and expectations for teaching and learning. The improved accountability system will be based on a diversified set of annual measurable objectives (AMOs) that will allow OSSE, LEAs, and other education partners to target rewards and supports based on academic achievement and needs. Flexibility in the use of federal funds will allow LEAs and schools to tailor programs and interventions, thus ensuring greater success in student outcomes and teacher and leader effectiveness. This improved accountability system will focus on creating incentives for continuous improvement and supporting LEAs and schools that need assistance.

Politically, the District of Columbia is unique. Its size, education governance, and reform structures enable aggressive change at the state level that is able to reach individual schools, classrooms, and students with great speed and impact. Roughly 77,000 students attend just over 200 schools, with 90 percent of enrollment represented by 30 of the 54 LEAs that have committed to participate in Race to the Top (RTTT).

The implementation and sustainability of the principles required in the ESEA Flexibility request are underway as part of RTTT. In June 2010, the District of Columbia adopted the Common Core State Standards. This year, the state assessment – the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System or DC CAS – will be aligned to the Common Core in English Language Arts, with the math assessment being aligned for the 2013 test administration. OSSE also is providing RTTT funding to D.C. Public Schools in its school turnaround work, applying one of four turnaround models to the persistently lowest-achieving 5 percent of schools as well as the broader lowest-achieving 20 percent of schools. OSSE plans to increase capacity and provide additional support to the lowest-achieving 20 percent of schools through a newly

formed Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Also this year, teacher and leader evaluation systems will be implemented in RTTT participating LEAs. To achieve this outcome, OSSE worked in partnership with various task forces consisting of LEA representatives and 1) established requirements for teacher and leader evaluation systems for LEAs participating in Race to the Top; 2) adopted a teacher value-added model to identify levels of teacher effectiveness; and 3) developed an innovative statewide growth model that is currently being used by both charter and traditional public schools to compare schools' ability to improve student performance.

To increase the quality of instruction and improve student achievement, OSSE will focus this upcoming year on providing support, training, and technical assistance around job-embedded professional development and exemplars of best practice as well as aligning state assessments and teacher/leader evaluation systems with the Common Core standards. This work will be carried out by the Department of Special Education Training and Technical Assistance unit within the Division of Special Education in coordination with the Department of Standards, Assessment and Accountability which is part of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

We believe that pursuing ESEA flexibility is the right approach for education in the District of Columbia. Flexibility will provide the opportunity to increase proficiency, close achievement gaps, reward schools, and support LEAs and schools to assure continuous improvement and improved student outcomes. The waiver of certain ESEA provisions will free up both time and money so that school communities can focus on their unique needs and provide information to help parents make better school choices.

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

## 1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

| Option A | Option B |
|---|---|
| ☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a | ☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been |

| | |
|---|---|
| significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.<br><br>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4) | approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.<br><br>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)<br><br>ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5) |

## 1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is in a unique position to use the Common Core State Standards to launch the next level of reform for all students in the District of Columbia, both in our traditional public schools and those served by public charter schools. The District of Columbia has 54 local education agencies (LEAs), one being a traditional public school system under mayoral control and 53 charter LEAs that operate independently of D.C. Public Schools and each other. This governance structure and the charter LEAs autonomy create an opportunity for the District of Columbia to serve as a model of school choice while maintaining the quality and rigor of instruction that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) demand.

OSSE's ultimate goal for the adoption of the Common Core State Standards is a District-wide understanding on a deep, internalized, and instructional level that benefits all learners by preparing them to succeed in college and careers. This aligns with our belief that students come first and what matters most is what is happening in the classroom. OSSE has the great opportunity to have a positive, direct impact on all teachers through state level support and

professional development. Also, the District of Columbia's small size allows us to comprehensively implement the standards sooner than most states and begin the alignment of our statewide assessment to the CCSS.

Already, District of Columbia students have reaped benefits from our commitment to CCSS implementation. By removing barriers and providing the necessary supports to teachers, including holding information and professional development sessions for instructional coaches and principals, students began receiving instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards this year, which will only improve student outcomes now and in the future. At this point, OSSE defines students as college- and career-ready when they are prepared to enter a post-secondary institution and be enrolled in credit-bearing courses and/or are able to qualify for entrance to a trade or training program, the military, or entry-level career.

District of Columbia students have a tremendous opportunity to receive scholarship funds through the DC Tuition Assistance Grant program (DC TAG) to attend any state college in the country for close to in-state tuition. However, just over 10 percent of our graduating high school seniors earn a bachelor's degree. Research shows that even with this financial benefit, often when District of Columbia students enter college, they are required to take remedial courses. Because of this, they can feel unprepared and eventually drop out. Aligning instruction with the CCSS will improve our students' chances of graduating from high school ready for the rigors of college and with and with a better chance of earning a degree.

Public engagement has been a crucial part of the entire CCSS adoption process. Stakeholders, including educators and national experts, were called in from the very beginning to review the standards and provide OSSE with guidance on adoption. The DC State Board of Education held numerous public meetings and several members attended Gates Foundation-sponsored CCSS study sessions with their National Association of State Boards of Education peers. LEA and school leaders were consulted on the implementation plan and transition to the assessment. At each decision point throughout the process, OSSE turned to the District of Columbia's education community for input and guidance.

OSSE's vision is to ensure all students graduate college- and career-ready. The Common Core State Standards focuses our efforts to realize that vision by better preparing all students to participate fully in today's global, Information Age economy.

**Adoption Process**

Directly after the National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practices and Council of

Chief State School Officers released the draft of college- and career-readiness standards on September 21, 2009, the District of Columbia proactively began the process of adopting the Common Core State Standards. Communication with stakeholders began immediately.

OSSE released a memo on October 1, 2009, inviting public comment on both the English language arts and mathematics standards. Two public surveys were designed and made available to stakeholders via the Internet, with a request for feedback by October 15, 2009. A joint public hearing of the DC State Board of Education and OSSE was held on October 7, 2009 to elicit public comment from the community.

Soon after the initial period for public comment, a joint letter was issued from former State Superintendent Kerri Briggs and former State Board of Education President Lisa Raymond to Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of CCSSO on October 21, 2009, indicating the continued support of both OSSE and SBOE for the common standards.

Once the newly drafted standards in kindergarten through grade 12 were made available to state education agencies in March 2010, OSSE staff created a comprehensive crosswalk of the District of Columbia's existing content standards with the proposed draft standards. The crosswalk compared the alignment of the Common Core State Standards with current D.C. standards in order to identify content gaps. OSSE staff brought in over 50 stakeholders to review the crosswalk and collect feedback. The stakeholders included school leaders, instructional coaches, educators (including science and social studies teachers), parents, members of the business community, higher education faculty, and elected officials. Several public meetings were held to discuss the new standards and the changes those standards would bring, and to gather feedback on whether the new standards should be adopted.

The combined feedback was used to propose the adoption of the Common Core State Standards to the State Board of Education, which they did on July 21, 2010. Then the more difficult job of implementation began.

**Timeline for Implementation**

After adoption of college- and career-ready standards, OSSE collaborated with all LEAs to move towards implementation. In a joint decision by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and other charter LEAs, it was decided that the District of Columbia would target an aggressive implementation timeline, starting with 2011 – 2012 school year. Beginning in 2011 – 2012, instruction would focus on the Common Core State Standards for all students in English language arts and mathematics in grades K – 2. For grades 3 – 12, English language

arts instruction would focus on the Common Core State Standards with a transition to informational text and writing to a text.

This aggressive timeline for implementation is critical to student success in the District of Columbia because it will begin to prepare them for the skills and knowledge required by the Common Core State Standards and to lay the foundation for success on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in 2014 – 2015.

The 2012 state assessment system in reading and composition, the DC CAS, will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Mathematics instruction would focus on priority standards—those current D.C. mathematics standards that would most prepare students to be successful after the mathematics transition to start in 2012–2013. These standards were identified in consultations with Student Achievement Partners and are indicated on the 2012 DC CAS mathematics blueprint. In conjunction with the priority standards, teachers are encouraged to incorporate the Standards for Mathematical Practice into instruction. These practices are also included on the 2012 DC CAS blueprint.

The timeline is below.

| School Years | Instruction | Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| 2011-2012 | K-2 Math (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (DC Priority Standards) | Reading: 3-8, 10<br>Math: 3-8, 10 – Priority Standards<br>Composition: 4, 7, 10<br>*Optional Grades 2 & 9: Reading & Math* |
| 2012-2013 | K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (aligned to CCSS) | Reading: 3-8, 10<br>Math: 3-8, 10<br>Composition: 4,7, 10<br>*Optional Grades 2 & 9: Reading & Math* |
| 2013-2014 | K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (aligned to CCSS) | Reading: 3-8, 10<br>Math: 3-8, 10<br>Composition: 4,7, 10<br>*Optional Grades 2 & 9: Reading & Math* |
| 2014-2015 | K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (aligned to CCSS) | PARCC Assessment |

It is important to note that OSSE is not responsible for curriculum development. Each LEA

develops its own curriculum with support and evaluation by OSSE on a request basis only. However, OSSE will provide professional development and exemplar lessons as resources to inform curriculum development at the LEA level.

**Outreach and Dissemination**

Outreach to our stakeholders was our first action step in the implementation process. Because we are a small area but with varying governing structures, we knew that for implementation to be successful, our outreach had to be wide and deep and that much guidance and direction would be needed. To do so, OSSE is leveraging all partnerships to be sure stakeholders, especially parents and teachers, have a full understanding of the shifts to the Common Core State Standard so that students will receive the necessary skills.

As a governing state of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the District of Columbia is prepared to provide the necessary guidance and direction to assist LEAs in preparing students for success in college and in the workforce. Additionally, our continuing partnerships with the University of the District of Columbia, Achieve, the American Diploma Project (ADP), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) provide us with guidance and information to support our transition to the Common Core State Standards and assessments.

In addition to these partnerships, OSSE has accomplished the following:

- The original crosswalk of the current D.C. standards to the Common Core State Standards was posted on the OSSE website for teachers to use in their instructional planning. OSSE then invited teachers to complete this work using the Achieve online tool and sent the analysis to a third party for the next iteration. The final version was reviewed and approved by selected teachers in the District of Columbia. This crosswalk was used to drive the blueprint for the 2012 DC CAS assessment.
- In June 2011, the 2012 DC CAS blueprint with the Common Core alignment was distributed to all LEAs and posted on the OSSE website.
- In August 2011, each teacher for mathematics and/or English language arts in the District of Columbia received a printed copy of the standards. These standards were sent to each school site where each building leader distributed them to educators.
- OSSE distributed printed PTA guides in English and Spanish to schools for each student to have a brochure introducing the Common Core State Standards to take

home to parents. These were created for English language arts and mathematics by grade and demonstrate to parents the importance of this shift and what they can expect in the classroom with the new standards.

- OSSE held meetings for LEA leaders and educators to explain the shift to the Common Core State Standards and how this will translate in the classroom. These meetings discussed the changes to the assessment, changes in instruction, and what these changes look like in the classroom. Several experts spoke at these meetings, including David Coleman, one of the writers of the Common Core State Standards.

- Through Race to the Top, OSSE created a Common Core Task Force with members representing over 20 of our 30 participating LEAs. This task force helped to drive decision-making around the implementation plan and became the Common Core experts for their LEAs to deliver updates and information. This Task Force was also asked to create a statewide message around the Common Core State Standards and to identify the shifts in instruction.

- OSSE is currently working with a contractor to create an interactive website with professional development units, sample test items aligned to the Common Core State Standards, information about the PARCC assessment, curriculum guidance, sample lesson plans, exemplar teaching units, student work, and teacher-created videos. OSSE will maintain control of this site to ensure high quality materials aligned to the standards are posted.

- OSSE sends out monthly newsletters and regular Twitter updates, and has plans for future public meetings.

- The District of Columbia is currently planning an instructional and curriculum summit for summer 2012 which will further support teachers in understanding the essential shifts in practice, curriculum, and assessment needed for full Common Core State Standard implementation. This summit will also bring together educators from all public schools to collaborate and share best practices for evaluating and developing curriculum and creating exemplar materials.

OSSE is collaborating with the University of the District of Columbia to examine the impact of the Common Core State Standards on K-12 instruction. It is our goal that students who graduate from an LEA in the District of Columbia are college- and career- ready and will not be required to enroll in developmental or remedial courses.

**Special Populations**

OSSE realizes the challenges implementation of the Common Core State Standards will present to special populations of students. The Common Core standards are for all students and implementation requires making the standards accessible to all students.

For English language learners (ELLs), OSSE has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) to align the current language acquisition standards and assessment with the Common Core State Standards. We also convened a group of school leaders to discuss ESEA Flexibility and provide input on the proposed application, AMOs, interventions and, additionally, how to best support our duel-language programs.

The District of Columbia is also a member of the Assessment Services Supporting ELLs through Technology System (ASSESTS) consortium. The consortium will build on the foundation of standards, assessment, professional development, and research already developed by the managing partner, WIDA, to provide comprehensive assessment tools to help English learners succeed in becoming college- and career-ready. The consortium also assists in the development of online summative, benchmark, and screener assessments in addition to formative assessment resources for use in the classroom.

In reviewing our student growth percentile data, our English language learners are those who are making the most growth across the District of Columbia. OSSE will look to those successes to continue the growth in ELLs and will call together leaders in the ELL community to evaluate how to meet the needs of our ELL population while meeting the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. The District of Columbia will continue to provide professional development on English Language Development Standards, language differentiation during content instruction and assessment, and how to effectively use assessment results to increase student achievement.

For our special education students in our 1 percent group (students taking the DC CAS Alternative test), it is most important that our current entry points are aligned to the Common Core State Standards so that teachers can differentiate instruction according to an individual student's starting point and allow students to set challenging but achievable academic goals. These entry points are used to guide the evidence-based portfolio assessment OSSE uses for these students. OSSE has currently aligned the DC CAS Alt Entry Points to the Common Core Standards for English language arts in preparation for this year's administration.

OSSE has joined the assessment consortium with the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) and is a member of the Workgroup One Community of Practice. Through this partnership, OSSE will continue to develop performance level descriptors, claims, focal knowledge, skills, and abilities for mathematics to provide information and guidance about the Common Core State Standards. The goal of NCSC is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve higher academic outcomes to prepare them for post-secondary options. We believe in this goal and is excited to be involved with this work.

Once the Learning Progressions being created by NCSC are released, OSSE will work to adopt these progressions and plans to facilitate teacher and educator professional development on their use to inform Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams as well as how to link curriculum and intervention resources to ensure standards progression throughout the school year for all students. Additionally, through this consortium we are examining how our definition of college- and career- readiness applies to our special-needs populations.

The District of Columbia currently has a Community of Practice (CoP) comprised of approximately 20 individuals. They include general and special education teachers as well as technical assistance providers to ensure curricular, instructional, and professional development modules developed by NCSC are practical and feasible. The CoP receives training on the Common Core State Standards, the relationship between content and achievement standards, curriculum, assessment, and universal access to the general curriculum. The CoP will implement model curricula and help to refine and clarify materials and resources.

For all students with disabilities, OSSE is providing comprehensive professional development to give school leaders ongoing support and resources so that the Common Core State Standards are accessible to all students.

Finally, SEDS, the statewide special education data system, will be upgraded to align with the Common Core State Standards and Learning Progressions. SEDS will contain a drop-down menu listing the Common Core Standards to inform IEP writers. This functionality will allow educators to use the database to track IDEA compliance, develop IEP goals aligned with Common Core standards, and monitor student progress toward those goals. OSSE will provide training and support to all LEAs throughout this process, with this system ready for 2012 – 2013 school year.

OSSE continues to provide ongoing professional development for teachers, allowing them to

obtain continuing education graduate credits, meet ESL licensure and certification requirements, take advantage of our free Special Education Praxis preparation materials, and build their capacities to meet the needs of diverse learners.

**Preparing for the Next Generation of Assessments**

As part of the implementation plan, OSSE decided to transition the statewide assessment to align to the Common Core State Standards as the best way to signal to the field the shifts in instruction. We also felt this would be the best preparation for our schools, educators, and students in preparation for the shift to the PARCC assessment to begin instruction in the Common Core State Standards as quickly as possible and give our students a head start on success. Starting in the summer of 2010, OSSE worked with its test contractor to modify the current DC CAS. All field test items on the 2011 DC CAS were aligned to a Common Core State Standard, and in 2012, all items on the DC CAS reading will be aligned to a Common Core State Standard with a shift in the blueprint to include more informational text.

This will alert the field to the text complexity and genre selections found in the Common Core State Standards. The swift incorporation was possible because of the close alignment we found in the initial mapping of the D.C. standards to the CCSS and the CCSS to D.C.-owned reading items. The 2012 DC CAS math will focus on priority standards to better prepare students for the transition to math Common Core standards in 2012 – 2013. These math standards were identified as the critical skills and knowledge students need to know to be successful on the Common Core State Standards and represent one or two essential skill sets for each grade for teachers to focus instruction.

In addition, OSSE will field test/operationalize new composition prompts that are aligned to the Common Core standards and focus on the essential skill of writing in response to a text. This is in answer to the indications in the PARCC ITN that demonstrates writing to a text will be crucial for students to be successful on the assessment and to address the shift from the old writing standards to the new standards.

Both the reading and the composition DC CAS results will report on the Common Core State Standards in all reports by student, school, LEA, and state levels to give schools, educators, students, and parents an indication on how students are performing on the new, more rigorous standards. OSSE worked with its Technical Advisory Council and test vendor to ensure that this transition maintains the achievement standards and does not disrupt trend lines in achievement. A cut score review will be conducted in the fall to ensure alignment.

Our transition to a fully aligned DC CAS math assessment to the Common Core State Standards will begin in 2012-2013. Within the Department of Standards, Assessment and Accountability, OSSE has formed an Assessment Task Force comprised of teachers, assessment coordinators, and other stakeholders to guide the development of the math assessments and to address any instructional gaps. This allows the District of Columbia the best opportunity to have all students exposed to, and instructed in, the Common Core State Standards, in preparation for the PARCC assessment in 2014-2015.

**Other assessments: Composition and Science**

The Composition Assessment in 2013 will be included in the accountability plan detailed in Principle 2. This is a crucial step to signal to educators and families the importance of students being able to write to a text. This is a major instructional shift found in the standards and one where data suggest our school leaders, teachers, and students will need additional support. OSSE first shared this information in June 2011 as part of the initial outreach to introduce school leaders to the Common Core State Standards and the shifts in instruction and assessments.

Over the summer, a panel of teachers reviewed and approved the prompts through content and bias review. In October 2011, OSSE held an initial training for LEAs to explain the shift, describe the new rubric, and release a sample prompt. Additional training and outreach took place at the start of 2012. Once OSSE receives the results of the 2012 assessments, results will be analyzed and used to guide more professional development in summer and fall of 2012.

