



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

December 19, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Wise  
Director  
Iowa Department of Education  
400 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Dear Director Wise:

Thank you for submitting Iowa's consolidated State plan to implement requirements of covered programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and of the amended McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act).

I am writing to provide initial feedback based on the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department's) review of your consolidated State plan. As you know, the Department also conducted, as required by the statute, a peer review of the portions of your State plan related to ESEA Title I, Part A, ESEA Title III, Part A, and the McKinney-Vento Act using the Department's *State Plan Peer Review Criteria* released on March 28, 2017. Peer reviewers examined these sections of the consolidated State plan in their totality, while respecting State and local judgments. The goal of the peer review was to support State- and local-led innovation by providing objective feedback on the technical, educational, and overall quality of the State plan and to advise the Department on the ultimate approval of the plan. I am enclosing a copy of the peer review notes for your consideration.

Based on the Department's review of all programs submitted under Iowa's consolidated State plan, including those programs subject to peer review, the Department is requesting clarifying or additional information to ensure the State's plan has met all statutory and regulatory requirements, as detailed in the enclosed table. Each State has flexibility in how it meets the statutory and regulatory requirements. Please note that the Department's feedback may differ from the peer review notes. I encourage you to read the full peer notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your consolidated State plan.

ESEA section 8451 requires the Department to issue a written determination within 120 days of a State's submission of its consolidated State plan. Given this statutory requirement, I ask that you revise Iowa's consolidated State plan and resubmit it through OMB Max by January 4, 2018. We encourage you to continue to engage in consultation with stakeholders, including representatives from the Governor's office, as you develop and implement your State plan. If you would like to take more time to resubmit your consolidated State plan, please contact your Office of State Support Program Officer in writing and indicate your new submission date.

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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

Please recognize that if we accommodate your request for additional time, a determination on the ESEA consolidated State plan may be rendered after the 120-day period.

Department staff will contact you to support Iowa in addressing the items enclosed with this letter. If you have any immediate questions or need additional information, I encourage you to contact your Program Officer for the specific Department program.

Please note that the Department only reviewed information provided in Iowa's consolidated State plan that was responsive to the Revised Template for the Consolidated State Plan that was issued on March 13, 2017. Each State is responsible for administering all programs included in its consolidated State plan consistent with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Department can only review and approve complete information. If Iowa indicated that any aspect of its plan may change or is still under development, Iowa may include updated or additional information in its resubmission. Iowa may also propose an amendment to its approved plan when additional data or information are available consistent with ESEA section 1111(a)(6)(B). The Department cannot approve incomplete details within the State plan until the State provides sufficient information.

Thank you for the important work that you and your staff are doing to support the transition to the ESSA. The Department looks forward to working with you to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jason Botel  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
Delegated the Authority to Perform the  
Functions and Duties of the Assistant  
Secretary of Elementary and Secondary  
Education

Enclosures

cc: Governor  
State Title I Director  
State Title II Director  
State Title III Director  
State Title IV Director  
State Title V Director  
State 21st Century Community Learning Center Director  
State Director for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless  
Children and Youths Program

**Items That Require Additional Information or Revision in Iowa’s Consolidated State Plan**

<b>Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)</b>	
A.3.iv: Efforts to Develop Assessments	<p>The ESEA and its implementing regulations require a State to describe how it will make every effort to develop assessments in, at a minimum, languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population, including a description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators, parents and families of English learners, students (as appropriate), and other stakeholders. In its State plan, the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) indicates that its request for proposals (RFP) process to develop new assessments does not allow for consultation across stakeholders. IDE does not address, however, consulting with stakeholders prior to its RFP process. As a result, it is unclear if IDE met the statutory and regulatory requirement.</p>
A.4.iii.c.1: English Language Proficiency Long-term goals	<p>The ESEA requires that a State identify and describe an ambitious long-term goal and measurements of interim progress for increases in the percentage of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment. IDE’s English language proficiency goal and measurements of interim progress are based solely on attainment of English language proficiency rather than being based on English learner progress in achieving English language proficiency. As a result, IDE has not met this requirement.</p>
A.4.iv.a: Academic Achievement Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESEA requires that a State describe an Academic Achievement indicator that is measured by proficiency on the annual assessments required under ESEA subsection (b)(2)(B)(v)(I) (i.e., reading/language arts and mathematics). IDE describes an indicator that includes both the percentage of students scoring proficient or above and the average scale scores, but does not describe how the proficiency measure and scale score measure will be combined within the indicator. As a result, it is unclear if IDE has met this requirement.</li> <li>• The Academic Achievement indicator required under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i)(I) must be measured by proficiency on the annual assessments required under ESEA subsection (b)(2)(B)(v)(I) (i.e., reading/language arts and mathematics) and must annually measure performance for all students and for each subgroup of students. IDE proposes an Academic Achievement indicator that includes the use of scale scores. IDE may use scale scores in the indicator but must clarify how the measures included in the indicator measure proficiency on the statewide reading/language arts and mathematics assessments. Additionally, to clarify its</li> </ul>

