

May 28, 2013

To: Iowa State Board of Education  
Fr: Dave Tilly, Deputy Director, Iowa Department of Education  
Re: Upcoming Board Work Session on Assessment

Enclosed please find an outline of the policy conversation on educational assessment that we will have as a part of the Board's work session next week. I have attempted to craft the conversation to hit on many of the key policy issues about assessment that we face as a state. I have also compiled a set of support materials that I am sending as a part of this packet. These include:

1. Requirements of US Department of Education for many discretionary programs (Handout #1 – General Requirements for access to many Discretionary Federal Opportunities)
2. Iowa's current teacher evaluation requirements (Handouts #2, See Excerpts from Chapter 284 of the Iowa Code and Teaching Standards)
3. An overview of the Federal Flexibility Waiver process and the executive summary of a study on status of states with waivers (Handout # 3)
4. Letter from Deb Delisle, Assistant Secretary, USDE, re: status of our Flexibility waiver (Handout #4)
5. Results from Teacher Evaluation Task Force report (Handout # 5)
6. Information on including student achievement data in educator evaluation (Handout #6)
7. Information on the statewide assessment task force required by HF215 (Handout #7)

I believe that you have seen many of these materials in the past, I just wanted each of us to have them as a resource for our conversation. I look forward to seeing you next week.

Outline of Statewide Assessment Conversation  
Iowa State Board Of Education  
June 4, 2013

Dave Tilly, Deputy Director, Facilitating

- A. Opening: Assessment is about answering questions. (Dave Tilly)

**Discussion Question: What are the two or three most important questions you want answers to from Iowa's Assessment system?**

**Discussion Question: To what extent is the system currently answering these questions for you?**

- B. Summary of Last Meeting on Large-Scale Accountability (Dave Tilly)

**Discussion Question: What are the one or two most important things you remember from last board meeting's presentation?**

- History of educational assessment in Iowa
- Standards have evolved
- Assessment requirements have not

- C. Current Alignment between Iowa Core and Iowa Tests (Diane Chadwick)

**Discussion Question: What implications do these results have at a policy level for Iowa Assessment?**

- Commissioned alignment study
- Examined alignment between what is being assessed and Iowa Core Standards
- Results

- D. Policy issues related to large-scale Assessment – Iowa's Accountability Flexibility Waiver (Dave Tilly, Jason Glass, Larry Bice)

**Discussion Question: Given the status of where we are currently, what are the most important next steps to take with regard to assessment from a policy perspective?**

- Requirements of US Department of Education – what is expected? (Handout #1 – General Requirements for access to many Discretionary Federal Opportunities)
- Iowa's current teacher evaluation requirements (Handouts #2, See Excerpts from Chapter 284 of the Iowa Code and Teaching Standards)
- Iowa's flexibility waiver and nationwide status of states with waivers (Handout # 3)
- Waiver Denial Letter from Deb Delisle, Assistant Secretary, US Department of Education (Handout #4)
- Consequences as a result of not receiving a waiver

- Results from Teacher Evaluation Task Force report (Handout # 5)
- Including student achievement data in Teacher and Administrator Evaluation (Handout #6)

E. Where do we go from here? Accountability and Programmatic Issues (Dave Tilly)

**Discussion Question: What priorities should the state assessment system have? What are next steps the Department of Education and State Board should take? What should the timeline be?**

- Major priorities
  - Accountability
  - Edumetric Assessment
- Comprehensive-Balanced Advisory Committee
- Assessment Task Force – Report Due (Handout #7)
  - Political Issues
  - Policy Issues
  - Pragmatic Issues
- State Board’s role and next steps

## Handout #1

General Requirements for access to many Discretionary Federal Opportunities (e.g., Investing in Innovation Grants, Race to the Top Grants etc.)

*Excerpt of text from Recent Race to the Top Request for Proposals*

**Eligible Applicants:** An applicant must be an individual LEA (as defined in this notice) or a consortium of individual LEAs from one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.”

Key components that preclude broad-based application:

(d) An applicant must demonstrate its commitment to the core educational assurance areas (as defined in this notice), including, for each LEA included in an application, an assurance signed by the LEA's superintendent or CEO that—

(i) The LEA, at a minimum, will implement no later than the 2014-2015 school year—

(A) A teacher evaluation system (as defined in this notice); - see definition below - which is same as before

(B) A principal evaluation system (as defined in this notice); see definition below - which is same as before and

(C) A superintendent evaluation (as defined in this notice);

(ii) The LEA is committed to preparing all students for college or career, as demonstrated by—

(A) Being located in a State that has adopted college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice); or

(B) Measuring all student progress and performance against college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice);

(iii) The LEA has a robust data system that has, at a minimum—

(A) An individual teacher identifier with a teacher-student match; and

(B) The capability to provide timely data back to educators and their supervisors on student growth (as defined in this notice);

(iv) The LEA has the capability to receive or match student-level preschool-through-12th grade and higher education data; and

(v) The LEA ensures that any disclosure of or access to personally identifiable information in students' education records complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

(e) Required signatures for the LEA or lead LEA in a consortium are those of the superintendent or CEO, local school board president, and local teacher union or association president (where applicable).