The District of Columbia's Science standards were recently awarded an A by the Fordham Institute. For this reason, and in response to requests to increase the number of subjects included in the accountability plan, OSSE will include a DC CAS Science assessment in 2014 as detailed in Principle 2. This will allow time for more educators to be involved with blueprint development, item review, and data analysis. This also will create a positive transition plan for including new subjects while supporting schools and educators through the transition.

As with all other assessment development, educators will approve field test items through content and bias review; OSSE will provide a strand-level blueprint to support schools and teachers in preparing students for the assessment. This will also signal to the field the importance of science and give OSSE an opportunity to begin the discussions on the Next Generation science standards expected to be completed this summer.

Below is a timeline for implementation.

| School Years | Instruction | Assessment |
|---|---|---|
| 2011-2012 | K-2 Math (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (DC Priority Standards)<br>K-12 DC Science Standards | Reading: 3-8, 10<br>Math: 3-8, 10 - Priority Standards<br>Composition: 4, 7, 10 - Field test<br>Science: 5, 8 and biology - Not included in accountability<br>*Optional Grades 2 & 9: Reading & Math* |
| 2012-2013 | K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 DC Science Standards | Reading: 3-8, 10<br>Math: 3-8, 10<br>Composition: 4,7, 10 - Included in accountability<br>Science: 5, 8 and biology - Not included in accountability<br>*Optional Grades 2 & 9: Reading & Math* |
| 2013-2014 | K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 DC Science Standards | Reading: 3-8, 10<br>Math: 3-8, 10<br>Composition: 4,7, 10<br>Science: 5, 8 and biology - Included in accountability<br>*Optional Grades 2 & 9: Reading & Math* |
| 2014-2015 | K-12 English language arts (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Math (aligned to CCSS)<br>K-12 Next Generation of Science Standards | PARCC Assessment |

For the first time in 2012, OSSE will administer the DC CAS assessments in reading and math for grade 2, and reading for grade 9, aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Originally, these assessments were only for District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), our largest LEA. However, after several charter LEAs also requested the assessments, OSSE assumed the contract and will make the assessment available for no charge to charter LEAs as an option.

At this time, OSSE does not plan to require the assessment or to use the data at the SEA level; however, that decision may change depending on input from our stakeholders and need for inclusion in the accountability framework. The benefits to offering these

assessments are that LEAs have another data point to determine if students are on track to succeed. The second grade assessment gives LEAs an early indicator of students' achievement and instructional competencies aligned to the Common Core Standards.

Through Race to the Top, participating LEAs have agreed to adopt interim assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards in all schools. All other LEAs are encouraged to follow the same practice. OSSE assists LEAs in choosing quality vendors by providing an "Interim Assessment provider list." LEAs adopting paced-interim assessments have developed a supportive professional development plan designed to build teacher capacity around using student data to drive instruction.

To ensure consistent improvement, each LEA works with its vendor to collect data in a timely manner so the information can be analyzed during professional development to enhance teacher practice and inform future instruction. As we move closer to the PARCC assessment, our goal is to have a robust DC CAS item pool aligned to the Common Core State Standards for LEAs to use as part of our interim assessment system.

The District of Columbia is one of the original governing states of PARCC and has been involved with the work from the beginning. Today, we are leading the work with 17 other states to develop and design the next generation of assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. We are a member of the Governing Board, Leadership Team, and Higher Education Leadership Team, and we serve as the chair for the Common Core Implementation and Educator Engagement working group. We also have representation in the PARCC Advisory Committee on College Readiness. The District of Columbia has attended design meetings, Common Core Implementation Institutes, and all other multistate meetings.

Currently, the District of Columbia is using the Model Content Frameworks to guide our LEAs through their creation of curriculum plans aligned to the new standards and will take a team to participate in the Educator Leader Cadres preparatory meetings to develop experts in the field. We are actively involved in all decision making and reviews. Being a governing state allows the District of Columbia to lead the nation in this reform and to inform our stakeholders on the coming shifts through our extensive work with the CCSS and the goals of the new assessment. This gives the District of Columbia a clear advantage in preparing schools, educators and students for next generation of assessment that will measure college- and career-readiness.

**Supporting Teachers**

To promote support of our overall goal of District-wide understanding of the CCSS and to ensure successful implementation, OSSE is providing ongoing state-level training in the areas of English language arts (ELA), math, pedagogy and assessment. The professional development will disseminate the state-level message as well as assist those LEAs with greater needs around curriculum planning. Lead authors of the CCSS have identified six instructional shifts in both ELA and math. The ELA shifts include balancing nonfiction and fiction text; building knowledge in the disciplines; increasing text complexity with grade advancement; text-based answers; writing from sources; and academic vocabulary. Math instructional shifts include focus, coherence, fluency, deep understanding, applications, and dual intensity of practicing and understanding.

Moving forward, how schools are tiered, as detailed in Principle 2, will affect the level of professional development OSSE provides. For example, to ensure we meet the needs of teachers in our lowest performing schools, preference will be given to them to attend live professional development sessions that fill up quickly, or OSSE will provide more on-site trainings at priority schools. For teachers in other school categories, OSSE will make available more webinars and online tools, and will focus in-person trainings on specialized topics.

Rather than offer professional development that simply makes educators familiar with a set of standards, the trainings OSSE offers are delivered through the lens of the instructional shifts, thus promoting and supporting a deep and internalized understanding of the new standards' teaching and learning principles. This approach allows teachers and school leaders to become familiar with the CCSS, compare former D.C. standards to the CCSS, and develop an understanding of how teaching, learning, and instructional materials will need to evolve to meet the demand of the new standards' increased rigor. Two specific examples of trainings OSSE offers through the Department of Standards, Assessment and Accountability to teachers and administrators addressing these instructional shifts include: Instructional Routines for Effective Small Group Instruction and Intervention and Authentic Performance Tasks.

The *Instructional Routines for Effective Small Group Instruction and Intervention* training is designed to support teachers across the District of Columbia, where approximately 55 percent of students (elementary and secondary) are scoring below proficient in readings. Based on the "gradual release of responsibility" model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and targeted to address specific reading needs (comprehension, fluency, phonics, vocabulary), the training aims to teach participants six explicit and systematic instructional routines. These

routines provide precise teaching moves to accelerate students' learning and boost their ability to understand complex text.

The *Authentic Performance Tasks* training answers the call for building knowledge in the disciplines so that students develop deep understanding of text through intense practice and providing text-based answers. Having a collection of motivating, authentic performance assessments with corresponding tasks and rubrics, aligned to CCSS, across grade levels and content areas is a key strategy to differentiate instruction. Using these tools effectively also will motivate students, increase achievement, and save teachers' time. The seminar provides step-by-step procedures that will help educators make differentiated instruction happen in the classroom.

To effectively implement the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, OSSE will concentrate on addressing the instructional shifts between our current D.C. standards and the Common Core State Standards while incorporating the Standards for Mathematical Practice. In 2011, OSSE conducted a crosswalk comparing the D.C. and Common Core State Standards. This analysis revealed major areas of difference, and those shifts are now driving the effort to tailor instruction aligned to the CCSS that ultimately will move student achievement upward.

OSSE will provide opportunities for all LEAs to build their instructional capacity through various opportunities, such as: trainings, accessing videos which model exemplar lessons on our Common Core website, reviewing exemplar tasks and lessons specifically aligned to CCSS-M, and examining sample assessment items that provide students with consistent exposure to higher-level questions expected in instruction and parallels what will be seen on PARCC.

As part of OSSE's commitment to continuous and sustainable improvement, participant feedback is solicited and analyzed after each Professional Development session. The feedback is, and will continue to be, used to inform both stakeholder understanding and future professional development sessions.

LEAs must be integrally involved in supporting teachers as they bring the Common Core standards to the classroom. Through Race to the Top, each LEA created an implementation plan to include professional development, curriculum alignment, program evaluation, and analysis of quality material that was reviewed and approved by the Common Core Task Force. Each year, LEAs must revisit and revise their implementation plan and include in their statement of work how they will support the transition to the Common Core State Standards.

The 2011 Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness (PLaCEs) grant supported a consortium of Race to the Top participating charter LEAs and DCPS schools in developing a professional learning community that is in the process of creating an online library of 50 Common Core State Standard video lessons per grade in both math and reading for grades three through nine (total of 350) to support every teacher in the adoption of the Common Core. The consortium uses the internationally recognized technique of lesson study, a collaborative approach in which teachers develop pedagogical content knowledge to research, evaluate, and refine the teaching of Common Core standards. The Consortium's lesson study teams are creating and refining exemplar lessons to add to the video lesson library. In an embedded "each one, teach one" approach, the Consortium's first cohort of 12 schools will mentor a set of schools in Year One which will become the Consortium's second cohort in Year Two.

As a governing state of PARCC, the District of Columbia will make available all resources provided by the consortium, including, but not limited to, the principle of Universal Design for Learning. The District serves as the chair for the Common Core Implementation and Educator Engagement working group. This group was integral in releasing the PARCC Model Content Frameworks and creation of Educator Leader Cadres. The District has disseminated the Model Content Frameworks and invited educators to take part in informational webinars. We also will participate in the Educator Leader Cadres with members from both DCPS and the charter schools to build expertise in the field.

In 2012, a gap analysis conducted by a third party will determine areas of improvement and/or need as evident by DC CAS scores and the grade correlation between current D.C. standards and the Common Core State Standards. Transition units will also be developed to help LEAs improve their instruction to the Common Core State Standards.

Through our partnerships with the University of the District of Columbia, we are actively addressing teacher preparation courses focusing on the CCSS. Specifically, mathematics and ELA courses will be designed to give aspiring teachers greater exposure and interaction with the CCSS with considerations for all student populations. We collectively recognize that to have successful students who are ready for college and careers, we must have teachers who are more than capable to prepare them. OSSE and UDC are looking at ways that the CCSS can be infused into teacher preparation courses so that aspiring educators are competent and confident about implementing them in their daily instruction.

OSSE will explore how teacher licensure criteria will change based on the Common Core State Standards, especially in the area of literacy. Because of the literacy standards for science,

social studies, and other technical subjects in grade 6 – 12, OSSE must determine if all teachers in those subjects would be required to have some type of formal literacy training, since teachers in those subjects would also be teachers of reading and writing skills. In addition, OSSE will tailor professional development based on the tiered teacher effectiveness plan in Principle 3 to meet the needs of all teachers. OSSE will provide guidance on how teacher effectiveness plans can be aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

**Increased Rigor**

As the Common Core State Standards are more rigorous than our previous standards, OSSE recognizes the need to find ways to immediately increase the rigor of instruction in the classroom for a successful implementation. OSSE is currently working in collaboration with the State Board of Education to review and revise graduation requirements to include more focus on college and career readiness. Also, a bill was recently introduced in the City Council that would require all students to take either the SAT or ACT and apply to college as part of the graduation requirements. Through this application, OSSE is reviewing its reporting requirements and plans to include AP and IB participation and proficiency, dual enrollment, ACT and SAT participation and performance, and other indicators of college and career readiness. OSSE also is beginning to collect data through the State Longitudinal Data System (SLED) of post-secondary acceptance, attendance and graduation. All these data points work together to signal to students, teachers, and parents the shift to more rigor in the classroom.

This public reporting will show the continuum of readiness across years and will indicate to schools, parents, and students the progress towards college- and career-readiness while allowing adjustments to be made along the way to ensure success for all students. OSSE's continued partnership with D.C. Public Schools, charter LEAs, the Public Charter School Board, and several advocacy groups will continue to push the level of rigor in all classrooms for all students. Through these partnerships we can align our expectations for college- and career-readiness, work to promote higher-level courses, and share data to gauge student performance.

**Summary**

Our size and proximity makes the District of Columbia very nimble, which should prove a great advantage in the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards and transition to aligned assessments. From the very start of the process, there was stakeholder buy-in, support, and a desire for an aggressive timeframe for implementation. OSSE believes this timeline will allow the District of Columbia to get a head start on providing schools and educators the necessary resources and support so that the standards can be

implemented with fidelity by 2014 – 2015. This will give our students the best opportunity to show success on the PARCC assessment and to demonstrate college- and career-readiness.

**For additional information, see Attachment 12: Principle 1 Documents**

- **Key Milestones Chart**
- **2012 DC CAS Blueprints for Reading and Math**
- **Grade 4, 7, and 10 Common Core Aligned Prompts – Composition**
- **OSSE CORE Professional Development**

## 1.C Develop and Administer Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

| Option A | Option B | Option C |
|---|---|---|
| ☒ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition.<br><br>i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6) | ☐ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.<br><br>i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts | ☐ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs.<br><br>i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments. | |

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

## 2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Despite its small size, the District of Columbia has extensive diversity among its LEAs. There is the traditional, geographic LEA (the District of Columbia Public Schools) that is under mayoral control, and 53 individual, independently administered charter LEAs, which can range from single small school to multi-campus charter networks.

In the past few years, much work has gone into designing and publishing frameworks to be used in school evaluation at the LEA level. The Public Charter School Board created its Performance Management Framework (PMF) and DCPS is using its School Scorecard system. Both were unveiled recently. These tools give valuable insight to how schools compare to each other in the service of students, and they give an array of valuable data points when evaluating school effectiveness on student learning.

In the District of Columbia's special environment, OSSE is committed to the autonomous school bargain – that LEAs are provided autonomy in exchange for accountability for student achievement results overall and for every subgroup. This waiver request is the natural extension of that approach – removing restrictions associated with NCLB mandates, addressing limitations in the ways federal funds can be used so LEAs can apply them more effectively, and replacing an ineffective accountability system in return for greater student outcomes from LEAs and schools. Schools that fail to achieve ambitious but achievable goals will receive additional recommendations for improvement and be subject to the return of current restrictions in the use of funds structured in a way that best supports academic achievement. Schools will be required to identify needs for improvement, create a plan, and monitor its implementation. However, every LEA in the District of Columbia will have the full ability to design its own system to complete these tasks within a framework supported by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's RTTT Innovation and Improvement team.

Through the implementation of the new accountability framework, we expect to see a number of educational improvements. During the 2010-2011 school year, 45 percent of District of Columbia students were proficient in reading and 47 percent tested proficient in math. Under the waiver, proficiency rates would improve to 72.5 percent in reading and 73.5 percent in math by 2017—or roughly the current benchmarks. Additionally, we expect to see graduation rates improve substantially. For the 2010-2011 school year, the cohort graduation rate is projected to be 51 percent. Our goal is to reach 70 percent of students graduating within four years by 2017. To that end, we expect to grow 4 percent a year for the next five years. Likewise, we expect to increase our graduation rates to 90 percent for students who take up to six years to complete their high school diploma.

**Educational Improvement through Policy**

The District of Columbia has made incredible efforts to support academic achievement in schools through policy changes and support. These efforts include a commitment to charter schools, mayoral control, a focus on providing high quality early childhood education, rigorous programs enacted under Race to the Top, and a strong tradition of school choice.

The District of Columbia has one of the strongest charter school laws in the country, enacted by Congress in 1995 with the passage of the School Reform Act (SRA). In the past fifteen years, charter schools have grown to serve 41 percent of our students, making the District of Columbia the state with the largest share of publicly educated pupils enrolled in charter schools. Each year, new charters are opened, increasing the number of LEAs providing service to students in the District of Columbia. Charter schools also are adding grades each year. The overall increase in charter schools has had a significant impact on state-level educational policy.

Twelve years after the enactment of the SRA, the Council of the District of Columbia passed the Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERA). That 2007 law brought about major shifts in management, accountability, and oversight. The PERA turned over control of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) to the mayor. This set the stage for reinvigorated efforts in DCPS including: closing low-performing or under-enrolled schools, a new teacher contract which included an aggressive teacher evaluation component, the creation of the IMPACT teacher and staff evaluation system, bonuses for highly effective teachers, and new momentum around improvement within DCPS. Additionally, PERA eliminated DCPS as a charter school authorizer, put its charter schools under the Public Charter School Board, and, perhaps most crucially, created a state education agency (OSSE) and state board of education agency to provide leadership in policy for all schools.

As City Council Chairman, Mayor Vincent Gray spearheaded an effort to establish universal high-quality Pre-K that would be available to any District of Columbia three- or four-year-old. This initiative has been exceptionally successful. According to the *Education Week* for *Quality Counts* report released January 12, 2011, the District of Columbia has more than 65 percent of three- and four-year-olds enrolled in academic programs, and 87 percent of kindergarten students enrolled in academic programs – the highest participation rates for early childhood education in the nation.

In 2010, the District of Columbia became a second-round winner of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant. This provides a unique opportunity for collaboration, including sharing best practices across DCPS and public charter schools. Under RTTT, the District of Columbia was the first state in the nation to implement Common Core standards and quickly move towards implementation. The OSSE Division of Elementary and Secondary Education remains a national model for creating a statewide growth model utilized by both charter and traditional public schools.

The District of Columbia's participation in RTTT has enabled an enhanced support system for the bottom 20 percent of Title I schools, development of LEA and state-level data systems to support instructional improvement, and the expansion of new systems of teacher evaluation using student performance to 30 LEAs serving over 90 percent of our K-12 students.

These efforts have brought about tremendous reform within almost all aspects of state policy in the District of Columbia, above and beyond accountability for schools. Additionally, there have been new efforts to build accountability by the PCSB (Performance Management Framework) and DCPS (School Scorecard). Both reframe school performance in terms of tiers, with strong schools no longer labeled "failing" for not making AYP and weak performers rewarded for making progress with struggling students.

The District of Columbia knows that content taught in classrooms is not enough – it is critically important that all students learn, grow academically, have opportunities to apply their knowledge, and achieve proficiency. If OSSE provides LEAs with information on academic outcomes and college success, sets high standards for achievement, and provides supports in identified areas of potential improvement, then LEAs will have the ability to effectively target their resources to areas of need such as implementing effective curriculum based on strong college- and career-ready standards, prioritizing the preparation of all students for college and professions, and creating an effectiveness-driven human capital system for teachers and leaders to benefit students throughout the District of Columbia.

There is a weak link to OSSE's approach in respecting autonomy by allowing LEAs to make independent decisions and providing support while holding LEAs accountable for strong results. AYP in the District of Columbia has become an effectively meaningless system. To reinforce this point, two critiques are attached to this waiver request, one by FOCUS (Friends of Choice in Urban Schools, an educational advocacy organization) and another by E. L. Haynes Public Charter School (one of the highest performing schools in the District of Columbia).

To be effective, the District of Columbia's statewide accountability system must have two components: support, and rewards. The first is a system of informed choice; the second targets the support and accountability system.

**Parent Based Accountability**

The District of Columbia has both incredible strengths and weaknesses in terms of parental choice. We have among the most extensive school-choice options available anywhere in the United States, including a robust tradition of out-of-boundary enrollment. This choice has allowed higher performing charter schools to fill up and expand around the city, while higher performing (often overenrolled) traditional schools continue to attract students and keep families in our neighborhoods. However, school choice presumes families have adequate information to make informed decisions. And there's the rub.