	<p>consistency with the statutory requirement to include all students, IDE should articulate how its approach will ensure that a school’s performance on the indicator reflects each student’s performance (e.g., how it will ensure that the performance of each student contributes to the overall performance on the indicator, including by ensuring that no student’s performance overcompensates for the results of a student who is not yet proficient).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In its State plan, IDE indicated that participation rate is included at a weight of 10 percent for elementary/middle schools and high schools, which is permissible. The ESEA requires a State to calculate the proficiency rate for the Academic Achievement indicator with a denominator of the greater of 95 percent of all students (or 95 percent of each subgroup of students) or the number of students participating in the assessments. It is not clear that IDE is meeting the statutory requirement for calculating the Academic Achievement indicator.</li> </ul>
<p>A.4.iv.b: Other Academic Indicator for Elementary and Secondary Schools that are Not High Schools</p>	<p>IDE proposes to include in the indicator for public elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools (i.e., the Other Academic indicator) a measure of student growth using student growth percentiles for all grade spans (elementary, middle, and high school). The ESEA requires a State to describe an Other Academic indicator that includes measures only for elementary and secondary schools that are not high schools. Student growth on the high school assessments may be included in the Academic Achievement indicator or as a School Quality or Student Success indicator. Additionally, because IDE does not provide a description of how it will calculate student growth percentiles, nor how the student growth percentiles will be included in the accountability system, it has not met this requirement.</p>
<p>A.4.iv.c: Graduation Rate Indicator</p>	<p>The ESEA requires a State to describe its Graduation Rate indicator. In its State plan, IDE indicates that it will include a four- and five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the indicator. However, because Iowa does not describe how the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate will be combined with the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate within the Graduation Rate indicator, IDE has not met this requirement.</p>
<p>A.4.iv.d: Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency Indicator</p>	<p>The ESEA requires a State to establish and describe a Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency indicator that is the same indicator across all LEAs in the State, is based on the State’s definition of English language proficiency, is measured by the State’s English language proficiency assessment, and is aligned with the State-determined timeline for students to achieve English language proficiency. IDE states that it will use student growth percentiles to calculate this indicator but does not describe the student growth percentiles or how the student growth information is combined to create a measure for each school in the State. Because IDE does not describe how student growth percentiles will be calculated and included within this indicator and</p>

	<p>does not describe how its English language proficiency indicator is aligned to the State-determined timeline to achieve English language proficiency, IDE has not fully described the Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency indicator.</p>
<p>A.4.iv.e: School Quality or Student Success Indicator(s)</p>	<p>The ESEA requires States to describe how each School Quality or Student Success indicator used in its statewide accountability system for all public schools in the State allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance, is comparable statewide, is used statewide in all schools in a consistent way, and can be disaggregated for each subgroup of students. The ESEA also requires a State to include all five indicators in its accountability system for annual meaningful differentiation of schools starting at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. Appendix G of IDE’s plan provides unclear information regarding if the Conditions for Learning survey will be administered to all students rather than a subset of students, when and how often it is administered, and how points are awarded in IDE’s accountability system for this indicator. In addition, it is unclear whether this measure will be calculated and included in the annual system of meaningful differentiation beginning with the 2018-2019 school year and, if so, whether it will be able to be calculated for all schools, including schools that do not include grade 5 or higher. Finally, IDE does not describe how the Conditions for Learning survey will be disaggregated for each subgroup of students, specifically for children with disabilities, English learners, and low-income students. Without this information, it is not clear that IDE meets the requirements for a School Quality or Student Success indicator.</p>
<p>A.4.v.a: State’s System of Annual Meaningful Differentiation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESEA requires a State to describe its system of meaningfully differentiating, on an annual basis, all public schools in the State. The State’s system of annual meaningful differentiation must be based on all indicators in the State’s accountability system and must include the performance of all students and each subgroup of students on each of the indicators in the State’s accountability system. IDE’s system of annual meaningful differentiation does not clarify how indicators will be calculated individually or how they will be combined to provide meaningful differentiation of schools. It is also unclear whether or not the State will implement its system of meaningful differentiation on an annual basis for accountability purposes. For example, IDE notes that its “accountability index decision-making process is applied annually for reporting purposes, and every three years for accountability purposes.”</li> <li>• In its State plan, IDE indicates that student participation will be included as 10% of the system of annual meaningful differentiation, but does not describe how student participation will be calculated. The ESEA requires a State to describe its system of meaningfully differentiating, on an annual basis, all public schools in the State. Because IDE has not</li> </ul>

