

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Office of the State Superintendent of Education

March 31, 2015

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-6100

Dear Assistant Secretary Delisle,

On behalf of the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), I am writing to request a renewal of the District of Columbia's ESEA flexibility waiver in order for the District to continue its implementation through the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

In preparing this application, OSSE has considered all of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) renewal guidance, the lessons that OSSE learned from its years of waiver implementation, the areas identified for continued improvement and the feedback that OSSE received from the meaningful consultation process that preceded this submission.

This application is the product of an extensive engagement process that included multiple means of consultation with students, teachers, principals, school administrators, parents, advocates, Local Education Agencies, and other education stakeholders. The rigor of the public engagement process resulted in essential insights from the field that informed the content of the application. Much was achieved as a result of the successful implementation of the District's first ESEA flexibility waiver. OSSE took an aggressive approach to implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and aligning the state assessments to them; administering a state system of recognition, accountability and support that focuses on continuous school improvement; and implementing rigorous teacher and leader evaluation systems.

This application builds upon these efforts, continuing to ensure that students graduate college- and career-ready, through the implementation of new state assessments aligned to both the CCSS, and the District's Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). In addition, OSSE is refining and improving the state system of differentiated accountability and support by clarifying what we are doing to support schools and when we implement differentiated supports.

OSSE is working to submit an amendment to the academic achievement and growth component of Principle 2 as quickly as possible. OSSE is currently engaged in further discussion with LEAs, the public, and community organizations to identify how it needs to alter its approach to measuring achievement and academic growth for accountability after the transition to new

assessments. These discussions take place via an accountability work group of LEA and community stakeholders designed to assist OSSE with answering three core questions:

1. How will achievement be recognized under new assessments (e.g. college- and career-readiness only or graduated recognition)?
2. How will academic growth be recognized: Norm or Criterion referenced measure?
3. How will those two measures be assembled to result in new classifications on an annual basis?

The accountability work group has identified preliminary options for the way in which the school accountability index can be calculated moving forward. The strength of these options will be evaluated by running preliminary simulations based on currently available information to develop a framework for accountability over the next six to eight weeks.

Once the final assessment data are available and the standard setting process over the summer has been completed, the framework will again be reviewed for suitability to ensure that the original intent is still reflected in the results.

In closing, included in this submission please find: 1) the redline version of the District of Columbia ESEA flexibility waiver renewal application and attachments; and 2) a waiver renewal form. If you need additional information, please contact Etai Mizrav at etai.mizrav@dc.gov or 202-727-3666.

I am confident that the District of Columbia's ESEA flexibility waiver will continue to be a key lever in driving education reform and improving academic outcomes for the District's children.

We thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hanseul Kang', followed by a large, stylized flourish or initial 'S'.

Hanseul Kang
Acting State Superintendent of Education