



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SEP 23 2009

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

The Honorable Francis Haithcock
Chancellor of Public Schools
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

The Honorable Eric J. Smith
Commissioner
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Chancellor Haithcock and Commissioner Smith:

I am writing in response to Florida's requests to waive certain statutory and regulatory requirements of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). After reviewing Florida's requests, I am pleased to grant the following waivers:

- Approving schools and LEAs identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring as supplemental educational services (SES) providers. I am granting a one-year waiver of 34 C.F.R. § 200.47(b)(1)(iv)(A) and (B) to permit Florida to approve a school or LEA identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring to serve as an SES provider in the 2009–10 school year.
- Calculation of “set-asides” for Title I, Part A funds. I am granting a one-year waiver to permit an LEA or school, as applicable, in Florida to exclude all or part of the Title I, Part A funds it receives through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) when calculating:
 - An LEA's obligation to spend an amount equal to at least 20 percent of its fiscal year (FY) 2009 Title I, Part A funds for public school choice-related transportation and SES (ESEA section 1116(b)(10); 34 C.F.R. § 200.48(a)(2)).
 - An LEA's obligation, if identified for improvement, to spend 10 percent of its FY 2009 Title I, Part A funds for professional development (ESEA section 1116(c)(7)(A)(iii); 34 C.F.R. § 200.52(a)(3)(iii)).
 - A school's obligation, if identified for improvement, to spend 10 percent of its FY 2009 Title I, Part A funds for professional development (ESEA section 1116(b)(3)(A)(iii); 34 C.F.R. § 200.41(c)(5)).
- Calculation of per-pupil amount for SES. I am granting a one-year waiver of ESEA section 1116(e)(6) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.48(c)(1) to permit an LEA in Florida to exclude some or all of the Title I, Part A funds it receives through the ARRA in calculating the per-pupil amount for SES.

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Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

- Ability to grant LEAs a waiver of the carryover limitation. I am granting Florida a two-year waiver of section 1127(b) of the ESEA to allow it to waive the carryover limitation in section 1127(a) of the ESEA more than once every three years for an LEA that needs the additional waiver because of the supplemental Title I, Part A appropriation provided through the ARRA.

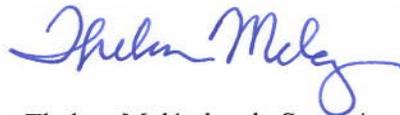
These waivers are granted on the condition that Florida will satisfy the conditions detailed in the enclosure to this letter, including the requirement to report certain information about the use of each of the waivers to the Department by September 30, 2010. Please be sure to review the enclosure carefully.

I am aware that, in addition to the waivers above, Florida submitted the following six additional requests: (1) waiving the cap on financial incentives and rewards, (2) lowering the poverty threshold for schoolwide eligibility to below 40 percent, (3) excluding ARRA funds when calculating the 85 percent for identified schools, (4) waiving the requirements for highly qualified paraprofessionals in newly identified Title I schools, (5) excluding ARRA funds when calculating the hold-harmless provisions, and (6) allowing the use of Title I, Part A Funds for additional paraprofessionals in newly identified Title I schools.

I am working with my staff to provide you a decision regarding those requests as soon as feasible. My staff will be reviewing them and will be in contact with your staff as needed. In the meantime, I wanted to ensure that you received my decisions regarding the waivers set forth above, as I know these matters are time sensitive.

I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. If you have any questions, please contact Zollie Stevenson, Director of Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) at (202) 260-0826.

Sincerely,



Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Governor Charlie Crist
Lisa Bacen

CONDITIONS ON TITLE I, PART A WAIVERS

Approving schools and LEAs identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring as supplemental educational services (SES) providers (34 C.F.R. § 200.47(b)(1)(iv)(A) and (B))

This waiver is granted on the condition that Florida will submit to the Department, by September 30, 2010, a report that includes:

- The total number of LEAs identified for improvement or corrective action that were approved to be an SES provider for the 2009–10 school year; and
- The total number of schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that were approved to be an SES provider for the 2009–10 school year.