**Principal evaluation system** means a system that: (1) Is used for continual improvement of instructional leadership; (2) meaningfully differentiates performance using at least three performance levels; (3) uses multiple valid

Key Element  
see definition  
on next  
page

measures in determining performance levels, including, as a significant factor, data on student growth (as defined in this notice) for all students (including English learners and students with disabilities), as well as other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous leadership performance standards, teacher evaluation data, and student and parent surveys); (4) evaluates principals on a regular basis; (5) provides clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies and guides professional development needs; and (6) is used to inform personnel decisions.



***Teacher evaluation system*** means a system that: (1) Is used for continual improvement of instruction; (2) meaningfully differentiates performance using at least three performance levels; (3) uses multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including, as a significant factor, data on student growth (as defined in this notice) for all students (including English learners and students with disabilities), as well as other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous teacher performance standards, teacher portfolios, and student and parent surveys); (4) evaluates teachers on a regular basis; (5) provides clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies and guides professional development needs; and (6) is used to inform personnel decisions.

## Handout #2

### Iowa Teacher Evaluation Requirements

#### **What's Required for Evaluation: 284.1 Student achievement and teacher quality program.**

A student achievement and teacher quality program is established to promote high student achievement. The program shall consist of the following four major elements:

1. Mentoring and induction programs that provide support for beginning teachers in accordance with section 284.5.
2. Career paths with compensation levels that strengthen Iowa's ability to recruit and retain teachers.
3. Professional development designed to directly support best teaching practices.
4. Evaluation of teachers against the Iowa teaching standards.

2001 Acts, ch 161, §2; 2006 Acts, ch 1182, §5, 6; 2007 Acts, ch 108, §12; 2011 Acts, ch 34, §73

#### **284.8 Performance review requirements for teachers — peer group reviews.**

1. A school district shall provide for an annual review of each teacher's performance for purposes of assisting teachers in making continuous improvement, documenting continued competence in the Iowa teaching standards, identifying teachers in need of improvement, or to determine whether the teacher's practice meets school district expectations for career advancement in accordance with section 284.7. The review shall include, at minimum, classroom observation of the teacher, the teacher's progress, and implementation of the teacher's individual professional development plan, subject to the level of resources provided to implement the plan; and shall include supporting documentation from parents, students, and other teachers. The first and second year of review shall be conducted by a peer group of teachers. The peer group shall review all of the peer group members. Peer group reviews shall be formative and shall be conducted on an informal, collaborative basis that is focused on assisting each peer group member in achieving the goals of the teacher's individual professional development plan. Peer group reviews shall not be the basis for recommending that a teacher participate in an intensive assistance program, and shall not be used to determine the compensation, promotion, layoff, or termination of a teacher, or any other determination affecting a teacher's employment status. However, as a result of a peer group review, a teacher may elect to participate in an intensive assistance program. Members of the peer group shall be reviewed every third year by at least one evaluator certified in accordance with section 284.10.

2. If a supervisor or an evaluator determines, at any time, as a result of a teacher's performance that the teacher is not meeting district expectations under the Iowa teaching standards specified in section 284.3, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h", the criteria for the Iowa teaching standards developed by the department in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 46, and any other

standards or criteria established in the collective bargaining agreement, the evaluator shall, at the direction of the teacher's supervisor, recommend to the district that the teacher participate in an intensive assistance program. The intensive assistance program and its implementation are subject to negotiation and grievance procedures established pursuant to chapter 20. All school districts shall be prepared to offer an intensive assistance program.

3. If a teacher is denied advancement to the career II or advanced teacher level based upon a performance review, the teacher may appeal the decision to an adjudicator under the process established under section 279.17. However, the decision of the adjudicator is final.

4. A teacher who is not meeting the applicable standards and criteria based on a determination made pursuant to subsection 2 shall participate in an intensive assistance program.

2001 Acts, ch 161, §9; 2002 Acts, ch 1152, §17; 2003 Acts, ch 180, §47; 2006 Acts, ch 1182, §22; 2007 Acts, ch 108, §31, 32; 2007 Acts, ch 215, §253; 2008 Acts, ch 1181, §81; 2012 Acts, ch 1119, §6

Referred to in §284.6

Subsection 1 amended

### **284.3 Iowa teaching standards.**

1. For purposes of this chapter and for developing teacher evaluation criteria under chapter 279, the Iowa teaching standards are as follows:

- a. Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for and implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.
- b. Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.
- c. Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.
- d. Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students.
- e. Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.
- f. Demonstrates competence in classroom management.
- g. Engages in professional growth.
- h. Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.