A recent research report on school choice by Russ Whitehurst of the Brookings Institute found "Information that is difficult to obtain, confusingly presented, or that doesn't permit easy comparisons among schools interferes with the choice process and promotes choices that do not accurately reflect the parents' intent." Additionally, to support quality choices, information on school~~s~~ should contain other information as described. As Whitehurst describes:

> "This information is useful but falls far short of what parents need and would like to know about schools before they make a choice. Best practice for districts includes the provision of additional information on such things as student and teacher absentee rates, measures of parental satisfaction, and course offerings. Also important in a system of open enrollment is information on school popularity as revealed through the ratio of applications to slots."

Over the past two years, the District of Columbia has seen a dramatic expansion in the amount of information available to the public on school performance. While helpful, this has not evolved to produce a consistent set of data that fulfills all the informational needs of parents. The changes in the accountability system, if the District of Columbia is granted ESEA Flexibility,

will provide an opportunity to pull all the stakeholders invested in educational data (LEAs, charter-school authorizers, parents, elected officials, community members, and interested individuals) together to work toward more consistent reports providing essential and comprehensive information that parents need to make the most informed decisions for their children. In essence, OSSE would seek input from a wide array of stakeholders to create more meaningful school reports that include information families cared about and could use for making informed decisions about school choice.

Providing parents with higher quality information is a critical issue in the District of Columbia because parents control one of the strongest accountability systems in the country and the strongest one in the city. They can vote with their feet, emptying any school they perceive of negatively, and in the process eliminate its funding. A recent DCPS school-closure announcement, for example, noted that River Terrace Elementary School is "severely under-enrolled, and as the smallest elementary school in the system is unable to sustain a viable" school. (Most charter schools close for financial rather than performance reasons.) The availability of comparable school data is key to school choice. The ESEA Flexibility waiver will create a strong motivation for the alignment of DCPS and charter school reports. Either of the two local accountability systems may incorporate the new state accountability index. Moreover, as opposed to the No Child Left Behind AYP system which simply shows that every school has failed, a more nuanced index that tiers schools by performance level and includes indicators useful to parents would bridge the current divide between charter and traditional schools and allow the District of Columbia to truly hold LEAs and schools accountable for student performance.

**More Robust School-Level Reporting for all Schools**

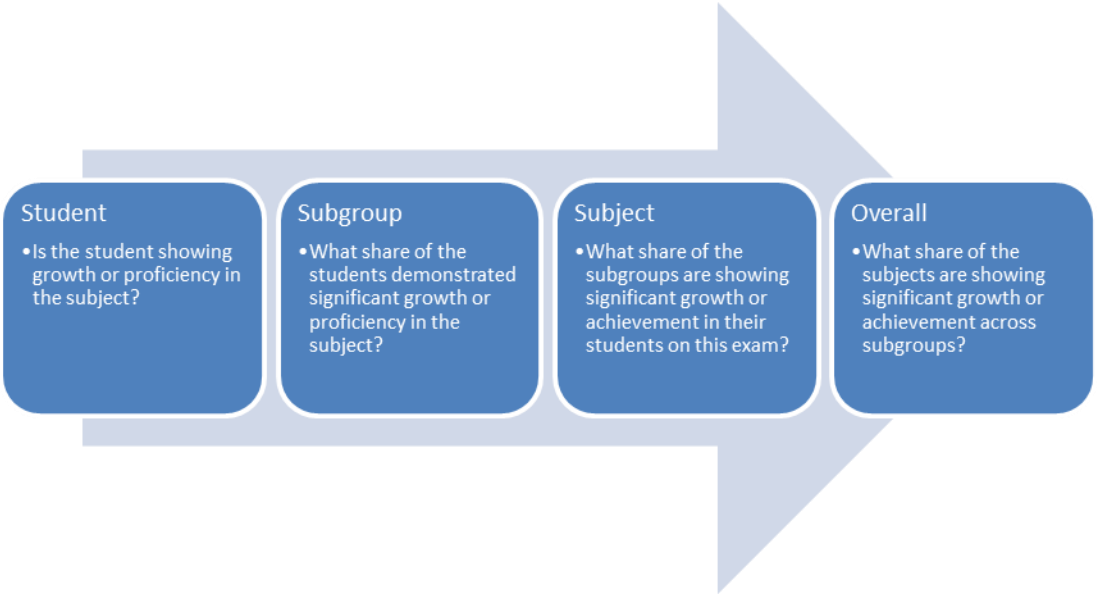
OSSE will ensure the development of high quality, consistent reports by working in collaboration with PCSB, DCPS, and public charter schools, parents, elected officials, community organizations, and interested individuals to empower all parents with the information they need to make sound educational decisions for their children.

OSSE committed in two previous grant applications (SLDS and Race to the Top) to establishing an online data portal that provides a detailed view into the range of data on school performance – including enrollment, college readiness, assessments, and the accountability information contemplated in this waiver. This portal will be powered by the Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data system (SLED) and come online to the public with the school performance results for the 2012 DC CAS. It will make more data available over time.

To make effective use of this information, parents need additional support in interpreting the data so they can take full advantage of the educational options available to them. OSSE will collaborate with community partners to develop a program to help parents understand school and LEA reports and how to use the information to make sound educational decisions.

**SEA Based Accountability**

In addition to informing parents, the District of Columbia's altered accountability system will focus on simplicity, utilizing existing growth measuring to ensure that every student counts. That means recognizing the importance of serving all subgroups and identifying schools that are truly the highest and lowest performing. These essential components have led to the development of an index based on the following benchmark questions:



Each level will produce an index score within every school. A student's test results will be compared to a chart to determine how many points to award depending on the level of growth and proficiency each has achieved. Here's a sample of what this chart may look like:

| Points | | 2011 Performance Level | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Below Basic | | | Basic | | | Proficient | | | Advanced | | |
| 2010 Performance Level | | Low | Middle | High | Low | Middle | High | Low | Middle | High | Low | Middle | High |
| Below Basic | Low | 0 | 0 | 25 | 60 | 80 | 90 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | Middle | 0 | 0 | 10 | 40 | 60 | 80 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | High | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| Basic | Low | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 40 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | Middle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | High | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| Proficient | Low | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | Middle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | High | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| Advanced | Low | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | Middle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | High | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 110 | 110 |

**Growth for all students**

It is important to note that some students will lack growth information. While we will give credit based strictly on proficiency for those students, we will also continue to seek additional ways to calculate growth for all students. There are two potential causes for a student not to show growth – the student might lack a prior score (e.g. a third grade student) or took the alternative assessment. Given the importance of recognizing growth in special needs students, OSSE will investigate the process of creating a growth measure for use with alternative assessments. We expect all students to achieve academic growth every year. Ultimately, our goal is for every student to achieve proficiency.

**Student Index Score**

The individual point values for students will be combined as a way to measure school progress toward overall academic progress. Below is a sample of possible student results to demonstrate how they can be aggregated into subgroup and subject totals.

*Example*

| | Student Reading Index | Student Math Index | ELL | Student Reading Index for ELL Students | Student Math Index for ELL Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student A | 100 | 100 | x | 100 | 100 |
| Student B | 110 | 100 | | | |
| Student C | 110 | 110 | x | 110 | 110 |
| Student D | 25 | 50 | | | |
| Student E | 25 | 50 | x | 25 | 50 |
| Student F | 100 | 100 | | | |
| Student G | 25 | 25 | | | |
| Student H | 25 | 0 | | | |
| Student I | 100 | 50 | x | 100 | 50 |
| Student J | 110 | 100 | x | 110 | 100 |
| Student K | 100 | 100 | | | |
| Total Index Score | 830 | 785 | | 445 | 410 |
| Number of Students | 11 | 11 | | 5 | 5 |
| Average Subgroup or All Students Index | 830 / 11 = **75** | 785 / 11 = **71** | | 445 / 5 = **89** | 410 / 5 = **82** |

Utilizing this data the subgroup scores are as follows:

*Example continued*

| | All Students | ELL |
|---|---|---|
| Reading | 75 | 89 |
| Math | 71 | 82 |

**Subject Index and Overall Index**

Each subgroup score will be averaged with the "all students" group (which will be counted twice) into an overall subject average. This will provide the main summary information for each subject. The subject averages will then be combined into an overall average depending on the particular assessment. Assessments outside reading and math will be combined at half the rate of the main assessments.

*Example continued*

| Subject | All Students | ELL | Subject Index |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reading | 75 | 89 | (75 + 75+89) / 3 = 80 |
| Math | 71 | 82 | (71 + 71 + 82) / 3 = 75 |

Overall Index for example is 80+75/2 = **77**

**Minimum N Size**

OSSE will pull together a group of local stakeholders and experts to discuss lowering the minimum N size for subgroups. Lowering the minimum N from 25 to 10 would result in more than doubling the number of schools that are accountable for special education student performance, from 74 schools currently to 155. This would not present a privacy issue since we already publicly report scores for groups of 10 or more students – but schools are not held accountable for the smaller subgroup performance. The blended nature of this index ensures schools are held accountable for smaller populations of special education, English language learners, and all other student subgroups.

**DC Statewide Network of Tiered Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

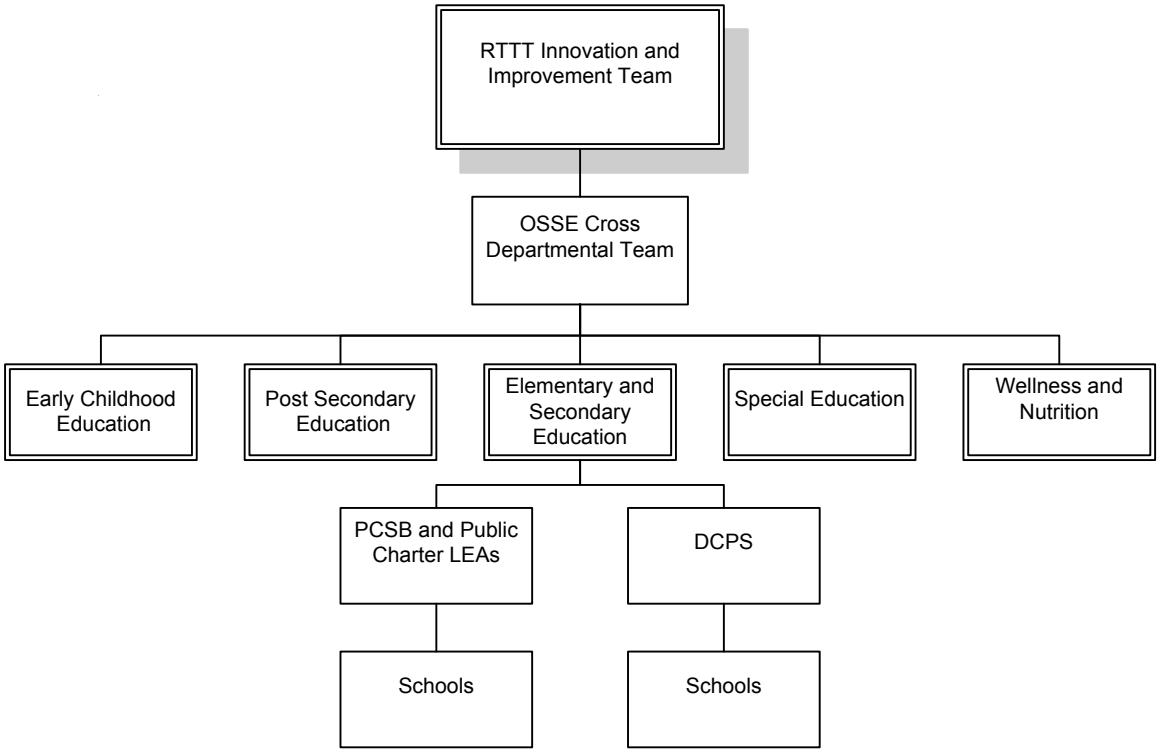
As part of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (ELSEC) within OSSE, the statewide network of tiered support will be structured in a way that maximizes resources both within and outside the agency. In the ELSEC division, the department of Innovation and Improvement, currently part of the Race to the Top team, will oversee the implementation of supports provided to LEAs and schools. This department then works collaboratively and cross-functionally with other divisions within OSSE to establish a core team of cross-departmental OSSE staff that will then partner and assist LEAs and schools with needs assessment, coordination, and development of federal grants programs and use of federal funds.

OSSE will also work collaboratively and coordinate with DCPS, PCSB, charter LEAs, schools, and external partners, where applicable including education advocacy groups, community based organizations, and parent groups to develop a strong statewide network of tiered support. Below is a diagram of how LEAs and schools will be supported from the SEA level down to LEA and school levels.

Lead by ELSEC's Race to the Top Department of Innovation and Improvement, these teams will work together to identify needs, assist in developing an effective improvement plan, support implementation including the realignment of federal resources, monitor progress, and report to the public.

Below is an organizational representation of how the statewide level of tiered recognition,

accountability, and support will be managed.




It is our hope that out of this shared ownership of process and accountability within OSSE and outside, the statewide network of tiered support will ensure services to LEAs and schools are well coordinated to:

- Maximize agency, LEA and school resources;
- Minimize burden to agency departments, LEAs and schools; and
- Have the greatest likelihood of improving academic achievement and graduation rates, and closing achievement gaps among our lowest performing subgroups and students in special populations.

As part of its SEA level responsibilities, OSSE will help build capacity at the LEA and school level in their efforts to improve student outcomes by providing guidance, technical assistance/support, and opportunities to participate in state-level trainings on Common Core implementation; developing and implementing teacher and leader evaluation systems; understanding the state-level differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system; serving special populations and how to leverage federal resources (Title I, SIG, Title II, Title III,

and other federal) to maximize coordination and academic achievement. Combined with the activities embedded in the statewide network of tiered support as described throughout 2C, 2D, 2E, and 2F, timely and effective monitoring will take place, LEAs and schools will be held to a high standard of accountability, and schools will be supported as needed to increase academic achievement, improve graduation rates, and close achievement gaps among subgroups.

**Summary**

This statewide network of recognition, accountability, and support will help address current needs in the District of Columbia. The focus on proficiency and growth will recognize and support gains in academic achievement while eliminating the false labels of failure. Additionally, this system is designed to provide flexibility to LEAs and schools with respect to curriculum and programs in a way that supports all of the education approaches that can effectively lead to growth and mastery of the Common Core competencies and other District of Columbia academic standards. Finally, this system recognizes the continued need to focus on subgroups and students with special needs, ensuring that not only are the results reported for all subgroups but that the performance of a subgroup of students' factors heavily in determining subject-level and overall index scores. All of these efforts combined are clearly focused on the OSSE goals to improve proficiency, graduation, and common core standard mastery without additional burdens for schools.

**For additional information, see Attachment 13: Principle 2 Documents**

- **DC CAS Performance Overview – Graphs**
- **AEI Journal Article: Choice without Options**
- **Why is AYP a Poor School Performance Measure - FOCUS**
- **Letter from EL Haynes**
- **School Reporting Sample**
- **Article: A Closer Look at DC NAEP Scores**

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

| Option A | Option B |
|---|---|
| ☐ The SEA only includes student achievement on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools. | ☒ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: |

| | |
|---|---|
| | a. provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and<br><br>b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards. |

One of the main criticisms of NCLB is that it narrowed the curriculum. By requiring schools to measure and be held accountable for only reading and math, the law sent a clear message to teachers and schools that skills such as writing, critical thinking, the arts, science, and extracurricular activities are not valued in education. Focus groups and conversations with teachers and principals, the State Board of Education members, parents, and community leaders believed this should change. The ESEA waiver process creates an opportunity to expand what "counts" for students in the District of Columbia. The inclusion of composition and science new assessments in the accountability system will clearly indicate the value place on these broader academic skills and pursuits.

The process of creating quality assessments and adjusting instruction and curriculum in schools to match can be a lengthy process. Thus, the District of Columbia will phase in new assessments with enough lead time for schools to adjust their curricula. Two assessments currently are planned for inclusion: science and composition. However, additional assessments will be evaluated as they become available, including alternative methods of assessment beyond multiple-choice tests, such as portfolio or performance-based assessments. Inclusion of these assessments ties into OSSE's underlying theory of action for the waiver, as it will provide additional data on academic performance and in the process reinforce efforts to move to stronger college- and career-ready standards. Moreover, it will address one of the largest concerns about college readiness: the ability of students to write convincing, elegant prose.

For 2012, the DC CAS Composition assessment will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and will focus on the skills necessary to write in response to a text. This will recognize the important work done by teachers of English language arts and other subjects in preparing students to compare and contrast, analyze, and otherwise apply critical thinking skills to engage with written material. This is a crucial step to signal to the District of Columbia the major instructional shifts found in the standards. OSSE first shared this information in June 2011 as part of the initial outreach to school leaders to introduce the Common Core State Standards and the shifts in instruction and the assessments.

Over the summer a panel of teachers reviewed and approved the prompts through content and bias review. In October 2011, OSSE held an initial training for LEAs to explain the shift, describe the new rubric, and release a sample prompt. Additional training and outreach took place at the start of 2012. Once OSSE receives the results of the 2012 assessments, we will analyze the results and use that information to guide more professional development in summer and fall 2012. As a result of LEA feedback, that 2012 will be the first time the newly aligned assessment is given and will become a part of the statewide proficiency index starting with the 2013 administration. This will allow LEAs time to get familiar with the assessment and to continue curriculum alterations in response to the adoption of the Common Core State Standards for

statewide assessment.

That District of Columbia students need better instruction—particularly in writing—is evident from the following tables showing student performance on the DC CAS over the past four years. By including composition in the accountability system, writing instruction will improve for all students and they will master skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in college or entry-level career.

*Composition Proficiency*

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 40.00% | 38.29% | 32.20% | 34.01% |
| Grade 7 | 37.20% | 42.07% | 45.38% | 33.32% |
| Grade 10 | 38.60% | 24.59% | 28.80% | 31.01% |

The District of Columbia's science standards recently earned an A in a Thomas Fordham Institute report study. For this reason, and in response to requests to increase the number of subjects included in the accountability plan, OSSE will include a DC CAS Science assessment in 2014. The delayed inclusion responds to LEA feedback and will allow time for more educators to be involved with blueprint development, item review, and data analysis. This will create a positive transition plan for including new subjects while supporting schools and educators through the transition. It will be included in the proficiency index at half of the weight of reading or math.

As with all other assessment development, educators will approve the field test items through content and bias review, and OSSE will provide a strand-level blueprint to support schools and teachers in preparing students for the assessment. The inclusion of science will signal the subject's importance—underscored by President Obama's recent call to graduate 100,000 more scientists and engineers—also signal to the and allow field the importance of science and give OSSE to begin the discussions on the Next Generation of Science Standards which will be completed this summer.

Including science in the accountability system is important because science it is important for careers, and to ensure that the accountability system does not promote a curriculum limited to just reading and math. By including science in the accountability system, students will receive richer instruction across all content areas and become better lifelong learners through integration of math and science skills. Supporting high quality science instruction also will bolster efforts underway at some schools and LEAs to engage students through hands-on STEM

(science, technology, engineering, and math) programs.

