



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

August 13, 2019

The Honorable Eric Mackey
State Superintendent of Education
Alabama State Department of Education
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36104

Dear Superintendent Mackey:

I am writing in response to Alabama's requests to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) on March 1, 2019, April 23, 2019, June 18, 2019, July 15, 2019, and July 22, 2019 to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act. Prior to implementing any revisions to its approved consolidated State plan, a State must submit its proposed amendments to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) for review and approval.

I have determined that the amended request meets the requirements in the ESEA and, for this reason, I am approving Alabama's amended State plan. A summary of the Alabama amendment is enclosed. This letter, as well as Alabama's revised ESEA consolidated State plan, will be posted on the Department's website. Any further requests to amend Alabama's ESEA consolidated State plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval.

Please be aware that approval of this amendment to Alabama's consolidated State plan is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is Alabama's responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

Thank you for all of the work that the Alabama State Department of Education has put into its consolidated State plan under the ESEA. If you have questions or need any assistance regarding

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the implementation of your ESEA consolidated State plan, please contact the Office of School Support and Accountability at: OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary for
Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Paul Bonner, Education Administrator II, Accountability
Daniel Boyd, Deputy State Superintendent
Angela Martin, Director, Federal Programs
Jean Scott, Education Administrator, Evaluation, Accountability, and Support
Tony Thacker, Assistant State Superintendent

Amendments to Alabama's Consolidated State Plan

The following is a summary of Alabama's amendment request. Please refer to the U.S. Department of Education's website <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/map/al.html> for Alabama's complete consolidated State plan.

Approved Amendments

The following amendments are aligned with the statute and regulations:

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)

- *Native Language Assessments*
Alabama updated its plan to indicate that the Spanish language version of its assessments will be administered in spring 2020 rather than spring 2019.
- *Academic Achievement Long-term Goals*
Alabama clarified that its Academic Achievement long-term goals and targets are based on the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the statewide assessments.
- *Long-Term Goals: High School Graduation Rate*
Alabama removed its long-term goals for the five-year extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and now only includes long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.
- *Long-Term Goals: Achieving English Learner Proficiency*
Alabama updated its Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency measurements of interim progress and long-term goal based on two years of baseline data from the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school year. The long-term goal has been revised from 85 to 58 percent of English learners making progress achieving English language proficiency.
- *Academic Achievement Indicator*
Alabama specified that it will use a performance index to calculate the Academic Achievement indicator. A student will receive zero points for scoring at Level I; 0.5 points for scoring at Level II; 1 point for scoring at Level III; and 1.25 points for scoring at Level IV.

In addition, Alabama clarified that it will use an index for calculating student growth in high school as part of the Academic Achievement indicator. Just like growth in the Other Academic Achievement Indicator for Elementary and Middle Schools (noted below), a student will be assigned to one of four categories based on the amount of growth shown between test scores and will receive zero points for Category 1; 0.75 points for Category 2; 1.25 points for Category 3; and 1.50 points for Category 4.

- *Other Academic Indicator for Elementary and Middle Schools that are not High Schools*
Alabama clarified that it will use student growth percentiles (SGPs) to calculate its Other Academic indicator. The State indicated that student-level assessment data for growth will be assigned to one of four categories and the category will be given a certain amount of points: zero points for Category 1; 0.75 points for Category 2; 1.25 points for Category 3; and 1.50 points for Category 4.
- *Graduation rate indicator*
Alabama removed the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate from its graduation rate indicator. The graduation rate indicator is now based only on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.
- *School quality and student success indicator*
Alabama revised its definition of a chronically absent student from a student absent for 15 or more days to a student absent for 18 or more days.
- *Comprehensive support and improvement – high school graduation rate*
Alabama updated its methodology so that it identifies for comprehensive support and improvement any high school that has a graduation rate less than 67 percent (rather than setting the threshold for identifying schools as the higher of 67 percent or more than 10 percentage points less than the state average graduation rate).
- *Comprehensive support and improvement – lowest 5 percent*
Alabama updated its plan so that it will identify for comprehensive support and improvement the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools (rather than the bottom six percent of schools).
- *Targeted support and improvement – Consistently Underperforming Schools*
Alabama updated its methodology for identifying targeted support and improvement schools based on consistently underperforming subgroups. Now, Alabama will identify any school that has at least one subgroup at the 75th percentile of the all students group in the lowest-performing schools (comprehensive support and improvement schools) and which has not improved over three years.
- *Targeted Support and Improvement – Additional Targeted Support*
Alabama revised its methodology for identifying schools for additional targeted support and improvement. Alabama will identify additional targeted support and improvement schools from among the schools identified for targeted support and improvement for consistently underperforming subgroups if a subgroup performs below the threshold for the “all students” group for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement. Alabama will continue to identify additional targeted support and improvement schools at least once every three years.

- *Subgroups*
Alabama has changed the manner in which it will include recently arrived English learners in assessments and accountability from the option in ESEA section 11111(b)(3)(A)(i) to ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii) (i.e., Alabama will now assess and report the performance of a recently arrived English learner, who has been enrolled in a school in one of the 50 States in the United States or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months, on the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in each year of the student's enrollment in a school, exclude the results from accountability in the first year, include a measure of student growth the second year, and include proficiency on the assessments in the third year).
- *More Rigorous Interventions*
Alabama revised its language regarding more rigorous interventions. It will identify partners who will provide professional development and assistance to continue supporting schools previously identified as Priority Support schools that do not exit comprehensive support and improvement within four years.