2. A school board shall provide for the following:

- a. For purposes of comprehensive evaluations for beginning teachers required to allow beginning teachers to progress to career teachers, standards and criteria that are the Iowa teaching standards specified in subsection 1 and the criteria for the Iowa teaching standards developed by the department in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 46. These standards and criteria shall be set forth in an instrument provided by the department. The comprehensive evaluation and instrument are not subject to negotiations or grievance procedures pursuant to chapter 20 or determinations made by the board of directors under section 279.14. A local school board and its certified bargaining representative may negotiate, pursuant to chapter 20, evaluation and grievance procedures for beginning teachers that are not in conflict with this chapter. If, in accordance with

section 279.19, a beginning teacher appeals the determination of a school board to an adjudicator under section 279.17, the adjudicator selected shall have successfully completed training related to the Iowa teacher standards, the criteria adopted by the state board of education in accordance with subsection 3, and any additional training required under rules adopted by the public employment relations board in cooperation with the state board of education.

*b.* For purposes of performance reviews for teachers other than beginning teachers, evaluations that contain, at a minimum, the Iowa teaching standards specified in subsection 1, as well as the criteria for the Iowa teaching standards developed by the department in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 46. A local school board and its certified bargaining representative may negotiate, pursuant to chapter 20, additional teaching standards and criteria. A local school board and its certified bargaining representative shall negotiate, pursuant to chapter 20, evaluation and grievance procedures for teachers other than beginning teachers that are not in conflict with this chapter.

3. The state board shall adopt by rule pursuant to chapter 17A the criteria developed by the department in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 46.

Handout #3  
Information about Flexibility Waivers and Executive Summary of National Study of  
Waiver Implementation

ESEA Flexibility Overview

**FLEXIBILITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT AND INCREASE THE QUALITY OF  
INSTRUCTION...Waivers of 10 provisions of ESEA**

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1. Flexibility Regarding the 2013–2014 Timeline for Determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):
  - SEAs would have flexibility to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics.
2. Flexibility in Implementation of School Improvement Requirements (Iowa's SINA designation):
  - An LEA would also be exempt from all administrative and reporting requirements related to school improvement under current law.
3. Flexibility in Implementation of LEA Improvement Requirements (Iowa's DINA designation):
  - An LEA would also be exempt from all associated administrative and reporting requirements related to LEA improvement under current law.
4. Flexibility for Rural LEAs:
  - An LEA that receives Small, Rural School Achievement Program funds or Rural and Low-Income School Program funds would have flexibility to use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of the LEA's AYP status.
5. Flexibility for Schoolwide Programs:
  - An LEA would have flexibility to operate a schoolwide program in a Title I school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty threshold if the SEA has identified the school as a **priority school** or a **focus school**, and the LEA is implementing interventions consistent with the **turnaround principles**.
6. Flexibility to Support School Improvement:
  - SEAs would have flexibility to allocate Title I Basic funds to an LEA in order to serve any priority or focus school, if the SEA determines such schools are most in need of additional support.
7. Flexibility for Reward Schools:

- SEAs would have flexibility to use funds reserved to provide financial rewards to any **reward school**, if the SEA determines such schools are most appropriate for financial rewards.
8. Flexibility Regarding Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Improvement Plans:
    - SEAs would not be exempt from the requirement that it ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.
  9. Flexibility to Transfer Certain Funds:
    - SEAs and its LEAs would have flexibility to transfer up to 100 percent of the funds received under the authorized programs designated in ESEA among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
  10. Flexibility to Use School Improvement Grant (SIG) Funds to Support Priority Schools:
    - SEAs would have flexibility to award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any priority school.

**OPTIONAL FLEXIBILITY...In addition:**

Flexibility in the Use of Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program Funds:

- SEAs would have flexibility to permit community learning centers that receive funds under the 21st CCLC program to use those funds 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 (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess).

## **PRINCIPLES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND INCREASING THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION**

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To receive flexibility through the waivers outlined above, SEAs must submit a request that addresses each of the following four principles.

### **1. College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students**

- Demonstrate that it has college- and career-ready expectations for all students in the SEA by adopting **college- and career-ready standards** in at least reading/language arts and mathematics.
- Developing and administer annual, statewide, aligned, **high-quality assessments**, and corresponding academic achievement standards, that measure **student growth** in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school.
- Support English Learners in reaching such standards by committing to adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to its college- and career-ready standards and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, and committing to develop and administer aligned ELP assessments.
- Annually report to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and student subgroups in each LEA and each high school in the SEA.