The current science proficiency results show that this may be an area that would benefit from additional attention being a part of the accountability system. As can be seen in the charts, science performance is closely tied to performance in both reading and math. Through integrating science into the accountability plan, we expect to see increases in student proficiency across all three subjects.

*Science Proficiency*

| | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 5 | 32.35% | 34.78% | 38.93% | 37.84% |
| Grade 8 | 21.93% | 29.89% | 35.28% | 36.90% |
| Biology | 38.60% | 24.59% | 28.80% | 31.01% |

**Outreach and Dissemination**

To facilitate the transitioning of the composition and science assessments as part of the new accountability system, OSSE will collaborate with DCPS, PCSB, Charter LEAs, and others to ensure schools, teachers, and students are better prepared. Outreach to our stakeholders will be our first action step in the implementation process. OSSE will also leverage all partnerships to be sure stakeholders, especially parents and teachers, have a full understanding of the shifts the Common Core State Standard so that students will receive the skills necessary. OSSE is prepared to provide the necessary guidance and direction to its LEAs to prepare students for success in college and in the workforce in composition and science.

In addition to these partnerships, OSSE is committed to the following:

- Establish a stakeholder working group to help develop an implementation plan that will identify deliverables focused on supports necessary to teachers, schools, and LEAs to ensure successful transition;
- Review alignment between composition and science assessments to current standards and make adjustments as necessary;
- Provide training and support to LEAs and schools on implementation of composition and science standards in classroom instruction;

- Provide timely access to composition and science data and supports in understanding results to inform teacher professional development, instruction, and student performance

**Summary**

Feedback from focus groups clearly called for more assessments to be included in the accountability plan so that instead of narrowing the curriculum, instruction would be integrated for greater student success. Currently, we are adding Composition to the accountability plan in 2013 and Science in 2014. It is our goal that by including composition and science as part of the new accountability system, students who graduate from an LEA in the District of Columbia will not be required to enroll in remediation courses and are ready for college and careers. The phase in will allow time for teachers to receive the resources and support they need to provide quality instruction to all students. With more data outcomes, schools will have a greater opportunity to identify students who are on track for college and career success.

## 2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

| Option A | Option B | Option C |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. | ☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs.<br><br>i. Provide the new AMOs | ☒ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups.<br><br>i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.<br>ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. | and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. | new AMOs in the text box below.<br>iii. Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8) |

As stated previously, we respect the original intent of the federal law and want to build upon it so that we can more effectively measure school success. Like with NCLB, we expect that 100 percent of our students will meet proficiency in the Common Core State Standards. In our proposed new accountability system, we are now also expecting that 100 percent of our students show growth each year. This tiered accountability approach recognizes both the LEA and SEA role for school accountability. The SEA accountability index will be used by DCPS and PCSB in their own local level accountability system.

**SEA Level Accountability**

There will be two AMOs. One will be proficiency based on school level goals. These goals are set to reduce the number of students who are not proficient by half over six years. The targets for this will be set for each school by the SEA.

Below is an example of what these elements might look like for an individual school.

| SCHOOL "A" | 2010-2011 | 2016-2017 | Expected Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Students | 54% | 77% | 23% |
| African American | 45% | 72.5% | 27.5% |
| White | 65% | 82.5% | 17.5% |
| Economically Disadvantaged Students | 40% | 70% | 30% |
| Students with IEPs | 18% | 59% | 41% |

The lowest performing subgroups are expected to grow the most – reducing the achievement gap over time.

Simplicity was a key factor in initial conversations about the waiver. For this reason the statewide accountability identification and AMOs will be based on only these two factors. As additional statewide assessments are developed, OSSE will explore including such new AMOs as statewide ACT/SAT testing, additional middle school subjects, 2nd and 9th grade DC CAS assessments, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and school readiness assessments for lower grade students. Any such exploration will involve input from stakeholders including DCPS, charter LEAs, and the community. Additionally, OSSE will seek to benchmark the AMOs to PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) international indicators of academic progress over time.

**Graduation AMO**

In addition to the proficiency AMO, the District of Columbia will have a graduation AMO. This will initially use the adjusted cohort graduation rate. The bottom 10 percent of schools will be subject to identification as "focus" or "priority" schools based on their graduation rates. Over time, OSSE will work convene an advisory panel of DCPS, charter LEAs, and community stakeholders to inform the development of a graduation index that gives credit not just for graduation in four years, but also improves a school's overall score for graduating students in

five, six, or more years—much like the proficiency/growth index.

OSSE will set annual graduation-rate targets to emphasize the need for measurable improvement in student outcomes. The targets for school year by 2017 are:

- 70 percent of students graduating in 4 years
- 90 percent of students graduate in 6 years.

OSSE expects a 4 percent improvement on an annual basis in both four- and six-year graduation rates over the next five years.

**LEA and School-Level Accountability**

Most local areas have their own accountability system in addition to the state system. This helps LEAs understand the needs of their schools and build an appropriate system that meets their needs. These systems typically complement the state accountability system but include provisions specific to local needs or policies. The District of Columbia has a similar situation. DCPS recently developed its own accountability system that puts schools in tiers based on student performance. DCPS has particular policy concerns and structural aspects that make it beneficial for their internal management to run a school accountability system. Similarly, the Public Charter School Board makes use of an accountability system to deal with school improvement, closure, and key issues (e.g. discipline and services to students in special population) within the sector. As a result OSSE has partnered with DCPS and PCSB around the accountability structure to create a comprehensive statewide network of tiered recognition, accountability and support both at the state level and within the sectors.

**DC Public Schools Accountability**

DC Public Schools plans to hold its schools accountable using the newly-released DCPS Scorecard. The purpose of the Scorecard is to give parents, students, and community members in the District of Columbia a clear, objective picture of school performance. By incorporating multiple measures of school quality into one tool, the Scorecard presents a unique opportunity to compare schools' strengths and weaknesses across DC Public Schools. If DC receives the ESEA waiver, the Scorecards will also include the state level Accountability Index described in the waiver application.

The metrics within the Scorecard are aligned to the DC Public Schools Effective Schools Framework and address five areas of school effectiveness: Student Performance, Student Progress, Safe and Effective Schools, Community Engagement and Satisfaction, and Unique School Indicators. With a few exceptions, data are displayed for two prior school years so

school performance can be tracked over time. District averages for similar schools are displayed when available. Below is a brief description of the key components of the DCPS Scorecard.

Student Performance: Results of annual, standardized assessments do not describe the full school experience, but they do provide the most accurate and reliable signal of student performance. Every DCPS school should demonstrate progress in the core areas of math and reading, as well as cultivate an environment focused on improving performance through outstanding teaching and learning. This measure is also on the PCSB PMF (Student Achievement).

The following measures are included as part of the DCPS Student Performance Measure:

- Meeting or exceeding math/reading standards: The percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards by earning scores of Proficient or Advanced on the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS or DC CAS Alt).
- Exceeding math/reading standards: The percentage of students performing at the highest level, Advanced, on the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS or DC CAS Alt).
- Median math/reading performance level: The median student's performance on the continuum of Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic performance levels on the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS or DC CAS Alt). This performance level is for the median (or middle) student, meaning that among other students in the school, half score above and half score below this point. If the median is at the high end of Basic, for example, the school is closer to having all students meeting standards (Proficient) than if the median is at the low end of Basic.
- Student Engagement: A score that signals students' level of effort and interest in their classes, as well as students' confidence in their own educational success. The scale is from 0 to 100, and the score is based on the results of a student survey given every two years.
- Retention of Effective and Highly Effective Teachers: The percentage of teachers who are returning to a particular school from the previous year rated Effective or Highly Effective by DC Public Schools' previous year IMPACT evaluation system.

Student Progress: Compared to student performance, which signals the share of students achieving at various levels, student progress is a measure of how much students grow from year to year. While some schools may have relatively few students meeting or exceeding

state standards, it is important to gauge the extent to which those schools help students catch up. This measure is also on the PCSB PMF.

- Student growth in math/reading: The median student's growth on the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS). This score describes the percentage of students the median (middle) student outperforms who started with a similar level of prior achievement. For example, a score of 70 means that this school's median student outperformed more than 70 percent of students in the District with the same level of prior achievement.

Safe and Effective Schools: DCPS believes that all schools must provide caring and supportive environments. School environments that are safe and welcoming better enable students and staff to learn and teach. This measure is also on the PMF (Leading Indicators).

- Student Attendance: The average percentage of students a 2011 attending school daily.
- School Safety: A score that represents student, parent, and staff perceptions of safety and order at this school. The scale is from 0 to 100, and the score is based on the results of a stakeholder survey given every two years.
- Expulsions and Suspensions: The percentage of students who were expelled or suspended for 11 days or more.
- Student Re-enrollment: The percentage of students who returned to school the following year. This does not include students in the school's highest grade level.

Family and Community Engagement and Satisfaction: Families and community members play key roles in helping students and schools thrive. When parents, guardians, and family members feel respected and informed about their student's life at school, they are more likely to be involved in helping their child learn.

- Community Satisfaction: A score that represents overall student, parent, and staff satisfaction with this school. The scale is from 0 to 100, and the score is based on the results of a stakeholder survey given every two years.
- Parent Engagement: A score that represents how well and how often parents felt this school engaged and communicated with them. The scale is from 0 to 100, and the score is based on the results of a parent survey given every two years.

**Public Charter School Accountability**

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) holds public charter schools accountable using its recently-developed and -implemented Performance Management Framework (PMF). The purpose of this framework is to provide a fair and comprehensive picture of a charter school's performance using common indicators and to use these results to reward higher achieving schools and support or close the lower achieving ones. The PMF currently divides public charter schools into three tiers based on their performance on statewide assessments and other indicators. The framework is designed to take into account both the autonomy and huge variety of public charter schools and therefore only includes performance outputs. It is also designed to hold schools to higher accountability standards; it uses higher floors and ceilings than is typical in a state system. School reports are publicly released each school year.

Schools currently earn points in four categories: student progress, student achievement, gateway measures, and leading indicators. The PCSB commits to adding the newly developed Accountability Index that OSSE is creating as a 5th category of the PMF, as this will incorporate subgroup performance and ensure that all schools are reducing the achievement gaps that exist both within their schools and across the city. This addition to the framework will be phased in over time, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. Below is a description of each section of the PMF:

Student Progress: Student progress measures how much a student's performance has improved from one year to the next, relative to other students. Progress is measured using the statewide growth model, first adopted in 2011. The Median Growth Percentile (MGP) model assesses student's growth in Reading and Math on the DC CAS in grades 3-8 and 10. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education provides the MGP results for all students in the state and validates the scores before releasing the charter school results to PCSB for inclusion in the PMF. A student's growth percentile is first calculated to measure how much a student's performance has improved from one year to the next, relative to students statewide with similar DC CAS scores in prior years. The model determines whether a student grew at a faster, slower, or similar rate than the students' peers. The school-level MGP is calculated by taking the median of all student growth rates within the school. For school year 2010-2011, student progress accounts for 40 points in elementary and middle schools and 15 points in high schools, where the emphasis is on achievement and college success measures. This measure is also on the DCPS School Score Card.

Student Achievement: Student achievement is a measure of the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in Reading and Math on the DC CAS (3rd through 8th grade for elementary and middle schools, and 10th grade for high schools). The Office of the State

Superintendent of Education provides the validated DC CAS performance data to PCSB for inclusion in its framework. For high schools, achievement on AP and IB exams are also included in this measure, so as to provide a fuller picture of academic achievement. In school year 2010-2011, student achievement is worth 25 points for elementary and middle schools and 30 points for high schools. This measure is also on the DCPS School Score Card.

Gateway Measure: Gateway measures reflect outcomes in key subjects that, for elementary and middle schools, predict future educational success. For high schools, gateway measures reflect outcomes aligned to a student's predicted success in college and/or a career. For elementary and middle schools, the measure captures students' success in mastering reading, writing, and math as measured by the DC CAS in 3rd grade reading and 8th grade math; for high schools it is a measure of the PSAT performance in 11th grade, SAT performance in 12th grade, graduation rate, and the college acceptance rate. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education provides the valid DC CAS data and the College Board provides the PSAT and SAT data. In 2010-2011, the Gateway indicator is worth 15 points for elementary and middle schools, and 30 points for high schools. This measure aligns with the Common Core State Standards for Career and College Readiness.

Leading Indicators: Leading indicators are a measure of a school's overall climate as measured by their attendance and re-enrollment rates. High schools are also measured by the percent of 9th graders with credits on track to graduate. These factors are seen as predictors of future student progress and achievement and are directly related to a school's overall performance. In 2010-2011, leading indicators are worth 20 points for elementary and middle schools, and worth 25 points for high schools. This measure is also on the DCPS Score Card as part of School Climate.

Accountability Index: As part of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver application, OSSE is developing and implementing a new Accountability Index that takes into account student achievement and growth and weights the performance by subgroup. This measure will also be on the DCPS School Score Card.

PMF Performance Tiers: Using a 100-point scale and based on the scores for the academic scoring screen, standard schools will be identified as Tier I (high-performers), Tier II (mid-performers), Tier III (low-performers) or Tier IV (lowest-performers). In School year 2010-2011, Tier I schools earn at least 65% of the possible points. Tier II schools earn between 35% and 64% of the possible points. Tier III schools earn less than 35% of the possible points. Tier IV will be added in SY2012-2013 and be reserved for the lowest performing public charter schools. A school must meet the thresholds for points for each tier. The threshold points for identifying each tier will be revised every year through a transparent process, with the aim to continue to raise the bar while adjusting to a new state assessment, PARCC in SY 2014-2015,

new national science standards, and changes to the state-defined Annual Measurable Objectives.

Under current PCSB policy, Tier IV schools are subject to immediate closure, and Tier III schools are subject to closure within one year if their PMF scores decline significantly or within two years if they do not improve to at least Tier II. These actions will take place independent of whether a school is designated priority or focus.

## 2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools.

The overall proficiency/growth index score is compared to a set of cut scores to classify a school. The currently proposed cut scores are below. These will be revisited annually and be increased over time as the priority and focus categories no longer make up 15% of schools.

The current identification criteria are below.

| Category | From | To |
|---|---|---|
| Reward | 80 | 100+ |
| Rising | 45 | 79 |
| Developing | 35 | 44 |
| Focus | 25 | 34 |
| Priority | 0 | 24 |

A school will be identified as a reward if it has an overall index score above 80 and has achievement gaps below the state average across all subgroups. OSSE will calculate a school's achievement gap using the lowest and highest subgroup index.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

The goal of a quality accountability system is not to penalize schools. Instead, it was developed and used to recognize successes and areas of weakness. This information then plays a critical role in supporting all schools to continue to improve. A system can typically only do this, and be seen as non-punitive when it recognizes the successes. No amount of recognition will ever be sufficient for the great work that many schools do, but an enacted

ESEA waiver will clearly identify schools that deserve recognition and provide them with all of the rewards identified here as well as any additional rewards that can be funded or provided over time. DCPS and PCSB will also recognize and reward schools. It is our hope that other LEAs and the DC community will similarly recognize and reward highly effective educators, departments, and schools.

**SEA Level Recognition and Rewards**

The DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education will recognize and reward highest-performing and high-progress schools in multiple ways. OSSE developed its current Academic Achievement Awards policy, aligned with the current ESEA requirements, during the 2010-11 school year in consultation with its Committee of Practitioners. OSSE also reserved Title I funds to make financial rewards to Title I schools that made adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years. The plan outlined here builds on the current policy and leverages reserved funds that remain available. The most significant change will be that OSSE will be able to provide financial rewards from reserved Title I funds to highest-performing and high-progress Title I schools according to the identification methodology described above, whereas under current law, OSSE can only use funds reserved for financial rewards for Title I schools that make adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years.

OSSE will identify schools, using the methodology described above, eligible to receive a Superintendent's Award in two categories: Proficiency and Progress. A school may receive both awards in a single year if it meets the criteria for both awards. The types of recognition may include:

- Letter/s of recognition from the State Superintendent, President of the State Board of Education, Deputy Mayor for Education, and/or the Mayor;
- School visit by the State Superintendent, President of the State Board of Education, Deputy Mayor for Education, and/or the Mayor;
- Certificate identifying the school a recipient of the Superintendent's Award for Proficiency and/or the Superintendent's Award for Progress, presented to each school at a State Board of Education meeting;
- Press release announcing Superintendent's Award recipients;
- Eligibility for OSSE nomination as National Title I Distinguished School and/or Blue Ribbon School (as a prerequisite; not all award recipients will be nominated);
- Special invitation to nominate one staff person to compete for one of two new

"Superintendent's Award Recipient" positions (one for Proficiency and one for Progress) on the DC State Title I Committee of Practitioners;

- Invitation to participate in a Superintendent's Award colloquium to present/discuss practices that drive proficiency and progress within Title I schools;
- Technical assistance from OSSE to prepare a presentation for the next National Title I Conference;
- Invitation to nominate staff to mentor lower-performing and low-progress schools as Superintendent's Ambassadors;
- Eligibility for substantially reduced SEA monitoring; and
- Eligibility for Title I schools to apply for financial rewards, as funding is available and as described in more detail below.

While all schools that meet the criteria to receive a Superintendent's Award for either Proficiency or Progress will receive the same non-monetary recognition, some Award recipients will also be eligible to apply for financial rewards in any year that funding is available from a reservation of Title I funds under Section 1117(c) of the ESEA (either from that fiscal year or carried over from a previous fiscal year), or from some other source.
All Award recipients that meet the following additional criteria, during the school year for which they met the Superintendent's Award criteria, will be eligible to apply for a financial reward if they:

- Had a poverty rate of at least 35 percent;
- Received a Title I allocation and operated a Title I program; and
- Enrolled students without a selective admission process.

The application will require Award recipient schools to identify the practices that led to their high levels of proficiency and/or progress and to propose uses of funds that either (1) ensure the continuation or expansion of those practices and/or (2) address other practices that need to improve to build on previous success. The Committee of Practitioners will serve as the review panel, after applications are received, advising OSSE on the selection of schools to receive financial rewards.

OSSE will develop and distribute information on a methodology for determining reward amounts for schools selected to receive financial rewards. Based on previous consultation

with the Committee of Practitioners, reward amounts will be differentiated based on the size of a school's population, the number of consecutive years the school met the criteria to receive a Superintendent's Award, the poverty rate of the school, exact rates of Proficiency for schools eligible based on Proficiency, and exact rates of Progress for schools eligible based on Progress.

**LEA and School Level Recognition and Rewards**

The District operates in an education landscape that includes one large Local Education Agency, DC Public Schools (DCPS), and multiple public charter school LEAs that are responsible for the oversight of teachers and school administrators. For purposes of this section as it relates to ESEA Title I Accountability, the Public Charter School Board as the authorizer of Charter Schools will be viewed to act in the capacity of an LEA for charter schools identified as reward schools.