“Set-aside” calculations — Excluding Title I, Part A ARRA funds from an LEA’s 20 percent obligation and from an LEA’s 10 percent professional development obligation (ESEA sections 1116(b)(10), 1116(c)(7)(A)(iii); 34 C.F.R. §§ 200.48(a)(2), 200.52(a)(3)(iii))

Each of these waivers is granted on the condition that Florida will:

- Only implement the waiver for an LEA that provides assurances to Florida that:
 - The LEA will comply with its statutory and regulatory obligations for the set-aside with respect to its regular Title I, Part A allocation;
 - The LEA will use the funds freed up by the waiver to address needs identified based on data;
 - The LEA will comply with all of its other Title I, Part A statutory and regulatory obligations, including the obligations in sections 1114 and 1115 to have schoolwide and targeted assistance programs that “use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research”;
 - The LEA will submit an application for Title I, Part A funds (LEA application) or, if necessary, an amendment to its existing LEA application that describes the data on which it relied to identify needs that will be addressed using the funds freed up by the waiver and the evidence that supports the strategies it intends to use to address those needs;
- Not approve an LEA’s application or amendment to an LEA’s application unless or until it determines, based on the LEA’s description, that the LEA has satisfied its obligation to identify needs based on data and address those needs using evidence-based strategies;
- Not approve an LEA to implement the waiver unless or until the LEA has an approved application (or amended application) that includes the required description of the data and evidence;
- If necessary, require an LEA seeking to implement the waiver to amend its application in accordance with the SEA’s usual process for changing an LEA’s application;
- Comply with its obligation under 34 C.F.R. § 200.47(a)(1)(ii)(B)(I) to post on its website the 20 percent obligation for each LEA and ensure that this information accurately reflects each LEA’s implementation of the waiver; and
- Submit to the Department, by September 30, 2010, a report that provides:
 - The name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing each of the waivers; and
 - The name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA that requested but was denied permission to implement each of the waivers.

“Set-aside” calculation — Excluding Title I, Part A ARRA funds a school’s 10 percent professional development obligation (ESEA section 1116(b)(3)(A)(iii); 34 C.F.R. § 200.41(c)(5))

This waiver is granted on the condition that Florida will:

- Only implement the waiver for an LEA that provides assurances to Florida that:
 - The LEA will ensure that its schools comply with their statutory and regulatory obligations for the set-aside with respect to the funds that are not “factored out” in accordance with Question C-9

in the Department's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title I, Part A Waivers (available at: www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/title-i-waiver.doc);

- The LEA will ensure that its schools use the funds freed up by the waiver to address needs identified based on data;
- The LEA will comply with all of its other Title I, Part A statutory and regulatory obligations, including the obligations in sections 1114 and 1115 to have schoolwide and targeted assistance programs that "use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research";
- The LEA will ensure that its schools will implement the waiver in accordance with Question C-9 in the Department's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title I, Part A Waivers (available at: www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/title-i-waiver.doc); and
- Submit to the Department, by September 30, 2010, a report that provides:
 - The name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing the waiver with respect to its schools; and
 - The name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA that requested but was denied permission to implement the waiver.

Calculation of per-pupil amount for SES (ESEA section 1116(e)(6); 34 C.F.R. § 200.48(c)(1))

This waiver is granted on the condition that Florida will:

- Only implement the waiver for an LEA that provides assurances to Florida that:
 - The LEA will comply with all of the statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the provision of SES with respect to its regular FY 2009 Title I, Part A allocation; and
 - The LEA will comply with all of its other Title I, Part A statutory and regulatory obligations, including the obligations in sections 1114 and 1115 to have schoolwide and targeted assistance programs that "use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research";
- Comply with its obligation under 34 C.F.R. § 200.47(a)(1)(ii)(B)(2) to post on its website the per-pupil amount for SES for each LEA and ensure that this information accurately reflects each LEA's implementation of the waiver; and
- Submit to the Department, by September 30, 2010, a report that provides the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing the waiver.

Waiving the carryover limitation more than once every three years (ESEA section 1127(b))

This waiver is granted on the condition that Florida will use its authority granted by this waiver to waive the carryover limitation in section 1127(a) more than once within three years only for an LEA that needs a second (or third) waiver because of its Title I, Part A ARRA funds.