### **2. State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support...SEAs must:**

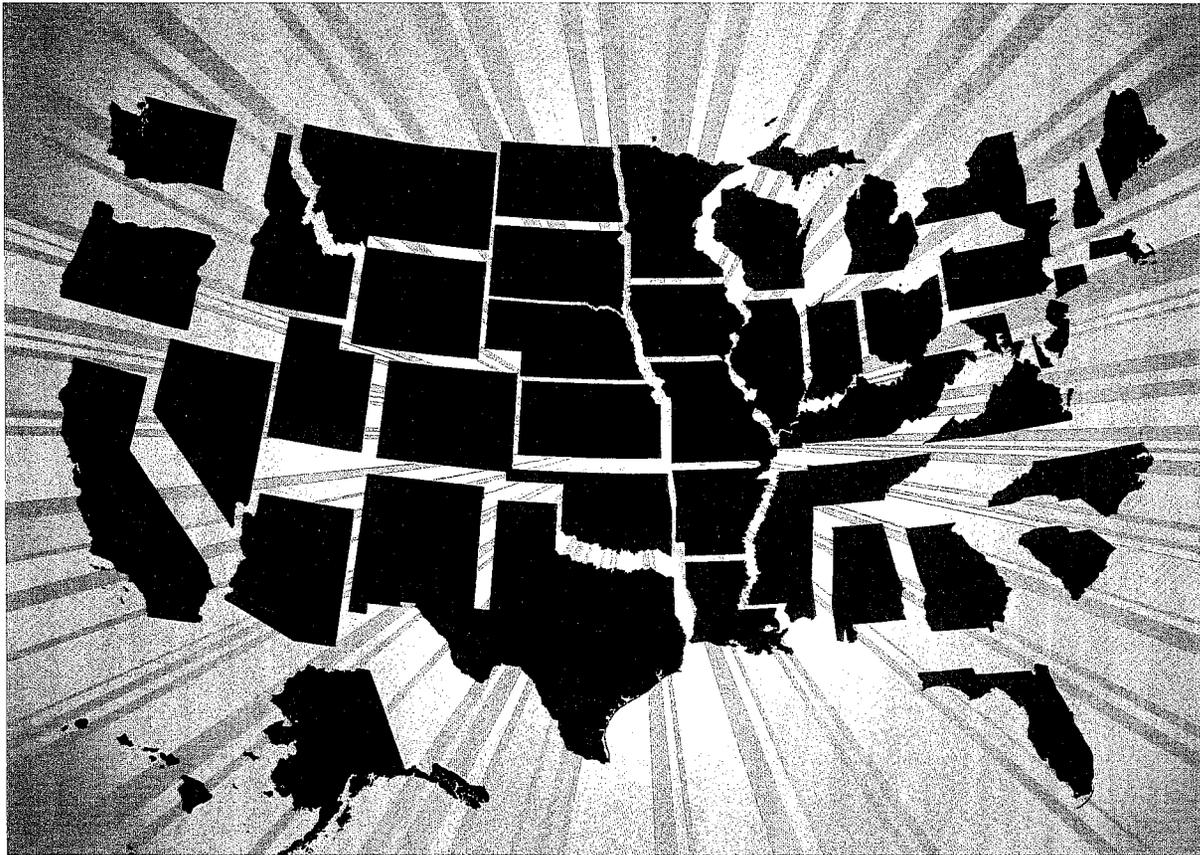
- Develop and implement a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all LEAs in the SEA and for all Title I schools in these LEAs.
- Look at student achievement in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and all subgroups of students; graduation rates for all students and all subgroups; and school performance and progress over time, including the performance and progress of all subgroups.
- Create incentives and include differentiated interventions and support to improve student achievement and graduation rates and to close achievement gaps for all subgroups, including interventions specifically focused on improving the performance of English Learners and students with disabilities.
- The SEA's system must, at a minimum:
  - Set new ambitious but achievable AMOs in at least reading/language arts and mathematics.
  - Provide incentives and recognition for success on an annual basis of Title I schools making the most progress or having the highest performance as "**reward schools**."
  - Effect dramatic, systemic change in the lowest-performing schools by publicly identifying "**priority schools**" and ensuring that each LEA with one or more of these schools implements, for three years, meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each of these schools.

- Publicly identify Title I schools with the greatest achievement gaps, or in which subgroups are furthest behind, as “**focus schools**” and ensure that each LEA implements interventions, which may include tutoring and public school choice, in each of these schools based on reviews of the specific academic needs of the school and its students.