**DC Public Schools Recognition and Rewards**

Those schools designated as "Reward schools" will be granted the most autonomy. DCPS plans to ensure that the DCPS Scorecards and Quality School Review process that grants schools autonomy is aligned to the schools identified as rewards schools.

Schools identified as Reward schools will have the following flexibility:

- **Funding**: Schools will have maximum flexibility in spending grant funds.
- **Professional Development**: Schools may develop their own professional development calendar.
- **Model**: Schools will serve as a model for best practices across the district.

**Public Charter School Recognition and Rewards**

Those schools designated as reward schools will most likely earn Tier I status on the Performance Management Framework. Based on weighted data previously described, schools earn the majority of points towards their score by showing growth and proficiency on state-mandated assessments. Accordingly, schools with high growth and/or high proficiency rates that actualize the original intent of the School Reform Act which is for District of Columbia public schools (inclusive of charter schools) to "become a world-class education system that prepares students for lifetime learning in the 21st century" will be acknowledged by the DC Public Charter School Board.

The DC Public Charter School Board, as the sole authorizer of charter schools, will recognize

and reward the high performing and high progress schools in multiple ways:

- Efficient pathways to replication: The DC Public Charter School Board will support and encourage the highest performing schools to replicate by developing an alternative, more efficient pathway.
- Access to facilities: Based on a 2011 survey by New Schools Venture Fund of charter sector needs, Tier I-rated schools cited "facility support" within their top ten needs.
- Public recognition: The DC Public Charter School Board will acknowledge the success of its reward schools through multiple mechanisms, including: charter school awards galas; press releases, postings of status to the DC Public Charter School website/ Facebook page and twitter feed.
- High Profile Opportunities to include invitation to special events (White House Egg Roll), chosen for site visits when distinguished international and national guests visit.
- Financial awards: At the 2011 Josephine Baker Awards for Charter Schools Excellence and through financial donations, the DC Public Charter School Board was able to grant financial rewards to those schools who demonstrated the highest overall performance and highest overall growth on the Performance Management Framework.

## 2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools.

The overall index score is compared to a set of cut scores to classify a school. The currently proposed cut scores are below. These will be revisited annually and be increased over time as the priority and focus categories no longer make up 15% of schools.

The current identification criteria are below.

| Category | From | To |
|---|---|---|
| Reward | 80 | 100+ |
| Rising | 45 | 79 |
| Developing | 35 | 44 |
| Focus | 25 | 34 |
| Priority | 0 | 24 |

A school will be identified as priority if it has an overall index score below 25; it is in the bottom 10% of schools for graduation rate for two consecutive years, or if it is still implementing a SIG grant.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

OSSE is committed to closing all achievement gaps and ensuring that all students in DC graduate from high school and are college and career ready. To reach this goal, priority schools must make dramatic and rapid improvements that accelerate student achievement. OSSE will provide tools for LEA and school-based improvement teams to assess their needs, develop a plan for improvement, and implement action steps to ensure student learning improves in each priority school. Through collaboration with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Public Charter School Board (PCSB), human capital task force, student growth task force and the Deputy Mayor of Education's Office, State Board of Education, and other partners, OSSE will enhance the effectiveness and coherence of district systems and the effective integration of external partners to support school improvement.

In addition, OSSE will evaluate, support, and monitor schools and LEAs around instructional leadership, curriculum, professional development, instruction, assessments, staff evaluation, human capital and financial/asset management. By doing so, OSSE believes that DC students will show annual academic growth, raise graduation rates, and close achievement gaps, particularly with regard to students with special needs and English language learners in priority schools.

In an effort to go beyond the legal requirements and engage the DC community, OSSE implemented a multifaceted engagement strategy. District public school teachers and their representatives were partners in the development of the ESEA waiver application. In addition, OSSE facilitated open forums and debriefing with PCSB and DCPS. The feedback from the engagement with various stakeholders showed a preference for setting annual targets to reduce achievement gaps by 50% within six years.

**SEA Level Accountability**

In an effort to turnaround the lowest-performing schools, LEAs with priority schools will be required to implement meaningful interventions that meet the Department of Education's

Turnaround Principles designed to improve the academic achievement of students in priority schools and must be aligned with all of the following "turnaround principles" and selected with family and community input:

- providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;
- redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;
- using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
- establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; **and**
- providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

The LEA may also select one of the four School Improvement Grant (SIG) turnaround models (see http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/2010-27313.pdf) after no less than six months and no more than a one year planning period in each of its priority schools. The four SIG models are as follows:

1. Turnaround: Replace the principal, rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the new principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and

budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

2. Restart: Convert the school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process

3. Closure: Close the school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.

4. Transformation: Replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; institute comprehensive instructional reforms; increase learning time and create community-oriented schools; and provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

In addition to providing Race to the Top and SIG funding that may be available to support the implementation of these models in schools that meet the federal criteria for receiving SIG funds, OSSE will require an LEA with one or more priority schools to reserve a necessary and reasonable amount from its Title I allocation during the three-year implementation period to support the implementation of meaningful interventions that meet the Turnaround Principles or one of the SIG models in each priority school.

As part of its statewide network of tiered support, OSSE will collaborate and coordinate with DCPS, PCSB, and Public Charter LEAs with schools identified as priority in the process for supporting schools. Schools identified by OSSE as priority schools will have no less than half a year and no more than 1 year to plan for implementation of selected model and interventions. This will allow for sufficient collaborations between LEAs, schools, parents and the school community.

Per waiver requirements for priority schools, OSSE will require the development of a 3-year improvement plan from PCSB for each LEA that has a priority school that is based on a school-level needs assessment or quality school review conducted in each priority school by a visiting review team that includes staff from OSSE and the DCPS Office of School Turnaround for DCPS schools or the PCSB for public charter schools. OSSE will then make recommendations and provide guidance to PCSB and the LEA around the development of its turnaround plan during the planning year.

Upon submission of LEA turnaround plan and performance targets for each priority school OSSE will approve the use of the LEA's Title I funds based on the quality of the school's needs analysis, intervention selection, turnaround plan, mid-year and annual targets, the proposed use of any external partners that can be strategically integrated into the school to help

implement the key elements of the turnaround models including, the use of data to inform instruction, the delivery of evidence-based targeted and school-wide interventions to improve student outcomes and enhance school climate, increased family engagement, and the provision of additional opportunities for student learning that are aligned with lessons taught during the school day and the LEA's capacity to implement meaningful interventions that meet the Turnaround Principles described previously.

To ensure that OSSE can provide effective guidance and support to LEAs and schools, each turnaround plan will include mid-year and annual performance targets set by the LEA, in consultation with schools and parents, across four areas: academic achievement, school climate, community and parent involvement, and resource management. These ambitious and achievable performance metrics will be tailored to each school based on its data and needs assessment for OSSE to use in its guidance and support to LEAs and schools. LEAs and schools will be allowed to use Title I reservation to support data management and reporting for the purposes of school improvement reporting. PCSB will submit on behalf of LEAs mid-year and end of year reports for each LEA with priority schools to OSSE so that OSSE can provide guidance and recommendations to ensure improvement. This will support OSSE's oversight of school improvement and its sub-recipients.

During the schools' first year of implementation and each year thereafter until the school exits priority status, OSSE will monitor PCSB in its implementation of the LEA's turnaround plan and the school's progress in meeting its mid-year and year-end performance targets. OSSE will then make recommendations to the LEAs and PCSB to adjust implementation of the improvement plan. Throughout the school year, OSSE will also be available to LEAs and schools to provide support to LEAs and in each priority school, as needed. At the end of the school year, OSSE will analyze all data and monitoring reviews to assess the school's progress in implementing the required interventions and its progress in meeting the mid-year and annual performance indicators. OSSE will then develop an annual progress report for all priority schools that will be publicly available.

If a priority school fails to meet its mid-year and annual performance targets, OSSE will strongly recommend to PCSB and LEAs with priority schools adjustments to interventions including, but not limited to, a restriction of the flexibility in the use of Title I funds, the redirecting of Title I funds to activities that have a greater likelihood of school improvement such as hiring a school improvement coach and partnerships with external organizations with evidence of effectiveness in the area of school improvement, and the implementation of other SIG requirements such as using the CAPStar tool, found at www.centerii.org/SchoolRestructuring/login.aspx, to manage the school improvement plan and activities. CAPStar is the District of Columbia's online continuous school improvement planning

and monitoring tool developed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement that allows schools to assess their implementation of indicators of effective practice, select priority objectives aligned to those indicators, plan action steps to address deficiencies related to those objectives, implement those action steps, and evaluate progress.

At the end of its three-year intervention implementation, if a school that was identified as a priority school is again identified as a priority school, OSSE will make a recommendation for closure or alternative governance. This aligns with an SEA's authority for state takeover in ESEA Section 1116(b)(8)(B)(iv).

**LEA and School Level Accountability**

The success of this waiver application and its upcoming implementation is founded on the belief that OSSE plays a supportive role to LEAs and schools. For this reason, we believe in LEA autonomy and with that flexibility, within the boundaries set by statute and regulations therein, in how they implement Title I programs and use Title I funds. For this to be successful, a strong belief in accountability is necessary to improve academic achievement and move students towards college and career readiness. Using the OSSE designated Accountability Index, priority schools will require support to implement their program with fidelity, evidenced by low growth, low achievement, and/or low graduation for all students or for specific subgroups of their population.

The District operates in an education landscape that includes one large Local Education Agency (LEA), DC Public Schools (DCPS), and multiple public charter school LEAs that are responsible for the oversight of teachers and school administrators. For purposes of this section as it relates to ESEA Title I Accountability, the Public Charter School Board as the authorizer of Charter Schools will be viewed to act in the capacity of an LEA for charter schools identified as priority schools.

To build upon the work already begun by DCPS with their school level scorecard and PCSB with their performance management framework, we have included in this section how each party, acting in the role of LEA for purposes of ESEA Title I accountability and school improvement will support schools identified as priority schools.

**DC Public Schools Accountability**

For schools identified as Priority under the state-level Accountability Index, DCPS will implement one of the following interventions for each of these schools:

Revise and Continue to Implement Cohort II Plans: For schools previously in Focus status, the first phase of the intervention is to review and evaluate the intervention plan established in the previous phase. The plan should be updated to learn from the strategies that were not

successful in the prior plan in order to create a more strategic approach to improving the schools performance. School must identify reasons for failing to meet AMOs and research based improvement.

**OR**

School Develops and Implements Turnaround-specific Action Plan: School is required to develop a turnaround specific action plan (may be one of the schools selected for Race to the Top Turnaround Leadership Model).

**AND**

Office of School Turnaround determines alternative governance structure: DCPS would consider one of the following governance structures: charter school partnership, limited contract with an outside provider, hybrid structure of teacher, administrator, community and central office staff (MOU), replace all or most school staff relevant to AMO failure, state takeover or other major restructuring.

**OR**

Consider school closure: DC Public Schools would consider school closure for a school that remains in priority status for an extended period of time without showing any growth.

**AND**

Professional Development: Mandatory professional development around best practices in school turnaround will be required for all staff.

***Note:*** *Any intervention required for Focus, Developing, or Rising Schools may also be applied to Priority Schools.*

The Office of School Turnaround would monitor the progress of Priority schools. For schools in priority status, the specialist assigned to the school from the Office of School Turnaround would work with the Instructional Superintendent and the principal to support the development of a plan and determine the appropriate mid-year and end of year targets. Schools would be able to use the data on the School Performance Dashboard Initiative (SPDI) – online web tool to track their on-going progress. Schools in priority status will have the least amount of flexibility in spending of any federal funds that the school is eligible to receive.

**Public Charter School Accountability**

PCSB knows that priority schools will fall into one of two categories: unsuccessful schools that are candidates for revocation or minimally successful schools that, with mandated supports and

more frequent monitoring, have the capacity to remedy their performance gaps. Because of the unique differences among charter schools and the autonomy given to them under the School Reform Act (SRA), support for minimally successful schools requires intensive focus on the particular needs of an individual school and their right to choose the best path forward, given their educational philosophy and mission. As such, the PCSB intends this support to include a four-stop process:

Step One – Assess: The DC Public Charter School Board, using historical and current data embedded in its performance management frameworks for finance, compliance and academics, coupled with qualitative data gathered through school visits, will make an initial determination on whether the school is a candidate for A. Charter Revocation or B. Intensive Support.

Step Two – Implementation:

a. Charter Revocation: For schools with the most severe underperformance, the DC Public Charter School Board will pursue charter revocation, under its authority in section 38.1802-12 of the School Reform Act. The charter revocation process begins with a mid-year vote on proposed revocation. Should this vote pass, families are notified of the school's status and the school is given the opportunity for a public hearing on the matter. The public hearing provides the school with the chance to state its case and allows all stakeholders to speak on the proposed revocation. Within 30 days of the public hearing, the DC Public Charter School Board votes on the proposed revocation. Should this vote pass, the DC Public Charter School Board staff prepares for an end of school year closure along multiple fronts, including enrollment and finance.

b. Intensive Support: Schools that are assessed at having the internal capacity to improve based on multiple indicators will be required to craft an action plan. Charter schools will have the autonomy to develop their own actionable strategies that are aligned with their mission and educational philosophy and fall within the current constructs of their charter agreement. Action plans will be reviewed by PCSB staff prior to implementation and will be approved by the PCSB Board. Charter schools will be responsible for implementing their action plan designed to address the needs of specific subgroups or their entire school population. DC PCSB will require the school to solicit services from a PCSB endorsed third party to help it address its weaknesses.

Step Three - Progress Monitoring: The DC Public Charter School Board will monitor the progress of schools toward their goals outlined in their implementation plan. Because public charter schools are governed by independent boards of trustees, the PCSB will work directly with the

school's board when monitoring interventions. Working with the school board, the PCSB will develop strategies for monthly monitoring, which may include onsite visit, review of interim assessment data, and an examination of other relevant data to measure the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. The DC Public Charter School Board will, whenever possible, align its monitoring with the third party consultant so as to disrupt the school as little as possible. Staff may join meetings, attend walk-throughs or coaching sessions, board meetings, and otherwise monitor the implementation of the intervention. Priority schools will be required to engage with the DC Public Charter School Board in regular discussions of progress.

Step Four - Re-Assess: At the end of this cycle, the DC Public Charter School Board, in collaboration with the priority school, will assess the progress made in the whole school and/or subgroup performances and decreases in achievement gaps. As an authorizer, the DC Public Charter School Board respects the autonomy of charter schools and is committed to measuring the success of outputs not the value of inputs. In this way, the DC Public Charter School Board with the school's new Accountability Index score and its performance on the PMF and make a recommendation for charter revocation, continued intensive support, or reduced monitoring. Schools can become candidates for charter revocation if they are, once again, designated as a priority school or show a decrease in academic performance, as measure by a summative PMF score, or remain in Tier III for three of five years.

**Summary**

OSSE strongly believes by supporting LEAs and schools in developing and implementing meaningful interventions that are tailored specifically to school/student needs, priority schools will have the greatest chance of improving academic achievement, increasing graduation rates, and closing all achievement gaps. It is our expectation that students will then be college and career ready. To reach this goal, priority schools must make dramatic and rapid improvements that accelerate student achievement. OSSE will make available tools for LEA and school-based improvement teams to assess their needs, develop a plan for improvement, and implement action steps to ensure student learning improves in each priority school.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

The 14 currently served SIG schools have already begun implementation of meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles. Schools are required to implement the interventions for the entire length of the 3-year grant period. All priority schools that were previously identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools and that are implementing SIG

will complete their three-year SIG interventions by the end of the 2012-13 or 2013-14 school years. Having learned the importance of an extended planning period, OSSE will require all newly-identified priority schools to spend at least one half of one school year planning for the implementation meaningful interventions that meet the Turnaround Principles.

Schools listed in 2.D.ii that were not previously identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools will initiate this planning in the 2012-13 school year and begin implementation of the selected model by the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. This means that all newly identified priority schools will be in year two of a three-year intervention model by the 2014-15 school year.

**SIG cohorts served 2011 to 2015-16**

| Cohort | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cohort 1 (8 schools) | Year 2 implementation | Year 3 implementation | Continued monitoring and support | Continued monitoring and support | Continued monitoring and support |
| Cohort 2 (6 schools) | Year 1 implementation | Year 2 implementation | Year 3 implementation | Continued monitoring and support | Continued monitoring and support |
| Additional "priority" schools | | Planning year | Year 1 implementation | Year 2 implementation | Year3 implementation |

OSSE believes that this timeline aggressively targets persistently low-performing schools for intensive intervention and support by identifying schools beyond the minimum number of schools the state education agency is required to identify at this time, while also providing sufficient time for planning by schools, LEAs, and OSSE to ensure full, effective implementation that will lead to dramatic increases in student achievement within newly-identified priority schools.

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

At the end of each school year during the three-year implementation of meaningful interventions that meet the Turnaround Principles, OSSE will determine if each priority school has made "significant progress," "some progress," or "little/no progress" in three areas: meeting academic goals, progress on U.S. Department of Education-defined leading areas, and progress toward fully implementing the selected intervention. Based on these three independent determinations, OSSE will make a summary determination of whether the

school is making sufficient progress. In doing so, OSSE will use the same detailed criteria it uses for SIG-served schools to make progress determinations.

**Detailed Criteria for Determinations of Sufficient Progress**

OSSE's determination of sufficient progress will be based on independent determinations in the following three areas: student achievement results (using new accountability measurement), data on the leading indicators, and school-level progress of intervention implementation. To receive an overall "sufficient progress" determination, the school must have made "significant progress" in at least one of the three areas or have made "some progress" in at least two of the three areas. Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's final requirements for SIG, any school that meets its annual student achievement goals will automatically receive a determination of "sufficient progress." For schools that do not make "significant progress" in any area and make "little or no progress" in two or more areas, the overall determination will be "insufficient progress."

- Student achievement results: Each school's student achievement target set in the school improvement plan, which aligns with the new accountability metrics, will be compared with its actual end of year student achievement data.
- Data on the leading indicators: Each LEA with one or more priority schools will submit data on the leading indicators listed in the U.S. Department of Education's final SIG regulations for each school year it has one or more priority schools. A school will be evaluated on the progress it makes for each leading indicator compared to data from its baseline year. For each leading indicators (i.e. attendance, discipline and teacher effectiveness) a school will be given one point if it has made "no to little progress," two points if it has made "some progress," or three points if it has made "significant progress" for the leading indicator during the school year. The average scores across the leading indicators will determine overall progress made in the leading indicators area. Schools with an average less than 1.5 will have made "little to no progress," schools with an average between 1.5 and 2.24 will have made "some progress," and schools with an average of at least 2.25 will have made "significant progress."
- School-level progress of intervention implementation: Each LEA with one or more priority schools will submit a mid-year and annual report that it has one or more priority schools for each school on the progress of the school improvement intervention implementation. From the implementation report and data gathered through on-site and/or other monitoring, OSSE will determine whether a school made "significant progress," "some progress," or "little or no progress" toward full

implementation of the intervention. A school will be evaluated on its level of implementation for each of its intervention's required activities. For each required activity, a school will be given one point if it has made "little to no progress," two points if it has made "some progress," or three points if it has made "significant progress" in implementing that required activity during the school year. The average scores from the required activities will determine overall progress for intervention implementation. Schools with an average less than 1.5 will have made "little to no progress," schools with an average between 1.5 and 2.24 will have made "some progress," and schools with an average of at least 2.25 will have made "significant progress."