	<p>described how it is calculating student participation, IDE has not fully described its system of annual meaningful differentiation.</p>
<p>A.4.vi.a: Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools—Lowest Performing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In its State plan, when describing its methodology, IDE indicates that it may identify its lowest-performing schools from among all schools, not just schools that receive Title I, Part A funds, which may result in some non-Title I schools being identified in place of some Title I schools that are among the lowest-performing five percent of those schools. The ESEA requires a State to describe its methodology to identify not less than the lowest-performing five percent of all schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in the State for comprehensive support and improvement. If it chooses, IDE may identify additional, non-Title I low-performing schools.</li> <li>• The ESEA requires that a State identify not less than the lowest-performing five percent of schools receiving Title I, Part A funds in the State. In its State plan, IDE describes exit criteria that would allow schools to exit Comprehensive Support and Improvement status even though the school continues to meet the identification criteria (e.g., the school could continue to be one of the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools in the State). In such a circumstance, the State proposes that the school would be exempt from being identified for comprehensive support and improvement until the following cycle of identification. As a result, IDE has not met this requirement.</li> </ul>
<p>A.4.vi.b: Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools—Low Graduation Rates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESEA requires a State to describe its methodology to identify all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one-third or more of their students for comprehensive support and improvement. In its State plan, IDE describes a methodology for identifying low graduation rate schools for comprehensive support and improvement from among schools receiving Title I, Part A funds and not from among all public high schools in the State.</li> <li>• The ESEA requires a State to identify all public high schools in the State failing to graduate one-third or more of their students for comprehensive support and improvement. In its State plan, IDE also describes exit criteria that would allow schools to exit Comprehensive Support and Improvement status even though the school continues to meet the identification criteria (e.g., the school could continue to be one of the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools in the State). In such a circumstance, the State indicates that the school would be exempt from being identified for comprehensive support and improvement until the following cycle of identification. As a result, IDE has not met this requirement.</li> </ul>
<p>A.4.vi.e: Targeted Support and Improvement Schools—</p>	<p>The ESEA requires a State to identify schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups annually. In its State plan, IDE indicates that it will identify schools with “consistently</p>

<p>“Consistently Underperforming” Subgroups</p>	<p>underperforming subgroups” every three years. In addition, IDE presents inconsistent definitions of “consistently underperforming subgroups.” On page 57, Iowa defines consistently underperforming as any subgroup that has a zero-to-negative growth trajectory in the State’s accountability index for three years, but on page 58, IDE defines consistently underperforming as any subgroup performing at or lower than the lowest five percent of schools identified in need of comprehensive support and improvement. Furthermore, IDE describes exit criteria that would allow schools to exit Additional Targeted Support status while still meeting the identification criteria. In such a circumstance, the State indicates that the school would be exempt from being identified for comprehensive support and improvement until the following cycle of identification. As a result, IDE has not met this requirement.</p>
<p>A.4.vi.f: Targeted Support and Improvement Schools— Additional Targeted Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESEA requires a State to describe its methodology to identify schools in which the performance of any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D) (i.e., the methodology described above in A.4.vi.a), including whether the methodology identifies these schools from among all public schools in the State or from among only the schools identified as schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups. In its State plan, IDE describes a methodology for identifying additional targeted support schools from among schools receiving Title I, Part A funds, and not from among either all schools in the State or all schools identified as schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups.</li> <li>• The ESEA requires that a State identify schools in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D). In its State plan, IDE describes exit criteria that would allow schools to exit Additional Targeted Support status while still meeting the identification criteria, which may not require schools to demonstrate continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success in the State. In such a circumstance, the State indicates that the school would be exempt from being identified for comprehensive support and improvement until the following cycle of identification.</li> </ul>
<p>A.4.viii.d: Resource Allocation Review</p>	<p>The ESEA requires a State to describe how it will periodically review resource allocation to support school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement. IDE only describes how it will periodically review resource allocation in LEAs with schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement and not LEAs with a significant number of schools</p>