3. **Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership**

- The SEA and each LEA must commit to develop, adopt, pilot, and implement, with the involvement of teachers and principals, teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.
- The SEA must also provide student growth data on current students and the students 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.

# States' Perspectives on Waivers: Relief from NCLB, Concern about Long-term Solutions



Center on Education Policy  
Graduate School of Education and Human Development  
The George Washington University  
March 2013

## Introduction and Key Findings

On February 9, 2012, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan granted 10 states waivers of key accountability requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. One year later, applications for this ESEA flexibility, also known as NCLB waivers, had been approved for an additional 24 states and the District of Columbia. States that receive waivers have the flexibility to depart from some of NCLB's most significant requirements, such as judging school performance against a goal of 100% of students reaching reading and math "proficiency" by 2014 and implementing specific interventions in schools that fall short of performance targets. States with approved waiver applications must meet several new requirements, described below, that relate to standards and assessments, accountability systems, teacher and principal evaluation, and reductions in administrative burden.

This report by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) at The George Washington University describes states' early experiences in applying for waivers and their plans for implementing the new systems outlined in their applications. The findings are based on a CEP survey administered in the fall of 2012. A total of 38 states responded to the survey, including 32 states with approved waiver applications (counting D.C. as a state) and 6 states whose applications were still pending as of the fall of 2012 when the survey was administered.

Several key findings emerged from the survey results:

- **States believe that the waivers address several of the problems they see with the NCLB accountability requirements.** For example, 37 states agreed that NCLB set an unrealistic goal of 100% of students reaching proficiency by 2014 and mandated consequences for schools in improvement that did not always increase student achievement. Most of the states surveyed anticipate that the accountability system in their waiver application will satisfy or somewhat satisfy their concerns about NCLB. For example, 35 states expect their waiver accountability system to do at least a somewhat better job than NCLB at identifying schools in need of improvement.
- **States are optimistic that the waivers will improve student learning.** A large majority of the states surveyed expect the waiver requirements for college- and career-ready standards and for growth-based teacher and principal evaluation systems to improve student learning to a great extent, and a majority agreed that differentiated accountability systems will increase learning to a great or some extent.
- **Waivers have shaped state policies and accelerated some reforms.** Although many states had already put in place or intended to carry out several of the policies required for a waiver before they applied, the waiver requirements have spurred several states to modify existing plans or to adopt policies they would not otherwise have implemented. For example, ten states reported amending their plans for new teacher evaluation systems due to the waiver. A dozen states reported they had not intended to implement differentiated recognition systems for districts and schools in their states before applying for a waiver.
- **Changes in teacher and principal evaluation systems are well underway, despite resistance in some states from teachers.** Twenty-nine of the 38 states surveyed are either piloting or implementing new teacher evaluation and support systems, and 11 of these states are using the results for personnel decisions. A similar number are piloting or implementing principal evaluation and support systems. However, many survey states reported experiencing resistance to their teacher evaluation and support systems from teachers, teachers' unions, and administrators.
- **States have mixed views about whether implementing the various aspects of the waivers will cost more than implementing similar NCLB provisions.** In particular, half or more of the states surveyed projected that college- and career-ready standards and differentiated recognition and accountability systems will cost about the same to implement as the systems implemented under NCLB requirements. But more than half of the survey

states indicated that the teacher evaluation and support systems required by the waiver will cost more to implement than comparable NCLB provisions.

- **Many state officials are concerned about what will happen to the programs and policies in their waiver plans if ESEA is reauthorized.** A majority of states were apprehensive about the confusion the transition to amended ESEA requirements would cause, the costs and disruption involved in implementing yet another accountability system, and the loss of credibility that might ensue among educators, parents, and other stakeholders. At the same time, some states were more neutral or optimistic that a reauthorized ESEA might be consistent with their waiver plans or might allow them to continue similar policies.

## Background on NCLB Waivers and the CEP Survey

On September 23, 2011, President Obama and Secretary Duncan announced a policy that would allow states to request flexibility in complying with certain provisions of ESEA, as amended by NCLB, if they agreed to implement particular reform measures.<sup>1</sup> While states have always been able to apply for waivers of some aspects of ESEA, this Obama Administration policy was remarkable for a few reasons. First, it was motivated largely by the failure of Congress to pass a bill to reauthorize ESEA and give states and school districts relief from some widely criticized requirements that the Administration asserted were “stifling reform” (U.S. Department of Education, 2011a & 2011b; The White House, 2011a). Second, it targeted some of the most central accountability provisions of NCLB and placed no limits on the number of states that could qualify for the waivers. Third, while the waiver policy freed states from many existing federal requirements, it also imposed a new set of reform-related requirements, or “principles,” on states with approved waivers. These principles, described in **box A**, include adopting “college- and career-ready” standards; implementing systems that differentiate accountability requirements, recognition, and support for different types of districts and schools; implementing teacher and principal evaluation systems that take into account students’ growth in achievement; and reducing administrative burden.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) released guidance with policy details for this flexibility and set deadlines for two rounds of review of formal waiver applications: November 14, 2011, and February 28, 2012. A deadline of September 6, 2012, for a third round of applications was added later. As of February 2013, 44 states and the District of Columbia had submitted requests for waivers, and ED had approved applications from 34 states and DC (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b).