A school will remain identified as a priority school until it demonstrates sufficient progress toward full implementation of its selected intervention model for three years (not necessarily consecutive), subject to revisions each year that it fails to demonstrate sufficient progress. At that time, the school will automatically transition to identification as a focus school for the subsequent three years.

If a school is deemed to be making sufficient progress at the end of each of the originally-planned three years of implementation, then the school will exit priority status at the end of the original three-year implementation period. If, however, a school is deemed not to be making sufficient progress at the end of any year during its three-year implementation, it will be required to adjust its plan and one additional year will be added to its overall intervention timeline. For example, if a school makes sufficient progress in years one and two, but not in year three, a fourth year will be added to its implementation, after which it may exit priority status if it makes sufficient progress during that fourth year.

The chart below shows several examples of exit timelines for priority schools; “Yes” indicates that sufficient progress was made, “No” indicates that sufficient progress was not made, and “Exit” indicates that the school exited priority status at the beginning of the school year.

| School | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School A | Yes | Yes | Yes | Exit | | |
| School B | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Exit | |
| School C | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Exit |

These criteria ensure that the lowest-performing schools in the District of Columbia are held to high standards for fully and effectively implementing selected intervention models to ensure that student achievement improves significantly over time. Only when this has been

demonstrated will a school exit priority status. That said, three full years of "sufficient progress" indicates that the school has built a foundation for academic achievement that justifies a move to "focus school" status. The automatic identification of a former priority school as a focus school ensures continued OSSE and LEA oversight and support.

As stated previously, if a school that was identified as a priority school is again identified as a priority school at the end of its three-year intervention implementation, OSSE will make a recommendation for closure or alternative governance. This aligns with an SEA's authority for state takeover in ESEA Section 1116(b)(8)(B)(iv).

## 2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools."

The overall proficiency/growth index score is compared to a set of cut scores to classify a school. The currently proposed cut scores are below. These will be revisited annually and be increased over time as the priority and focus categories no longer make up 15% of schools.

The current identification criteria are below.

| Category | From | To |
|---|---|---|
| Reward | 80 | 100+ |
| Rising | 45 | 79 |
| Developing | 35 | 44 |
| Focus | 25 | 34 |
| Priority | 0 | 24 |

A school will be identified as a focus school if its proficiency and growth index score is between 25 and 34 or if it is in the bottom 10% of schools for graduation rate for only one year.

2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will

be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Similar to efforts to be undertaken with priority schools, OSSE believes that partnering with LEAs will be critical in moving further and faster in addressing persistent underperformance, including closing or consolidating schools. OSSE will make available tools for LEA and school-based improvement teams to assess their needs, develop a plan for improvement, and implement action steps to ensure student learning improves in each priority and focus school. Through collaboration with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Public Charter School Board (PCSB), human capital task force, student growth task force and the Deputy Mayor of Education's Office, State Board of Education, and other partners, OSSE will enhance the effectiveness and coherence of district systems to support school improvement.

In addition, OSSE will evaluate, support, and monitor schools and LEAs around instructional leadership, curriculum, professional development, instruction, assessments, staff evaluation, human capital and financial/asset management. OSSE will continue efforts that support significant action with 10% of the lowest-achieving schools and implement rigorous intervention models to improve academic achievement, increase graduation rates, and close achievement gaps among subgroups, particularly students with special needs and English language learners.

**SEA Level Accountability**

In addition to providing Race to the Top and SIG funding that may be available to support the implementation of these models in schools that meet the federal criteria for receiving SIG funds, OSSE will require an LEA with one or more focus schools to reserve a necessary and reasonable amount from its Title I allocation during the one-year implementation period to support the implementation of targeted interventions in each focus school.

As part of its statewide network of tiered support, OSSE will collaborate and coordinate with DCPS, PCSB, and Public Charter LEAs with schools identified as focus in the process for supporting schools. Schools identified by OSSE as focus schools will have no less than half a year and no more than 1 year to plan for implementation of selected model and interventions. This will allow for sufficient collaborations between LEAs, schools, parents and the school community which has indicated the role for OSSE to have stronger oversight.

OSSE will require the development of a one-year improvement plan by the LEA for each focus school based on a school-level needs assessment or quality school review conducted in each focus school by a visiting review team that includes staff from OSSE and the DCPS Office of School Turnaround for DCPS schools or the PCSB for public charter schools. LEAs with focus schools will submit a one-year plan for the implementation of targeted interventions for each

of its focus schools. Information gathered from the needs assessment will inform the selection of the targeted interventions and the school's one-year plan. OSSE will then make recommendations and provide guidance to the LEA around the development of its school improvement plan during the planning year.

Upon submission by the LEAs of its school improvement plan and performance targets for each focus school to OSSE, OSSE will approve the use of Title I funds based on the quality of the school's needs analysis, intervention selection, improvement plan, mid-year and annual targets, and the LEAs capacity to implement targeted interventions.

To ensure that OSSE can provide effective guidance and support to LEAs and schools, each school's improvement plan will include mid-year and annual performance targets set by the LEA, in consultation with schools and parents, across four areas: academic achievement, school climate, community and parent involvement, and resource management. These ambitious and achievable performance metrics will be tailored to each school based on its data and needs assessment for OSSE to use in its guidance and support to LEAs and schools. LEAs and schools will be allowed to use Title I reservation to support data management and reporting for the purposes of school improvement reporting. PCSB will submit on behalf of LEAs mid-year and end of year reports to OSSE so that OSSE can provide guidance and recommendations to the LEA and school. This will support OSSE's oversight of school improvement.

During the school's implementation of the school improvement plan and targeted interventions, OSSE will monitor PCSB's implementation of the LEA's turnaround plan and the school's progress in meeting its mid-year performance targets and make recommendations to the LEAs and PCSB to adjust implementation of the improvement plan. Throughout the school year, OSSE will also assign assistance liaisons and accountability monitors to provide support to LEAs and in each focus school, as needed. At the end of the school year, OSSE will analyze all data and monitoring reviews to assess the school's progress in implementing the targeted interventions and its progress in meeting the mid-year and annual performance indicators. OSSE will then develop an annual progress report for all priority schools that will be publicly available.

If a focus school fails to meet its mid-year and annual performance targets, OSSE will strongly recommend PCSB and LEAs with focus schools adjustments to interventions including, but not limited to, a restriction of the flexibility in the use of Title I funds, the redirecting of Title I funds to activities that have a greater likelihood of school improvement such as hiring a school improvement coach and partnerships with external organizations with evidence of effectiveness in the area of school improvement, and the implementation of other SIG requirements such as using the CAPStar tool, found at

www.centerii.org/SchoolRestructuring/login.aspx, to manage the school improvement plan and activities. CAPStar is the District of Columbia's online continuous school improvement planning and monitoring tool developed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement that allows schools to assess the their implementation of indicators of effective practice, select priority objectives aligned to those indicators, plan action steps to address deficiencies related to those objectives, implement those action steps, and evaluate progress.

**LEA Level Accountability**

The success of this waiver application and its upcoming implementation is founded on the belief that OSSE plays a supportive role to LEAs and schools. For this reason, we believe in LEA autonomy and with that flexibility, within the boundaries set by statutory regulations, in how they implement Title I programs and use Title I funds. For this to be successful, a strong belief in accountability is necessary to improve academic achievement and move students towards college and career readiness. Using the OSSE designated Accountability Index, focus schools will require support to implement their program with fidelity, evidenced by low growth, low achievement, and/or low graduation/attendance for all students or for specific subgroups of their population.

As stated previously, the District operates in an education landscape that includes one large Local Education Agency (LEA), DC Public Schools (DCPS), and multiple public charter school LEAs that are responsible for the oversight of teachers and school administrators. For purposes of this section as it relates to ESEA Title I Accountability, the Public Charter School Board as the authorizer of Charter Schools will be viewed to act in the capacity of an LEA for charter schools identified as focus schools.

To build upon the work already begun by DCPS with their school level scorecard and PCSB with their performance management framework, we have included in this section how each party, acting in the role of LEA for purposes of ESEA Title I accountability and school improvement will support schools identified as focus schools.

**DC Public Schools Accountability**

For schools in Focus status, DC Public Schools believes that it is important to tier these schools into two different categories: Cohort I and Cohort II. The schools in Cohort II will be the schools that are in danger of entering priority status whereas the schools in Cohort I will have more flexibility. The following interventions will be applied Schools identified as Focus:

Cohort I:

- **Maintain and Enhance Continuous Improvement School Activities** Develop and

implement a plan to improve school's success in their Comprehensive School Plan. School must identify reasons for failing to meet AMOs and research based improvement.

- **Maximize Instructional Time.** Examine and reorganize school schedule to provide options for increased learning time during the school day.
- **Professional Development**. Mandatory professional development around best practices in school turnaround for all staff.

Cohort II:

- **Cohort I Plan.** Revise and re-evaluate Cohort I plan (Comprehensive School Plan) to learn from successes and failures of prior implementation. Develop and implement a more strategic and aggressive implementation plan. School must identify reasons for failing to meet AMOs and research based improvement.
- **Funding.** Allocate local school funding for the implementation of extended day learning opportunities.
- **Staffing.** Consider replacing relevant school staff.
- **Autonomy**. Decrease school autonomy and increase district oversight, DCPS selects a turnaround model.
- **Professional Development**. Mandatory professional development around best practices in school turnaround for all staff.

***Note:*** *Any intervention being required for Continuous Improvement Schools may also be applied to Focus schools.*

The Office of School Turnaround would monitor the progress of Focus schools. For schools in focus status, the specialist assigned to the school from the Office of School Turnaround would work with the Instructional Superintendent and the principal to support the development of the plan, determine the appropriate mid-year and end of year targets. Schools would be able to use the data on the School Performance Dashboard Initiative (SPDI) to track their on-going progress.

**Public Charter Schools Accountability**

Using the Accountability Index, which accounts for performance across subgroups, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education will identify focus schools. Those charter schools

designated as focus schools will most likely fall in Tier III on the Performance Management Framework. Therefore, they are subject to closure under current PCSB policies as described above. Scoring within this range indicates that these schools may be struggling to implement their program, evidenced potentially by low growth, low achievement, and/or low graduation/attendance for all students or for specific subgroups of their population.

Public charter schools are schools of choice that have exclusive control over their curriculum, instruction, personnel and finance; therefore, these schools will be given choices to improve their performance. The wide variety of supports available to schools gives schools plenty of options. The DC Public Charter School Board views focus schools as those that, with additional support, have the capacity to remedy their performance gaps. Because of the unique differences among charter schools, this support requires intensive focus on the needs of an individual school. Furthermore, as outlined in the School Reform Act, as amended, charters schools have the autonomy to implement an academic program aligned with its mission and operate the school as it sees fit. As such, the DC Public Charter School Board intends this support to include a four-step process:

Step One: Assess: The DC Public Charter School Board, using historical and current outcome data embedded in its performance management frameworks for finance, compliance, and academics, coupled with qualitative data gathered through school visits, will make an initial determination on what type of support the school requires to improve its performance.

Step Two: Implementation: Charter schools will be responsible for implementing an action plan designed to address the needs of specific subgroups or their entire school population based on an analysis of data. As dictated by law, charter schools are granted autonomy; this autonomy extends to the rights of charter LEAs to seek partnerships with any of the charter support organizations in the District to aid in the implementation of their plan. As cited in a survey conducted by the New Schools Venture Fund in 2011, many organizations, such as The Achievement Network and the DC Special Education Cooperative, were rated high by Tier I schools. The DC Public Charter School Board will facilitate partnerships between these organizations and focus schools, based on needs identified in the action plan. Support garnered from these organizations offers charters designated as focus schools with an additional layer of assistance that exists beyond the influence of the authorizer. Regardless of potential partnerships, it falls within the auspices of charter LEAs to implement action items and assess progress in whole school and/or subgroup performance.

Step Three: Progress Monitoring: The DC Public Charter School Board will monitor the progress of schools toward their goals. Strategies for quarterly monitoring include onsite visits, review of interim assessment data, and an examination of data on the effectiveness of strategies chosen by the school. Ratings on the success of the implementation will be

followed with a review of the action plan, and possible adjustments. Focus schools will be required to track interim assessment data by subgroup performance and engage with the DC Public Charter School Board in discussions of progress made throughout the year. Additionally, focus schools will be required to develop metrics for assessing the efficacy of strategies outlined in the action plan and tracking their success.

In partnership with the OSSE, the DC Public Charter School Board can also monitor the expenditures of school funds. Focus schools will be required to submit detailed quarterly accounting reports of funds spent toward action items. Based on the action plan and data provided by the school on the effectiveness of implemented strategies, the DC Public Charter School Board will offer guidance and/or correction to schools. PCSB will share this information with OSSE to assist in the review of the school's implementation of the school improvement plan and targeted interventions.

Step Four: Re-Assess: At the end of this cycle, the DC Public Charter School Board, in collaboration with the focus school, will assess the progress made towards improvements in whole school and/or subgroup performance and decreases in achievement gaps. As an authorizer, the DC Public Charter School Board respects the autonomy of charter schools and is committed to measuring the success of outputs not the value of inputs. In this way, the DC Public Charter School Board will the school's new Accountability Index score and its performance on the PMF and make a recommendation for charter revocation, continued support, or reduced monitoring. Schools can become candidates for charter revocation if they are, once again, designated as a focus school, designated as a priority school, shows a decrease in academic performance, as measured by a summative PMF score, or remain in Tier III for three of five years.

**Summary**

OSSE will continue to commit to closing all achievement gaps and ensuring that all students in DC graduate from high school to be college and career ready. To reach this goal, focus schools must make dramatic and rapid improvements that accelerate student achievement. OSSE will provide tools for LEA and school-based improvement teams to assess their needs, develop a plan for improvement, and implement action steps to ensure student learning improves in each focus school.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

At the end of the school year during the one-year implementation of a school improvement

plan and targeted interventions, OSSE will determine if each focus school has made "significant progress," "some progress," or "little/no progress" in three areas: meeting academic goals, progress on U.S. Department of Education-defined leading indicators, and progress toward fully implementing the school improvement plan and targeted intervention. Based on these three, independent determinations, OSSE will make a summary determination of whether the school is making sufficient progress. In doing so, OSSE will use the same detailed criteria it uses for SIG-served schools to make progress determinations.

**Detailed Criteria for Determinations of Sufficient Progress**

OSSE's determination of sufficient progress will be based on independent determinations in the following three areas: student achievement results (measured by the DC CAS), data on the leading indicators, and school-level progress of intervention implementation. To receive an overall "sufficient progress" determination, the school must have made "significant progress" in at least one of the three areas or have made "some progress" in at least two of the three areas. Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's final requirements for SIG, any school that meets its annual student achievement goals will automatically receive a determination of "sufficient progress." For schools that do not make "significant progress" in any area and make "little or no progress" in two or more areas, the overall determination will be "insufficient progress."

- Student achievement results: Each school's student achievement target set in the school improvement plan, which aligns with the new accountability metrics, will be compared with its actual end of year student achievement data.

- Data on the leading indicators: Each LEA with one or more focus schools will submit data on the leading indicators listed in the U.S. Department of Education's final SIG regulations for each school year it has one or more focus schools. A school will be evaluated on the progress it makes for each leading indicator compared to data from its baseline year. For each leading indicator, a school will be given one point if it has made "no to little progress," two points if it has made "some progress," or three points if it has made "significant progress" for the leading indicator during the school year. The average scores across the leading indicators will determine overall progress made in the leading indicators area. Schools with an average less than 1.5 will have made "little or no progress," schools with an average between 1.5 and 2.24 will have made "some progress," and schools with an average of at least 2.25 will have made "significant progress."

- School-level progress of intervention implementation: Each LEA with one or more

focus schools will submit a mid-year and annual report that it has one or more focus schools for each school on the progress of the school improvement plan and targeted intervention implementation. From the implementation report and data gathered through on-site and/or other monitoring, OSSE will determine whether a school made "significant progress," "some progress," or "little or no progress" toward full implementation of the intervention. A school will be evaluated on its level of implementation for each of its intervention's targeted activities. For each targeted activity, a school will be given one point if it has made "little or no progress," two points if it has made "some progress," or three points if it has made "significant progress" in implementing that targeted activity during the school year. The average scores from the targeted activities will determine overall progress for school improvement plan and targeted intervention implementation. Schools with an average less than 1.5 will have made "no to little progress," schools with an average between 1.5 and 2.24 will have made "some progress," and schools with an average of at least 2.25 will have made "significant progress."

A school identified as a focus school will exit focus status if it is not re-identified as a focus school in any subsequent year, including the first year after its initial identification. If a school meets the criteria in Section 2.E.i to be classified as a focus school for a fourth consecutive year, the school is then identified as a priority school. This plan ensures both that (1) a school remains in focus status as long as it meets the criteria set by OSSE and (2) a school that improves enough to no longer meet the criteria is removed from focus status as soon as possible.

The chart below shows several examples of exit timelines for focus schools; "Yes" indicates that sufficient progress was made, "No" indicates that sufficient progress was not made, and "Exit" indicates that the school exited focus status at the beginning of the school year.

| School | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School A | Yes | Exit | | | |
| School B | Yes | No | Yes | Exit | |
| School C | No | No | No | Yes | Exit |
| School D | No | No | No | No | Priority Designation |

These criteria ensure that the lowest-performing schools in the District of Columbia are held to high standards for fully and effectively implementing selected intervention models to ensure that student achievement improves significantly over time. Only when this has been demonstrated will a school exit focus status. That said, evidence of "sufficient progress"

indicates that the school has built a foundation for academic achievement that justifies exiting "focus school" status. The automatic identification of a former focus school as a priority school ensures continued OSSE and PCSB oversight and support.

OSSE is committed to closing all achievement gaps and ensuring that all students in DC graduate from high school and are college and career ready. Through collaboration with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Public Charter School Board (PCSB), human capital task force, student growth task force and the Deputy Mayor of Education's Office, State Board of Education, and other partners, OSSE will enhance the effectiveness and coherence of district systems to support school improvement. In addition, OSSE will evaluate, support, and monitor schools and LEAs around instructional leadership, curriculum, professional development, instruction, assessments, staff evaluation, human capital and financial/asset management. By doing so, OSSE believes that DC students will show annual academic growth, raise graduation rates, and close achievement gaps, particularly with regard to students with special needs and English language learners in priority schools.

## TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.

**TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOL**

| LEA Name | School Name | School NCES ID # | REWARD SCHOOL | PRIORITY SCHOOL | FOCUS SCHOOL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *See Attachment 9* | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
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| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| **TOTAL # of Schools:** | | | | | |

**Total # of Title I schools in the State: TBD**
**Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: TBD**

| Key | |
|---|---|
| **Reward School Criteria:**<br>**A.** Highest-performing school<br>**B.** High-progress school<br><br>**Priority School Criteria:**<br>**C.** Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group<br>**D.** Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years<br>**E.** Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model | **Focus School Criteria:**<br>**F.** Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate<br>**G.** Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate<br>**H.** A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school |

## 2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

OSSE believes strongly that those professionals who work most directly with students each day are in the best position to identify and respond to the needs of those students. OSSE also believes that the state education agency must provide the tools necessary for school-based teams to assess needs, develop continuous school improvement plans, and implement action steps to ensure that student learning improves in all schools, particularly low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps.

OSSE's framework for intervention and support for priority schools, focus schools, and other schools not making progress stems from these beliefs. While the levels of flexibility change from one category of schools to another, OSSE seeks to maximize the flexibility at the district and school level to plan and implement activities that are deemed most appropriate by the professionals working with those schools. For priority and focus schools, OSSE will require a quality review process in collaboration with LEAs to ensure—and support—the most effective use of Title I funds.

All of OSSE's work is supplemental to two very active agencies in oversight of student achievement in the District of Columbia: the DC Public Charter School Board and the District of Columbia Public Schools. In the plans outlined here, OSSE does not seek or implement authority to require school closure. Instead, OSSE will recommend where appropriate, as is the case for priority schools that fail to improve after 3 years. Both the PCSB and DCPS have policies in place to ensure that schools that fail to improve over a significant number of years are closed.

To improve academic achievement and graduation rates and close achievement gaps for all subgroups, particularly students with special needs and English language learners, OSSE will provide opportunities and services to all LEAs and schools based on the statewide network of tiered support.

**SEA Level Incentives and Supports**

All schools that are not already identified as priority or focus schools and fail to meet their annual measurable objectives will be identified for additional support. In partnership with

DCPS, PCSB and Public Charter LEAs, these schools will be required to identify and respond to the needs of their students using many of the same strategies implemented by focus schools, except these schools will do so with more flexibility and less-directed SEA support.

OSSE will require LEAs that have schools not meeting their AMOs to do the following as part of its Title I grant application:

Describe how the LEA will:

- assess the district's implementation of indicators of effective practice;
- select priority objectives aligned to those indicators;
- plan action steps to address deficiencies related to those objectives;
- implement those action steps; and
- evaluate progress.

Specifically the task of implementing activities, documented through the action steps referred to above, to address deficiencies in school-based practices, which may include:

- supplemental, research-based, job-embedded professional development,
- supplemental instruction to school-selected students through providers, which may include external providers, schools, or local educational agencies,
- any activity that is required within one of the SIG intervention models for priority schools, and/or
- any other activity that is specifically required by an action step included in the plan in support of an objective included by the leadership team.

As part of its statewide network of tiered supports, OSSE believes that providing a differentiated approach to how it serves schools and the autonomy and flexibility it offers is consistent with the requirements of this waiver and will yield maximum benefit to LEAs, schools, and students. The table below illustrates the level of engagement by OSSE to LEAs and schools based on school designation.

**Differentiated Interventions and Supports**

| | **SEA Engagement** | **LEA/School Autonomy** over Activities | **LEA/School Flexibility** in Use of Federal Funds |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Priority Schools** | Very High | Lower | Lower |
| **Focus Schools** | High | Moderate | Moderate |
| **Developing Schools** | Moderate | High | High |
| **Rising Schools** | Low | Very High | Very High |
| **Reward Schools** | Very Low | Very High | Very High |

Without the "intensive interventions" required for priority schools, "targeted interventions" required for focus schools, and "guided interventions" required for developing schools, schools that are making progress (reward schools and rising schools) have the incentive of maximum flexibility in how Title I and other federal funds are used to support continued performance and growth. Many OSSE supports, including support around common core implementation and statewide professional development, remain available to these schools as the schools choose to use them.

The table below outlines the system of incentives and interventions OSSE will implement for all schools in DC.

| **SCHOOL CATEGORY:** | **Reward School** | **Rising School** | **Developing School** | **Focus School** | **Priority School** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Receive SEA Recognition** | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| **Eligible to Receive SEA Financial Reward** | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| **Flexibility in the Use of Funds** | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| **Describe Continuous Improvement in Title I Grant Application** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Implement Self-Selected Interventions** | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| **Receive Progress Monitoring to Inform Plan** | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| **Implement Meaningful Interventions** | No | No | No | No | Yes |

OSSE recognizes the significant value added by supplemental reports available to LEAs and schools through work completed by DCPS and the PCSB. Both the DCPS School Scorecard and the PSCB PMF provide comprehensive information on school performance that goes beyond the focused data incorporated into OSSE's system of classifying schools for recognition, accountability and support. This information can be used by LEAs and schools to inform the assessment of needs and planning for continuous school improvement. Within the system of interventions outlined below, LEAs and schools retain the autonomy and responsibility for identifying and implementing strategies and activities that will most significantly and positively affect student achievement.

**LEA and School Level Incentives and Supports**

As part of their Title I grant application, rising and developing schools will be required to identify and respond to the needs of their students and do so with more flexibility and less-directed SEA support.

**DC Public Schools Incentives and Supports**

For schools identified as developing schools under the SEA Level Accountability Index, DCPS will implement one of the following interventions for each of these schools:

- Develop and Implement an Improvement Plan: School must develop a two-year improvement plan. School must identify reasons for failing to meet AMOs and research based improvement practices.
- Professional Development and Collaboration: School will be required to create more time for teacher collaboration and professional development.
- School Leadership Requirements: School leadership is required to attend mandatory professional development around data interpretation analysis, root cause analysis, and implications for instruction.

The Office of School Turnaround would monitor the progress of plans. For schools in developing status, the specialist assigned to the school from the Office of School Turnaround would work with the Instructional Superintendent and the principal to support the development of a plan, determine the appropriate mid-year and end-of-year targets. Schools would be able to use the data on the School Performance Dashboard Initiative (SPDI) online dashboard to track their on-going progress.

**Public Charter Schools Incentives and Supports**

Based on the SEA Level Accountability Index, schools not identified as priority or focus schools and who do not earn reward school status will be designated as schools in good standing. This group represents charter schools that are successfully implementing their educational program and will most likely fall in Tier I and II of the Performance Management Framework. Their success comes from their ability to leverage their autonomy and individually pursue improvement strategies. These LEAs have access to charter support organizations and OSSE-sponsored trainings, as well as PCSB support, if needed. If schools fail to improve on the PMF, they will eventually fall into Tier III, when PCSB will start enforcing stricter monitoring practices, as described in the Performance Management Guidelines.

**Summary**

The statewide network of tiered support as described in this section will improve academic achievement, increase graduation rates and close achievement gaps. Working in partnership with DCPS, PCSB and Charter LEAs will be critical to the successful implementation of our new differentiated recognition, accountability, and support.

## 2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
ii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools; and
iii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources).

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

Building capacity at OSSE, LEAs and schools is critical for increasing student achievement, improving graduation rates, and closing achievement gaps. Throughout this document, examples of how OSSE, in its role as the SEA, DCPS, PCSB and Charter LEAs will support the work already underway as part of RTTT and that needs to be further enhanced to meet the requirements of CCSS implementation, differentiated recognition, accountability, and

support system, and teacher effectiveness.

The District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is in a unique position to use the Common Core State Standards to launch the next level of reform for all students in DC, both in our traditional public schools and those served by public charter schools. OSSE's ultimate goal for the adoption of the Common Core State Standards is a district-wide understanding on a deep, internalized and instructional level that benefits all learners by preparing them to be college-and career-ready. OSSE has the great opportunity to impact all teachers through state level support and professional development. Also, because of our small size and proximity, we are able to comprehensively implement the standards sooner than most states and begin the transition of our assessment to be in alignment.

OSSE will build the capacity for LEAs and schools to:

- implement the common core through technical assistance and training on the standards;
- develop websites and publications helping teachers align instruction to the common core and share exemplary lessons;
- provide training on anchor papers and other assessment preparation technical assistance;
- provide high quality data at the standard and strand level on DC CAS aligned to both the historical DC standards and to the common core standards;
- connect schools struggling with implementation to external partners to ensure that students reap the maximum benefit from the Common Core State Standards; and
- provide support for schools to utilize that information to improve their instruction.

OSSE is committed to closing all achievement gaps and ensuring that all students in DC graduate from high school and are college and career ready. In order to reach this goal, priority and focus schools must make dramatic and rapid improvements that accelerate student achievement. OSSE will provide tools for LEA and school-based improvement teams to assess their needs, develop a plan for improvement, and implement action steps to ensure student learning improves in each priority and focus school. LEAs will be provided with flexibility in the appropriate tools to use in the process and the new Department of Innovation and Improvement will provide targeted technical assistance in this process.

Also, the inclusion of science in the accountability system is important because DC has made a significant commitment to STEM as science it is important for careers in the next century. The new accountability system will ensure that it does not promote narrowing the curriculum to reading and math. This will require support for all LEAs. To determine the most appropriate form of this support, OSSE is convening an implementation taskforce for Science. This group will guide how resources and support for the implementation of Science will be used.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Department of Special Education Training and Technical Assistance unit within the Division of Special Education in collaboration with other divisions within OSSE provides core professional development, trainings and technical assistance to all local education agencies in the District of Columbia. One major aspect of the core professional development is to provide high quality evidenced based trainings to all educators in the District of Columbia with a specific focus on improving the educational outcomes for students with disabilities. The local education agencies have been provided with professional development and ongoing trainings on specific special education topics in a sequential order to build a solid core instructional background knowledge in research evidenced based best practices to address the instructional needs of all children.

In an effort to address the needs of special education students who are placed in general education settings, we have provided professional development trainings and toolkits in the following areas:

- The IEP Process and Standards Base Effective Goal Writing
- Universal Design for Learning
- Least Restrictive Environment and Inclusionary Practices
- Effective Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Classrooms
- The Administrator's Roles and Responsibilities in Inclusive Schools
- Proactive and Positive Approaches to Classroom Management
- Authentic Performance Tasks
- Common Formative Assessments
- Common Core State Standards and a Balanced Approach to Mathematics Instruction

- Response to Intervention: Using a Tiered Reading Model to Support Struggling Readers
- Behavioral Response to Intervention
- Interventions: Evidence Based Behavioral Strategies for Individual Students
- Reading Instruction for students with disabilities
- Instructional Coaching to Support Teaching and Learning

As described previously, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (ELSEC) within OSSE, the statewide network of tiered support will be structured in a way that maximizes resources both within and outside the agency. In the ELSEC division, the department of Innovation and Improvement, currently part of the Race to the Top team, will oversee the implementation of the supports provided to LEAs and schools. This department then works collaboratively and cross-functionally with other divisions within OSSE to establish a core team of cross-departmental OSSE staff that will then partner and assist LEAs and schools with needs assessment, coordination and development of federal grants programs, and use of federal funds.

Additionally, the OSSE office of data management will utilize SLED to provide LEAs with a variety of data elements that can help support instructional improvement. The first phase of this will be access to more comprehensive information on all DC state assessments, college attainment data, and college readiness assessments. Over time ODM will provide technical assistance in understanding and making effective use of this data as well as use it as a mechanism for dissemination of technical assistance in the use of data.

OSSE will also work collaboratively and coordinate with DCPS, PCSB, Public Charter LEAs, schools and external partners, where applicable including education advocacy groups, community based organizations, and parent groups to develop a strong statewide network of tiered support.

OSSE's position with respect to supporting teacher and leader evaluation systems is as follows: by providing standards, guidance, and technical assistance, OSSE will help LEAs develop more rigorous teacher and leader evaluation and support systems. These rigorous and meaningful evaluation systems will improve instructional practices, resulting in increased teacher and leader effectiveness, greater student achievement, and higher graduation rates. To advance this work, OSSE has formed a teacher effectiveness team that will provide exemplars, technical assistance and training to LEAs, and will coordinate peer reviews and

other intra-district collaboration.

As part of its SEA level responsibilities, OSSE will build capacity at the LEA and school level by providing guidance, technical assistance/support, and opportunities to participate in state-level trainings on common core implementation, developing and implementing teacher and leader evaluation systems, understanding the state-level differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, serving special populations, and how to leverage federal resources (Title I, SIG, Title II, Title III, and other federal) to maximize coordination and academic achievement. Combined with the activities embedded in the statewide network of tiered support as described in this document, timely and effective monitoring will take place, LEAs and schools will be held to a high standard of accountability, and schools will be supported as needed to increase academic achievement, improve graduation rates, and close achievement gaps among subgroups.

# PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

## 3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

| Option A | Option B | Option C |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ If the SEA has not already developed any guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:<br><br>i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year;<br><br>ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and<br><br>iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14). | ☒ If the SEA has already developed and adopted one or more, but not all, guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:<br><br>i. a copy of any guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;<br><br>ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11);<br><br>iii. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt the remaining guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year;<br><br>iv. a description of the process used to involve teachers and principals in the development of the | ☐ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide:<br><br>i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students;<br><br>ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and<br><br>iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | adopted guidelines and the process to continue their involvement in developing any remaining guidelines; and<br><br>v. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the remaining guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14). | |

The Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) believes that students come first and what matters most is what happens in the classroom. OSSE also believes that the best qualified professionals to impact student learning are teachers and school leaders. To that end, OSSE believes that if we remove barriers to education and provide the necessary supports to maximize student learning, then school leaders and teachers who are best qualified to provide solutions can improve student outcomes.

OSSE's theory of action with respect to supporting teacher and leader evaluation systems is to provide standards, guidance, and technical assistance to help LEAs develop more rigorous teacher and leader evaluation and support systems. These rigorous and meaningful evaluation systems will improve instructional practices, resulting in increased teacher and leader effectiveness, greater student achievement, and higher graduation rates.

As part of the outreach efforts to obtain stakeholder input in the development of this waiver application, teachers expressed concern about evaluations based on assessments that are not aligned to schools' curricula and that do not incorporate critical barriers such as chronic truancy. Teachers also expressed concerns that growth measures may not capture growth for students whose performance falls several grades below actual grade level. Teachers and leaders expressed concern about including growth measures for all grades and subjects in teacher evaluations when there are no valid or objective means of assessing performance in these subjects and grades.

Options such as end-of-year tests and a portfolio of several assessments and external assessments (ex: ACT/SAT for high school) were discussed. It was suggested that growth measures be very lightly weighted in teacher evaluations given that assessments for non-tested grades may be of questionable quality and validity. It is for these reasons that OSSE will ensure that teachers and leaders are prominently involved in the development of

new evaluation systems, so there is buy-in for the new process, the measures included, and the recipients of these evaluations find them meaningful toward improving practice.

With respect to public charter schools, the DC School Reform Act of 1995 provides Charter LEAs with complete autonomy over personnel, including evaluation systems, hiring, and firing. Therefore, like other State Education Agencies, OSSE's role is to develop policy that allows for local flexibility, provide guidance, disseminate best practices, and monitor to ensure LEAs meet state and federal guidelines.

Public charter schools are autonomous schools that have exclusive control over their personnel. In D.C., all public charter school employees are at-will employees and can be hired and fired at any time during the school year. The schools know that their success is based almost exclusively on the caliber of their teaching staff, and they go through great pains to attract and hire the absolute best from across the nation. Still, it is not easy to find the right fit; therefore, teachers must be evaluated regularly and lower performing ones must be either supported or released.

While schools that signed on to RTTT agreed to pilot and implement teacher evaluation systems, some public charter schools chose not to receive the funding because they did not want to give up their exclusive control over their personnel, among other autonomies. In fact, the highest performing, the most innovative, and those that serve alternative populations make up the majority of the non-RTTT LEAs. Of the 29 charter campuses that did not sign up for the funding, 15 serve untested populations such as early childhood, adults and disengaged youth working toward GEDs. Of the remaining 14 that serve tested grades, half of them are considered "Tier 1" by the PCSB's Performance Management Framework and all but one are exceeding the state average on the DC CAS standardized assessment. These schools include nationally recognized programs such as the Achievement Prep, Two Rivers, Washington Latin, Howard University Math and Science Middle School, Washington Math Science and Technology, Washington Yu Ying, and the SEED School.

Based on DC's participation in Race to the Top (RTTT) and the number of LEAs that are currently implementing more rigorous evaluation systems, OSSE is selecting Option B. We have existing state teacher and leader evaluation requirements for RTTT participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs). RTTT LEAs are about 57% of the District's LEAs and these LEAs enroll approximately 90% of the city's students. After extensive feedback from the PCSB and charter LEAs, it has been determined that since the ultimate goal of these more rigorous evaluation systems is to improve student achievement, charter LEAs that are already helping students achieve and are designated as having only reward, rising, or developing schools in our new accountability framework will not have to meet these new evaluation requirements.

Therefore, only Title I LEAs with focus and priority schools will have to implement the new ESEA Flexibility Waiver requirements in those schools. Race to the Top LEAs will continue to meet RTTT Teacher and Leader Evaluation Requirements and if they have focus and priority schools, they will also need to implement the ESEA Flexibility Waiver evaluation requirements in those schools.

To support the implementation of high quality teacher and leader evaluation systems, OSSE will work closely with LEAs, schools, and other education partners. Specifically, OSSE will disseminate state evaluation requirements, develop voluntary professional standards for teachers and leaders, identify exemplary evaluation systems, provide technical assistance around research and best practices, and review and approve LEA evaluation systems.

Other strategies that relate to increasing teacher and leader effectiveness include the support of high quality teacher and leader pipelines, the improvement of teacher and leader preparation programs, and the revision of teacher licensure regulations that take the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into account. These strategies will improve teacher and leader preparation practices to better prepare teachers and leaders to improve student learning and achievement. Projects related to these strategies are described below.

**Race to the Top Alignment with the ESEA Flexibility Request**

DC's Race to the Top application was designed with the unique human capital context described above in mind. Increasing teacher and leader effectiveness was a primary goal of DC's successful grant application. DC understands that effective teachers and leaders are the foundation for a high-performing educational system. One of RTTT's primary strategies for increasing teacher and leader effectiveness is to improve the quality and rigor of educator evaluation systems. These systems should provide teachers and leaders with clear expectations, a common vision of effective instruction, meaningful feedback about how to improve practice, and inform teacher and leader professional development needs. RTTT staff worked with the Human Capital Task Force to develop evaluation requirements that will improve instructional practice and therefore student achievement in RTTT participating LEAs.

