

ESEA Flexibility Waiver Talking Points

July 2012

FINAL

Overview

- States were offered the **opportunity to** seek waivers from some of the provisions of the No Child Left Behind legislation in September 2011, after Congress had failed over a period of five years to reauthorize the legislation. Kansas sought a waiver in an effort to **move away from a narrowly defined accountability system** that gave a limited and often misleading view of a school or district's success in improving student achievement.
- The approval of the state's ESEA waiver request **does not eliminate accountability** measures for improving student achievement, **but** it does allow us to implement an accountability system that **will provide a more meaningful measure** of the success and progress of Kansas students and schools.
- **Schools will no longer have to focus on meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** – a single measure, assigned arbitrarily that was the same for everyone regardless of where they were starting from or the challenges inherent in their student population. Instead, we'll be able to look at **multiple measures** of achievement and establish performance goals that are **unique to each school**.
- The new accountability system **maintains a focus on helping students achieve proficiency in both reading and math**, but also gives credit for improving performance along the way. The system provides a **more accurate and fair view** of performance among students, schools and school districts.
- We'll begin using the **new accountability system in the 2012-2013 school year**. For the 2011-2012 school year, AYP will still be determined, however it will be based on the 2010-2011 AYP targets. In addition, there will be no designation of schools on improvement. AYP information for the 2011-2012 school year will be made available in report cards that will be released in September.

Accountability System

- One of the **strengths** of the new accountability system is that it **relies on multiple measures** in establishing the success of a school or district in helping students achieve. There will be **six measures determined annually** for accountability purposes and they'll be known as Annual Measurable Objectives, or AMOs. Four of the AMOs are related to performance on state assessments.
- State reading and math assessments remain the standard by which school and district performance is measured, however we'll now be **looking at that data in four different ways** based on student achievement, student growth, decreasing the achievement gap and reducing the percent of non-proficient students.
- Each of the four performance AMOs is **based on student growth**, but by looking at it in different ways schools gain clarity regarding the areas in which improvement efforts should be focused.
- The final two AMOs are related to **participation** on state assessments **and the graduation rate**. These objectives are retained from the previous accountability system and the measures surrounding them **do not change**.
- In the new accountability system, schools and districts will **no longer be identified as "on improvement,"** nor will they be required to offer school choice or supplemental educational services. We will, however, **identify low performing Title I schools** based on student achievement and the achievement gap and provide those schools with **technical assistance to help implement improvement plans**.
- Identified districts will partner with KSDE to **implement district action plans** that consist of appropriate interventions and technical assistance **based on** the results of a **comprehensive needs assessment**. The progress of identified schools and districts will be monitored and evaluated, and district action plans will continue to evolve in response to that feedback.
- The new system also provides an opportunity to **recognize schools for high performance and high levels of improvement** and to reward those schools for their efforts.

- The Kansas plan is one of **shared responsibility** in which the state provides leadership and direction to school districts, which then give leadership and direction to the schools, which are then responsible for building the capacity of the school staff to meet the needs of all learners. In this way, effective **interventions can occur at all levels** to ensure improved student learning.

Teacher and Leader Evaluations

- One of the sticking points in achieving the state's waiver was related to how teacher and principal **evaluations** would be **tied to student achievement**, as required in the waiver criteria. Believing strongly that we needed to **work collaboratively with our stakeholders** to develop the most effective method for integrating student performance into our existing model evaluation system, we fought for the ability to create and implement that plan **over the next three years**.
- Our plan calls for forming a commission – the **Teaching in Kansas Commission II** – composed of stakeholders who will recommend the method for integrating student achievement into the existing Kansas Educator Evaluation Protocol (KEEP). We will pilot the revised KEEP system in 2013-2014 and be prepared to implement it in 2014-2015.
- Districts are **not required to use the KEEP evaluation system**, however, whatever system they choose **must meet the guidelines** specified in the Kansas plan, including the tie to student achievement.

College and Career Ready Expectations

- Like many states, Kansas was already prepared to meet the waiver criteria for establishing college and career ready expectations for students because it had **adopted the Common Core Standards** for English language arts and math.

- As a governing state in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, Kansas is working to develop and **implement** computerized **assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards** that will be ready for implementation in 2014-2015.
- Kansas is also on track to **adopt English Language Proficiency standards** aligned to the Common Core Standards by 2013-2014, and to **administer new assessments** aligned to those standards by 2014-2015.