More information about NCLB waivers—including a map showing the status of state waiver applications, an analysis of major accountability themes in state applications, and answers to frequently asked questions—can be found in the NCLB/ESEA Waivers section of the CEP website ([www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org)).

The CEP survey was administered in the fall of 2012 to officials in all states with approved or pending waiver applications. The survey was completed by 38 respondents—most commonly deputy chief state school officers—including 32 states (counting DC) with approved waivers and 6 states with pending waiver applications. Survey respondents were promised confidentiality to encourage frank answers, so the report provides only the aggregate number of responses and does not give information for individual states. More detailed information about the survey development, administration, data collection, and analysis is included in the study methods appendix at the end of this report.

<sup>1</sup> For more background information on ESEA flexibility and waivers, see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>.

## Handout #4: Letter from USED on Flexibility Waiver



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

The Honorable Jason E. Glass  
Director of Education  
Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Director Glass:

Thank you for your letter of May 30, 2012 to Michael Yudin regarding Iowa's ESEA flexibility request. We appreciate the information you provided regarding the challenge the Iowa Department of Education faces in developing and implementing teacher and leader evaluation and support systems that would meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

As referenced in your letter, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) provided guidance to State educational agencies (SEAs) explaining that, in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility, an SEA must develop and adopt guidelines for teacher and leader evaluation and support systems that:

- Will be used for continual improvement of instruction;
- Meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels;
- Use multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including as a significant factor data on student growth for all students (including English Learners and students with disabilities), and other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous teacher performance standards, teacher portfolios, and student and parent surveys);
- Evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis;
- Provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development; and
- Will be used to inform personnel decisions.

In its request for ESEA flexibility, an SEA must provide the guidelines it has developed and adopted, or a plan to develop and adopt those guidelines, and ensure that each local educational agency (LEA) in the State develops and implements teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's guidelines. This includes ensuring that LEA evaluation and

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support systems take into account data on student growth in a significant way to determine teacher and principal performance levels.

According to the information in your request, the Iowa Department of Education does not currently have authority to ensure implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with this principle of ESEA flexibility. Because of these constraints, the Department is not able to approve Iowa's request for flexibility at this time.

Please be assured that we would like to continue working with Iowa in support of your efforts to increase the quality of instruction and improve student academic achievement. Further, I'd like to commend you and your team on the work that has been done to develop high-quality plans to transition to college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments, as well as to develop a differentiated recognition, accountability and support system that holds strong promise to improve student achievement.

As Iowa continues to move forward with important educational reforms, we stand ready to be a partner and to provide support. Best wishes in your continued quest to ensure that all students achieve at high levels.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle

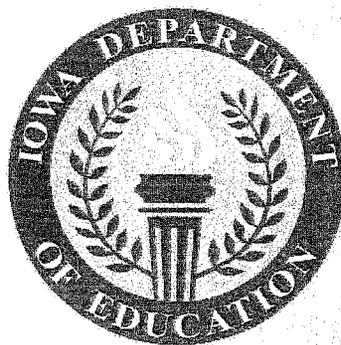
cc: Kevin Fangman, Deputy Director, Iowa Department of Education  
Wilma Gajdel, Title I Administrative Consultant, Iowa Department of Education

Handout #5 Teacher Evaluation  
Task Force Report

10/15/2012

# Teaching Standards and Teacher Evaluation Task Force

## Final Report



Senate File 2284

## Executive Summary

The task force developed a theory of action to provide clarity for the thinking and discussion that shaped our recommendations. This theory of action is as follows:

- If teachers and evaluators are given standards and criteria that specify clearly differentiated levels of proficiency: ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective;
- If standards are based on nationally recognized teaching standards;
- If the teaching standards are developed to support a continuum of teacher development from pre-service through the practicing teacher levels;
- If a common language is used in teacher preparation programs in Iowa and in the PK-12 system of education;
- If the teaching standards address knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions;
- If evaluators and teachers have a clear understanding on the standards and criteria;
- If the standards are aligned with measures based on best practices supported by research;
- If a work group is established by the Legislature to revise or replace the current Iowa Teaching Standards;
- If teaching standards and criteria are developed to identify teacher leaders;
- If teaching criteria based on standards are manageable in number and scope;