	that are identified for Targeted Support and Improvement.
A.5: Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators	The ESEA requires a State to describe the extent, if any, to which low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers. The ESEA also requires a State to describe the measures that it will use to evaluate and publicly report its progress with respect to how low-income and minority children are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers. Although IDE describes disproportionate rates of access to educators for all schools based on the State’s 2015 Equity Plan, IDE does not specifically address ineffective teachers, schools assisted under Title I, Part A, or the measures it will use to evaluate and publicly report progress.
<b>Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children</b>	
B.1: Supporting Needs of Migratory Children	IDE describes how, in planning and implementing the Migrant Education Program, it will identify and address the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs;</li> <li>○ Joint planning among local, State, and Federal educational programs serving migratory children, including language instruction educational programs under Title III, Part A; and</li> <li>○ The integration of services available under Title I, Part C with services provided by those other programs.</li> </ul> However, the ESEA requires that a State also describe how it will evaluate the Migrant Education Program in the areas described above, to ensure the unique educational needs of migratory children are identified and addressed.
<b>Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk</b>	
C.1: Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs	Although IDE includes a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth from correctional facilities to locally operated programs, IDE does not include a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between locally operated programs and correctional facilities (i.e., the transition from correctional facilities to locally operated programs as well as the transition from locally operated programs to correctional facilities). The ESEA requires a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

<b>Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction</b>	
D.4: Improving the Skills of Educators	In its State plan, IDE describes how it will improve the skills of educators, in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs, for children with disabilities and English learners and provide instruction based on the needs of such students. However, IDE does not address all of the required subgroups of students. The ESEA requires a State to describe how it will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs and provide instruction based on the needs for such students, particularly for students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels.
<b>Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants</b>	
F.2: Awarding Subgrants	The ESEA requires a State plan to include a description of how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2). IDE does not include a description of how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs are consistent with this requirement, including that the SEA will not award grants less than \$10,000.
<b>Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers</b>	
G.2: Awarding Subgrants	IDE describes the objectives of its program, including its peer review process and how points will be awarded, but does not describe the procedures it will use to ensure that community learning centers will help participating students meet challenging State and local academic standards. The ESEA requires that each State describe: (1) how it will ensure that proposed community learning centers will target their activities to students’ academic needs; and (2) how IDE will implement a rigorous peer review process.
<b>Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B</b>	
I.2: Dispute Resolution	In its State plan, IDE describes procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding educational placement. The plan does not, however, include a procedural timeline or any other information that indicates that these procedures would result in the <i>prompt</i> resolution of disputes. The McKinney-Vento Act requires a State to include information about how the procedures described will result in the <i>prompt</i> resolution of disputes.
I.3: Support for School Personnel	In its State plan, IDE includes a description of training and outreach by the SEA for school personnel to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the needs of homeless children and youth. It is not clear, however, how these activities will heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of <i>runaway and homeless</i> children and youth. The McKinney-Vento Act requires the State to describe programs for school personnel (including the

	<p>LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of runaway and homeless children and youth.</p>
<p>I.4: Access to Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDE does not include any SEA procedures that ensure that <i>youths separated from public schools</i> are identified and afforded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including removing barriers that prevent them from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies. The McKinney-Vento Act requires a State to describe procedures that ensure that homeless youth and <i>youths separated from public schools</i> are afforded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent them from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.</li> <li>• IDE describes ongoing training and technical assistance to ensure all barriers for homeless students are removed to their participation in extracurricular and academic support programs. It is not clear, however, if these procedures ensure that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers that specifically include access to magnet schools, summer school, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels. The McKinney-Vento Act requires the State to describe procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels.</li> </ul>
<p>I.6: Policies to Remove Barriers</p>	<p>In its State plan, IDE discusses several State policies in administrative codes related to enrollment and retention barriers to homeless children and youth. IDE does not demonstrate, however, that the SEA and LEAs have developed, policies that they will review and revise to address specific barriers to enrollment and retention <i>due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences</i>. The McKinney-Vento Act requires the State to demonstrate how the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed policies that they will review and revise to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in the State due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.</p>

<b>General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)</b>	
GEPA 427	Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act requires a State to provide a description of the steps it will take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, the programs included in its State plan for students, teachers, and program beneficiaries with special needs, and this is not addressed in IDE's plan.