

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL ENHANCEMENT AND INTERNAL OPERATIONS
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
September 12-13, 2013

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

12. Approval to submit an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request for additional waivers

Context for the Waiver

As part of the approved ESEA Flexibility Request, Mississippi was required to commit to fully implementing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet the requirements of ESEA flexibility, which include the use of student growth as a significant factor. These systems were to be fully implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, and the results of those systems were scheduled to inform personnel decisions no later than the 2015-2016 school year.

This flexibility waiver allows districts to continue with the implementation of evaluation systems, but allows districts to postpone making personnel decisions based upon the new evaluation systems until the 2016-17 school year.

Extending the timeline to 2016-17 for personnel decisions allows:

- Multiple years of comparable data for schoolwide growth goals based on the CCSS-aligned assessment (results from 2014-15 and 2015-16 will be first available in 2016-17).
- Additional time for training and support on schoolwide student growth measures and other indicators to increase fidelity of implementation.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

US Department of Education-required template for ESEA Flexibility Amendment

Dear Assistant Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to request approval to amend the State's approved ESEA flexibility request. The relevant information, outlined in the *ESEA Flexibility Amendment Submission Process* document, is provided in the table below.

Flexibility Element(s) Affected by the Amendment	Brief Description of Element as Originally Approved	Brief Description of Requested Amendment	Rationale	Process for Consulting with Stakeholders, Summary of Comments, and Changes Made as a Result
3.B. <i>Educator Evaluation</i>	p. 113. While the SEA does not intend the sole purpose of the educator evaluation to be for personnel decisions, the first time the practice could feasibly occur would be the 2015-16 school year, after the first full year of implementation. Mississippi will fully implement the principal evaluation in 2013-14 and the teacher evaluation in 2014-15.	Mississippi requests that personnel decisions based upon the statewide educator evaluation system be postponed until no earlier than the 2016-17 school year.	Extending the timeline to 2016-17 for personnel decisions will provide more time to manage the use of data for personnel decisions; multiple years of comparable data for schoolwide growth goals based on the CCSS-aligned assessment (results from 2014-15 and 2015-16 will be first available in 2016-17); and more time for training and support on schoolwide student growth measures and other indicators to increase fidelity of implementation.	MDE sent an email to all LEAs inviting comment and posted a public notice on our website, as well as discussing at an open portion of a State Board meeting and multiple stakeholder meetings. Some comments were received in support of the amendment; others expressed concern at the lowering of standards based upon a delay in implementation. As a result, MDE will emphasize to our LEAs the purpose of due process and the use of educator evaluation for improved instruction. Attached is a summary of LEA comments submitted in response to the invitation to comment.

US Department of Education-required template for ESEA Flexibility Amendment

Flexibility Element(s) Affected by the Amendment	Brief Description of Element as Originally Approved	Brief Description of Requested Amendment	Rationale	Process for Consulting with Stakeholders, Summary of Comments, and Changes Made as a Result
3.A. and 3.B. <i>Educator Evaluation</i>	Pages 113, 116, 117, 118, and 122 of the approved request reference use of Student Growth Percentiles as the schoolwide growth measure for Educator Evaluation beginning in the 2013-14 statewide implementation of principal evaluation as well as the 2013-14 statewide pilot of teacher evaluation.	Beginning with all evaluations in the 2013-14 school year, MDE will use the schoolwide growth indicators being used to measure schoolwide growth, as approved by the State Board of Education, for use in the statewide accountability model. MDE will continue to use student growth percentiles as a student learning objective for tested area teachers in grades 3-8 in TIF-participating schools.	Research indicates that, based upon the data available to Mississippi schools, SGPs only be applied to the elementary tested-area teachers. Research does not support use of SGPs for schoolwide growth, nor for teacher-specific growth at the high school level. To that end, MDE will instead use the schoolwide growth indicators being used to measure schoolwide growth, as approved by the State Board of Education, for use in the statewide accountability model. This linkage of consistent, transparent growth measures will ensure that teachers, principals, and schools are all focused on the same data set used to ensure increased student outcomes.	MDE sent an email to all LEAs inviting comment and posted a public notice on our website, as well as discussing at an open portion of a State Board meeting and multiple stakeholder meetings. All comments received are in support of the amendment. Attached is a summary of LEA comments submitted in response to the invitation to comment.

If the Department approves the amendment request, MDE will provide an updated ESEA flexibility request that reflects the amendment with additional details on its high-quality plan, timeline, and activities related to this amendment as part of the process for requesting renewal of ESEA flexibility. Please contact Dr. Kim Benton, State ESEA Contact, at kbenton@mde.k12.ms.us or by phone at 601/359-3077 if you have any questions regarding these proposed amendments.

Executive Summary of Public Comment

The MDE began sharing information regarding the amendment and the pending waiver at multiple stakeholder meetings throughout the months of June and July (e.g., Regional MPES Training, MASS Alliance Conference). On August 8th, MDE sent an email to all local educational agencies (LEAs) inviting comment. The draft of the amendment was posted for public notice on the website. The final step is the discussion during the State Board of Education’s work session on September 12, 2013. The comments garnered from all of these meetings will be summarized as supporting documentation to the September 30, 2013, amendment request.

Stakeholders were asked to respond to the following question:

Should the Mississippi Department of Education apply for the waiver to extend the use of educator evaluation results for personnel decisions to the 2016-17 school year?

Summary of Comments from On-Line Survey and Face-to-Face Meetings:
247 respondents

Apply for the Waiver 224 responses (91%)	Do not Apply for the Waiver 23 responses (9%)
Time needed to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate validity of results • provide training • understand data and impact of growth • increase teacher preparation and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators should be held accountable now, not three years from now. • Strings are always attached to waivers.