### AND

- If Iowa's teacher evaluation system is improved to measure clearly differentiated levels of proficiency, including ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective and teacher leaders;
- If the improved evaluation system for teachers is used by school districts, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic schools throughout the state;
- If the evaluation system uses language that supports a continuum of teacher development from pre-service through practicing teacher levels;

- If the teacher evaluation training clearly differentiates peer review from teacher evaluation;
- If clear, consistent, and appropriately frequent training is provided for teacher evaluators statewide;
- If the teacher evaluation system provides a mechanism to ensure the consistent, fair, reliable, and valid implementation of the evaluation of teachers at all levels of proficiency;
- If the direct observation of classroom teaching behaviors is included in the evaluation process;
- If the evaluation system includes a balanced consideration of student growth measures when available for tested grades and subjects;
- If the improved evaluation system is based on revised teaching standards;
- If the evaluation system demonstrates applicability to teachers in all content areas and all grade levels;
- If a rubric that clearly describes the criteria and expectations for each level of teaching performance is developed as part of the evaluation system;

AND

- If the development of improved teaching standards and a teacher evaluation process is implemented statewide as a teacher development system;

AND

- If there is a coherent theory of action for school improvement and education reform delivered through the PK-16 system from the Department of Education, AEAs, professional associations, and the accredited institutions of higher education;

THEN

A teacher development system from pre-service to the highest level of teacher performance will be implemented; teachers will have opportunities and support for professional growth; and teacher effectiveness will be high.

SO THEN

Student learning will increase.

## **Our Recommendations**

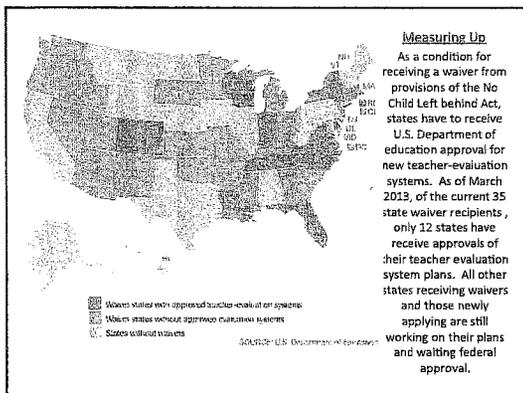
- 1.) **Revise current Iowa Teaching Standards to align pre-service with PK-12 teaching.** Standards will be based on best practice and nationally accepted standards. The standards should address knowledge, skill, performance, and dispositions.
- 2.) **An improved teacher evaluation system will be developed to replace the existing evaluation system for teachers.** The new system will include a researched-based rubric that differentiates each level of teaching performance and ensures a consistent implementation statewide. Training and professional development will be an integral component of the system.
- 3.) **The Iowa Legislature will require the formation of a work group to identify standards and create an improved teacher evaluation system to be implemented with fidelity statewide in an effort to create effective teachers as part of a system of development.**

# Handout #6: Teacher Evaluation and Student Achievement Data

**Assessment**  
Tied to Teacher Evaluation

**Waivers**

In exchange for flexibility on key tenets of the 11-year-old law enacted under President George W. Bush—such as that all students be proficient in reading and mathematics by the end of next school year, states had to agree, among other things, to adopt teacher and principal evaluation systems that incorporate student academic growth as a significant factor used in making personnel decisions.



**Timelines**

- The Education Department has sought waiver applications in four rounds; the fourth and latest application deadline was Feb. 28.
- Waiver states that applied in the earliest two rounds must pilot their systems in the 2013-14 school year and fully implement them the next year. The systems then must be used to "inform personnel decisions" in 2015-16. (States that applied for waivers in later rounds are allowed to let each of those milestones slide by one year.)

**Timelines**

- States that did not have teacher-evaluation systems that met the federal requirements when they turned in their waiver applications in early 2012 or before had to agree to submit them by the end of last school year.

**Tricky Issues**

- Using student growth to evaluate teachers in nontested subjects is one of several challenges states are facing
- how multiple measures used to evaluate teachers are rolled into one performance rating;
- how to appropriately judge teachers of English-language learners and special education students; and
- how to deal with special situations, like co-teaching.

### Approvals

- Federal officials say they have generally approved systems in which student growth counts for between 20 percent and 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation.

### How is it working?

- More than half of states will be implementing revised teacher-evaluation systems in the next three years.
- Some early adopters have already begun to make or propose changes to key aspects, such as the weight given to quantitative measures, based on early results and feedback from teachers.



### What some states are doing

- In Arkansas, a teacher can't be rated as effective if he or she fails to meet expectations for student growth.
- In Massachusetts, student growth doesn't receive a specific weighting but is coupled with other measures, such as unannounced teacher observations.