Additional Race to the Top initiatives that align with the goal of increasing teacher and leader effectiveness and thereby student achievement, include the Charter School Teacher Pipelines Grant and the Teacher Preparation Scorecard. The Charter School Teacher Pipelines Grant supports the development or expansion of teacher residency programs that recruit, train, evaluate, and place highly effective teachers into both traditional and charter public schools in DC. The Teacher Preparation Scorecard is intended to evaluate teacher preparation programs in DC using a number of indicators of performance, including evaluation data which

will measure program completers' impact on student achievement.

Finally, another competitive grant, the Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness grant focuses on developing professional learning communities that work together to address an educational challenge. Last year a grant was awarded to a consortium of LEAs led by E.L. Haynes to develop an online library of video lessons aligned to Common Core Standards. In addition, OSSE's Educator Licensure and Accreditation unit plans to incorporate CCSS components in its Elementary, English, and Mathematics licensure requirements as the unit revamps it state accreditation and licensure requirements in coordination with the signing of a renewed state partnership agreement with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly NCATE).

OSSE's Race to the Top grant requires that school leader evaluations include student growth to a significant extent and that teacher evaluations include student growth as 50% of the evaluation rating for teachers in English/Language Arts and mathematics in grades 4-8. Including student growth in educator evaluations ensures that educators are focused on improving student achievement. RTTT LEAs must also provide timely and specific feedback to educators about their performance.

Continuous and constructive feedback is critical to improving instructional practice, and feedback is most useful if it is immediate. In addition to providing specific feedback, LEAs are required to provide targeted professional development based on evaluation findings to ensure that professional development focuses on the needs of educators in their schools. LEAs will gauge educator performance using a variety of measures to provide a holistic picture of educator performance. Finally, evaluation results are only meaningful if they are used to improve teacher practice and to inform personnel decisions. OSSE requires that LEAs use these results to inform personnel decisions, such as those about compensation, retention, and promotion.

OSSE will modify the Race to the Top Teacher and Leader Evaluation requirements to meet the guidelines in the U.S. Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility Request and adopt them for all Title I LEAs that include Focus and/or Priority schools. Charter LEAs that are not part of Race to the Top and do not include Focus and/or Priority schools would be exempt from these teacher and leader evaluation requirements, since they have autonomy over personnel. Specifically, to the requirements that are not addressed in the Race to the Top Teacher and Leader Evaluation Requirements are:

- **Ensure validity of measures;**
- **Conduct training for evaluators;**

- **Provide student achievement or growth measures for all teachers and leaders; and**
- **Include teachers and principals in reviewing and revising evaluation systems.**

More detail about these requirements is specified in the next section.

Non-Race to the Top LEAs with Priority and/or Focus schools will have to incorporate student growth as a significant percent to be determined by the LEA of the evaluation rating. Non-Race to the Top LEAs will not have to use the value added model and will not have to count student growth as 50% of the evaluation rating. OSSE will encourage all LEAs to consider how their evaluation systems are aligned with Common Core standards by providing guidance, technical support and training in thinking through this alignment.

**Teacher and Leader Evaluation Systems in DC**

Race to the Top LEAs have developed a variety of unique evaluation models that meet Race to the Top requirements. Every RTTT LEA has developed an evaluation system that is rigorous and meets the unique needs of the LEA. DC Public Schools' IMPACT evaluation system is one of the more established systems and has received national attention from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. KIPP DC provides another model of a rigorous evaluation system that also provides continuous feedback and support to teachers. Below is a description of both of these systems.

**DC Public Schools**

IMPACT is the District of Columbia's Public Schools' system for assessing the performance of teachers and other school-based staff. IMPACT ratings for teachers are based on the following elements:

- **Student Achievement** – DCPS believes that a teacher's most important responsibility is to ensure that her or his students learn and grow. For this reason, educators are held accountable for the growth their students make on the DC CAS, or on other assessments if they do not teach a DC CAS grade or subject.
- **Instructional Expertise** – This is assessed through five formal observations each year – three by teachers' administrators and two by independent, expert practitioners called master educators. Feedback and guidance for growth are provided in five post-observation conferences.
- **Collaboration** – Education is very much a team effort. IMPACT factors collaboration by measuring the extent to which educators work together on behalf of students.

- **Professionalism** – Teachers are also held accountable for key professional requirements including following all school policies and procedures and interacting with colleagues, students, families, and community members in a respectful manner.

**KIPP DC**

KIPP DC has a system for evaluating teachers and supporting them in their professional growth through observation, coaching, and feedback. Teachers are evaluated on the basis of the following elements:

- **Student Achievement (50%)**. This component includes value added results for teachers in DC CAS tested grades and subjects and other measures of student achievement for other teachers.

- **School Outcomes Survey (5%).** KIPP DC administers a survey that assesses leading indicators of school health to students, parents, and faculty. These indicators assess school culture and climate and teaching and learning.

- **Teacher Performance on the Competency Model (35%).** KIPP DC has a rubric that assesses teachers' performance on six competencies: Planning; Teaching (instruction and delivery); Managing (behavior, culture, and systems); Assessing; Leadership and Professionalism; and Beliefs and Character.

  **School-wide Achievement (10%).** All teachers are evaluated in part based on school-wide performance on the DC CAS and another standardized measure of school-wide performance.
  Teachers set goals with one of their school leaders at the beginning and mid-point of the school year. Throughout the school year, school leaders engage in both formal and informal observations and coaching sessions that involve lesson plan feedback, lesson observation feedback, student work and achievement feedback, goal progress, and on-going support. All teachers have at least two formal observations each year.

**Modifying State Requirements**

During our stakeholder engagement, participants expressed concern about the capacity of LEAs to conduct validity analyses of their evaluation systems. Therefore, OSSE now proposes to conduct these analyses by looking for alignment between teacher and leader evaluation ratings and student achievement and growth in a school. Stakeholders were also concerned about the ability of LEAs to identify student growth measures for teachers in non-tested grades and subjects. OSSE has broadened its definition of student growth measures from

student growth only to allow for both measures of growth and achievement for teachers in non-tested grades and subjects.

In developing evaluation requirements for Title I LEAs that have focus and priority schools, OSSE will build on the RTTT evaluation requirements to address the U.S. Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility guidelines, to reflect lessons learned from the first year of implementation of the requirements and to allow maximum LEA flexibility for non-Race to the Top-participating LEAs. These guidelines will reflect the idea that evaluation systems go beyond informing personnel decisions. They are also about providing support to teachers and opportunities for professional growth as determined by the LEA.

OSSE will then adopt these requirements for all Title I LEAs that include Priority and/or Focus schools by January 2013. These LEAs will develop evaluation systems that meet these requirements and will pilot these systems for one year before full implementation.

Race to the Top LEAs with focus and priority schools will need to address the following new criteria:

- Ensuring validity of measures: OSSE will analyze the relationship between student achievement and LEA teacher and leader evaluation ratings by analyzing the alignment between teacher and leader evaluation ratings and student growth and proficiency in a school. OSSE will share results with LEAs so that modifications can be made to their evaluation systems. OSSE will also provide exemplars of valid observation rubrics that LEAs can choose to adopt.

- Training for evaluators: LEAs will be required to provide training to all of their evaluators and develop plans to work towards inter-rater reliability among evaluators within the LEA.

- Student growth for teachers and leaders: LEAs will be required to include a measure of student growth as a significant component of teacher and principal evaluations in tested grades and subjects and other measures of student achievement or growth in non-tested grades and subjects in grades K-12. LEAs will use standardized measures, where available. LEAs may pilot an assessment before using it for evaluation purposes. In the absence of standardized assessment results, OSSE will grant LEAs flexibility to propose their own assessments. For teachers in non-tested grades and subjects, LEAs may use end-of-course tests, objective performance-based assessments; student learning objectives; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across schools within an LEA. The SEA will hire a contractor

to develop a list of possible assessments that could be used for the various subject areas. The contractor will also work with OSSE to explore assessments for potential use in early childhood and adult education classrooms in future years. LEAs may also volunteer to participate in the statewide teacher value-added model. Finally, OSSE will offer the school-wide growth measure as an option for teacher and/or principal evaluation. LEAs may choose to use the school-wide growth measure as a portion of the evaluation rating of all teachers in a school, rather than having subject specific growth measures. OSSE will review and approve LEA plans for measuring student growth for use in teacher and leader evaluations.

- Include teachers and principals in reviewing and revising evaluation systems: LEAs will be required to describe how they will include teachers and principals in reviewing and revising teacher and principal evaluation systems and making revisions as needed.

In addition, there are several ways OSSE will support LEA efforts to implement the CCSS and to infuse the CCSS into classroom teaching and evaluations. For example, OSSE will provide professional development to LEAs in assessing the quality and complexity of texts teachers are teaching and their ability to help students respond to text-based questions and write evidence-based responses. OSSE will also assist LEAs with infusing the CCSS in teacher evaluation systems by:

- providing professional development around interpretation of the CCSS;
- developing a voluntary competency exam that LEAs and teacher and leader preparation programs can use to assess teachers' knowledge of the CCSS; and
- identifying observation rubrics that are aligned with CCSS.

As part of this flexibility waiver application, OSSE requests that the LEAs with approved evaluation systems be exempt from various Highly Qualified requirements under NCLB. Once an LEA has an approved evaluation system in place, they will no longer need to develop Highly Qualified Teacher improvement plans nor set aside specific funds to ensure their teachers are Highly Qualified. However, the expectation remains that LEAs will continue to ensure teachers are Highly Qualified. OSSE will shift from providing technical assistance to LEAs in developing and implementing their HQT improvement plans to developing and implementing high quality teacher and leader evaluation systems.

With stakeholder involvement, OSSE will also develop and adopt voluntary teacher, leader, and professional development performance standards by December 2012 as a way of providing guidance to the LEAs that are developing new evaluation systems. The standards will reflect the skills that teachers are expected to have in order to teach Common Core State

Standards. OSSE will develop teacher performance standards based on the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (InTASC), promising models from other states, CCSS, and existing LEA standards. OSSE will develop school leadership performance standards based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), New Leaders for New Schools, and promising models from other states as well as LEA standards. For the professional development standards, OSSE will draw from Learning Forward's professional development standards which articulate a vision of professional development that is continuous, job-embedded, and part of the school day.

**Guidance and Technical Assistance**

OSSE will provide and facilitate technical assistance to LEAs as they develop and implement evaluation and support systems. To ensure alignment with Common Core State Standards, OSSE will provide guidance and technical assistance in aligning the CCSS with teacher and leader evaluation systems, and in evaluating teachers of English Language Learners and special education students. To support this work, OSSE can use discretionary grant funds to provide technical assistance from national providers to LEAs in developing their systems.

Identifying exemplary evaluation systems is critical to this process. To that end, OSSE will identify exemplary evaluation systems that national organizations have determined are research-based and have evidence of validity. These exemplars will provide guidance to LEAs in developing or modifying their evaluation systems.

OSSE will also develop a web page that will be the source of information about teacher and leader evaluation requirements, standards, and evaluation systems. This web page will include OSSE policies, information about best practices, and presentation materials that LEAs can use in their communications with teachers and leaders. OSSE will also create forums for LEAs to share information about their challenges and successes in implementing teacher and leader evaluation systems.

**Professional Development**

Like many of the key components already mentioned, robust professional development opportunities will support development and implementation of teacher and leader evaluation systems. OSSE will also continue to provide high quality professional development offerings to teachers and leaders throughout the District to help them effectively implement CCSS and address areas of need identified through evaluations. The Office of Training and Technical Assistance Unit offers a variety of professional learning experiences for special and general educators that focus on:

- Compliance with federal and local requirements for special education and related

services;

- Effective pedagogy and rigorous curriculum, including alignment to the CCSS;
- Implementation of differentiated instruction and behavioral support; and
- Appropriate use of accommodations, modifications and assistive technologies.

OSSE publishes a guide annually about its many professional development offerings. The Office of Standards, Assessments and Accountability also provides professional development sessions that focus on interpreting the CCSS and their inclusion on the new DC CAS. This office also provides professional development on understanding and interpreting the ACCESS assessment for English Language Learners and on providing appropriate instruction and assessment for English Language Learners.

**Stakeholder Input**

OSSE has received input from the RTTT Human Capital Task Force comprised of various stakeholders on revisions to the Evaluation System Requirements and will also seek feedback from other key stakeholders. Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, the Human Capital Task Force will be expanded to include non-RTTT LEA representatives. OSSE will also create two new advisory groups—a group of teachers and a group of leaders from both public charter and DC Public Schools (DCPS) —that will provide input on the evaluation requirements and development of Teacher, Leader, and Professional Development standards. These groups will meet to review drafts of these documents and provide feedback. They will reconvene any time major modifications to the documents are proposed. Finally, OSSE will post the final requirements for all teacher and principal evaluation systems in January 2013 and will conduct webinars and meetings to educate LEAs about the new standards and requirements.

**Teacher and Leader Evaluation Review Process**

Title I LEAs with Priority and/or Focus schools will submit evaluation plans that provide responses to each of the ESEA Flexibility requirements by June 1, 2013. Race to the Top LEAs will only need to submit responses to the new or modified requirements. OSSE will then conduct a review process and approve all plans by August 1, 2013, so that LEAs are ready to implement the pilot year of their evaluation system (or second year of full implementation for RTTT LEAs) in 2013-2014.

Similar to the review process conducted for Race to the Top LEAs, if LEA plans do not meet the requirements, OSSE will provide specific feedback for LEAs to revise their plans and resubmit for review and approval. Finally, OSSE will require the submission of individual

teacher and leader ratings from all LEAs through the Employed Educator Report. Individual ratings will not be made public in any way, as the intent of this data collection is to track progress in improving teacher effectiveness and to respond to federal reporting requirements. Ratings will only be published in aggregate form with an explanation that acknowledges that the ratings are based on unique LEA evaluation systems. A data policy will be disseminated this spring that indicates that OSSE will not report individual teacher data.

**Summary**

By publishing state requirements and ensuring Title I LEAs with Priority and Focus Schools meet these requirements, OSSE is raising the bar for the quality of teacher and leader evaluation and support systems. OSSE will support LEAs in developing rigorous evaluation systems by providing professional development, technical assistance, and identifying high-quality resources and materials that provide teachers and leaders with meaningful feedback.

**For additional information, see Attachment 14: Principle 3 Documents**

- **Definition of Teacher Value Added Model**
- **Definition of School-wide Growth Model**

## 3.B Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

To ensure that Title I LEAs that include Priority and/or Focus schools are meeting the new evaluation system requirements, OSSE will review and approve LEA teacher and leader evaluation systems. These more rigorous evaluation systems will permit LEAs to better focus on teacher and leader needs and areas for improvement to maximize student learning and improve student outcomes. Since the ultimate goal of these more rigorous evaluation systems is to improve student achievement, charter LEAs that are already helping students achieve will not have to meet these new evaluation requirements.

**Process for Implementation**

As discussed in the Overview for 3A, some public charter schools chose not to receive RTTT funding because they did not want to give up their exclusive control over their personnel,

among other autonomies. In fact, the highest performing, the most innovative, and those that serve alternative populations make up the majority of the non-RTTT LEAs. Of the 29 charter campuses that did not sign up for the funding, many serve untested populations such as early childhood, adults and disengaged youth working toward GEDs. Those that do serve tested grades, about half of them are considered "Tier 1" by the PCSB's Performance Management Framework.

It is for this reason that all Title I LEAs that include Priority and/or Focus schools will have to create teacher and leader evaluation systems that address each of the OSSE requirements and submit them to OSSE. RTTT LEAs will only have to develop plans to address the four new criteria required by the flexibility waiver that were not already required by Race to the Top. OSSE staff will then review the plans and provide feedback where necessary to LEAs. The OSSE review will focus on whether LEA-proposed systems meet state requirements, including whether student achievement or growth measures are proposed for all teachers and leaders and whether standardized assessments are used where feasible. Based on this review, LEAs will then have to make revisions based on the feedback.

**Summary**

Through state guidelines and a review process, OSSE will assist LEAs with the implementation of rigorous teacher and leader evaluation systems. These systems will offer frequent and timely feedback, and will be used to inform professional development needs and personnel decisions. With higher quality information about teacher and leader performance, LEAs will be better able to design strategies that increase teacher and leader effectiveness and ultimately increase student achievement, increase graduation rates, and close achievement gaps.

This Flexibility Waiver Request in its entirety supports the Office of the State Superintendent's (OSSE) belief that students come first and what matters most is what happens in the classroom. Our belief is that the best qualified professionals to impact student learning are teachers and school leaders. This drives our efforts to remove barriers to education and provide the necessary supports to maximize student learning. With this support and focus on improving teacher and leadership effectiveness, the school leaders and teachers who are best qualified to provide solutions can improve student outcomes.

| Key Milestone or Activity | Detailed Timeline | Party(ies) Responsible | Evidence | Resources (e.g., staff time, additional funding) | Significant Obstacles |
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| Solicit members for advisory | March2012 | OSSE staff | List of members | One staff member to | Finding effective |

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| groups | | | | solicit volunteers | educators who have the time to participate |
| Develop Voluntary Teacher, Leader, and Professional Development Standards | April-July 2012 | OSSE Staff, Teacher Task Force, Leader Task Force, Human Capital Task Force | Draft Standards | Two staff members to review model standards and draft DC standards and then manage the process for getting input and revising the standards | This will be a time-consuming process. We will have to find the staff capacity to do this or contract it out. |
| Revise Evaluation System Requirements | August-December 2012 | OSSE Staff, Teacher Task Force, Leader Task Force, Human Capital Task Force | Draft of Revised Evaluation System Requirements | Two staff people to convene meetings to get input and make revisions to the document | None |
| Adopt Educator Performance Standards | December 2012 | OSSE staff | Performance Standards | One staff member to finalize performance standards | None |
| Adopt Evaluation Requirements for all Title I LEAs with Priority and/or Focus schools | January 2013 | OSSE staff | Evaluation Requirements | One staff member to finalize evaluation requirements | None |
| Conduct trainings on Evaluation Requirements | February-March 2013 | OSSE staff | Training materials and attendance lists | One staff member to conduct trainings | None |
| Conduct review process of teacher and leader evaluations | June 1-August 1, 2013 | OSSE staff | Evaluation Review Tracking Sheet | Two staff members to conduct the review process | Allocating staff time to this activity |
| Non-Race to the Top LEAs with Priority and/or Focus schools | School year 2013-2014 | LEAs/OSSE staff | Approved Evaluation Plans, Title I monitoring | Staff members to conduct monitoring visits | None |

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| pilot evaluation systems/Full implementation for Race to the Top LEAs | | | visits | | |
| Full implementation of evaluation systems for all Title I LEAs with Priority and/or Focus schools | School year 2014-15 | LEAs/OSSE staff | Title I monitoring visits | Staff members to conduct monitoring visits | None |

## SAMPLE FORMAT FOR PLAN

Below is one example of a format an SEA may use to provide a plan to meet a particular principle in the *ESEA Flexibility*.

| Key Milestone or Activity | Detailed Timeline | Party or Parties Responsible | Evidence (Attachment) | Resources (*e.g.*, staff time, additional funding) | Significant Obstacles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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