### Observation Only Data Often Results in High Marks for Teachers

- In Michigan, 98 percent of teachers were rated effective or better under new teacher-evaluation systems recently put in place.
- In Florida, 97 percent of teachers were deemed effective or better.
- Principals in Tennessee judged 98 percent of teachers to be "at expectations" or better last school year.
- Evaluators in Georgia gave good reviews to 94 percent of teachers taking part in a pilot evaluation program.
- In Florida, where every district was required to implement a new teacher-evaluation system in 2011-12, data released in December show that 97 percent of teachers received one of the top ratings. That figure, while high, is still lower than the 99.9 percent from before the revisions, state officials noted.
- "We know that in the first year, most districts exercised an abundance of caution," said Kathy Hebdia, the state chancellor for educator quality. "We said upfront that our plan was to start together, and to get better every year. We do think it was a really good start, considering how big we are, and how much work there was to do."

### Value Added Adds Quantitative Data to Teacher Evaluations

- "Value added" is a statistical method of estimating the effect of a teacher's instruction on his or her students' test scores.
- Does it work?
  - Tennessee's data released last summer show, for instance, that observers gave only 0.2 percent of teachers the lowest score, compared to quantitative measures that put 16.5 percent of teachers in that category.
  - Georgia officials are still examining the quantitative portion of the pilot data, but preliminary reports on "student learning objectives"—district-determined common growth measures—showed more variability than did observations.

### How does this impact teacher education programs?

- For example, Ohio, TN, MI, IN, and LA have reported teacher related student achievement data to teacher prep programs for program improvement.
- Many including Iowa are developing systems of aligning teacher related student achievement data (including value added measures) with teacher educ programs.

**Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO)  
State Consortium on Educator  
Effectiveness (SCEE)**

- 28 states and the District of Columbia have signed on to participate in SCEE: AR, AZ, CA, CT, DE, GA, HI, IA, IL, KY, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NV, OH, OR, SC, UT, WA, WI, WV.
- Priority strands for Consortium work include:
  - Standards for Learning, Teaching, and Leading
  - Teacher and Leader Professional Growth and Support
  - Evaluating Teaching and Leading

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2013, is amended to read as follows:

b. A set of core academic indicators in mathematics and reading in grades four, eight, and eleven, a set of core academic indicators in science in grades eight and eleven, and another set of core indicators that includes but is not limited to graduation rate, postsecondary education, and successful employment in Iowa.

(1) Annually, the department shall report state data for each indicator in the condition of education report. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection shall specify that the approved district-wide assessment of student progress administered for purposes of this paragraph the indicators shall be the assessment utilized by school districts statewide in the school year beginning July 1, 2011, or a successor assessment administered by the same assessment provider.

(2) Notwithstanding subparagraph (1), for the school year beginning July 1, 2016, and each succeeding school year, the rules shall provide that all students enrolled in school districts in grades three through eleven shall be administered an assessment during the last quarter of the school year that at a minimum assesses the indicators identified in this paragraph "b"; is aligned with the Iowa common core standards in both content and rigor; accurately describes student achievement and growth for purposes of the school, the school district, and state accountability systems; and provides valid, reliable, and fair measures of student progress toward college or career readiness.

(3) The director shall establish an assessment task force to review and make recommendations for a statewide assessment of student progress on the indicators identified pursuant to this paragraph "b". The task force shall recommend a statewide assessment that is aligned to the Iowa common core standards and is, at a minimum, valid, reliable, tested, and piloted in Iowa. In addition, in developing recommendations, the task

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force shall consider the costs to school districts and the state in providing and administering such an assessment and the technical support necessary to implement the assessment. The task force shall submit its recommendations in a report to the director, the state board, and the general assembly by January 1, 2015. The task force shall assist with the final development and implementation of the assessment administered pursuant to subparagraph (2). The task force members shall include but not be limited to teachers, school administrators, business leaders, representatives of state agencies, and members of the general public. This subparagraph is repealed July 1, 2020.

(4) The state board ~~may~~ shall submit to the general assembly recommendations the state board deems appropriate for modifications of assessments of student progress administered for purposes of this paragraph "b".

DIVISION VI

COUNCIL ON EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 48. NEW SECTION. 256.29 Council on educator development established.

1. A council on educator development is established to conduct a study and make recommendations regarding the following:

a. A statewide teacher evaluation system and performance review requirements.

b. A statewide administrator evaluation system.

2. The goal of the study shall be to determine the efficacy of the current systems in providing practitioners with clear and actionable feedback to enhance their practice and advance student learning. The council shall receive input from teachers, administrators, and evaluators regarding educators' personal experiences with evaluations.

3. The study shall review the following:

a. The current teacher evaluation system and performance