

**ESEA FLEXIBILITY  
Amendment Submission Template**

Dear Assistant Secretary:

We are writing on behalf of the CORE districts to request approval to amend the CORE districts’ approved ESEA flexibility request. The relevant information, outlined in the *ESEA Flexibility Amendment Submission Process* document, is provided in the table below. All of the proposed amendments were approved the CORE Board Meeting on April 29, 2014.

#	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
1	2A (p. 82, 83, 87, 89, 90 with other amendments throughout the text)	The School Quality Improvement Index (hereafter, SQII) was originally approved with three separate domains – academics, social/emotional and school/district culture climate.	The SQII will continue to include academics, social/emotional development and school/district culture & climate. The social/emotional and culture & climate domains are being combined into one domain – The Social-Emotional & School Culture-Climate domain.	The CORE Waiver, from the start, recognized the inter-relationship between the measures in all three domains. In particular, stakeholders have expressed concern about why some metrics were in the social/emotional domain as opposed to the culture/climate domain, and vice versa. To facilitate communications about the SQII, the CORE Districts would prefer,	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0581.

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				<p>going forward, to refer to two domains when examining school performance – the Academic domain and Social/Emotional &amp; Culture/Climate domain. The weights in the SQII (e.g., 60% academic domain, and 40% culture-climate and social-emotional domain) have not changed.</p>	<p>community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): February 6, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Additionally, Select educators participated in input sessions at the Pairing Institutes in January 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
2	2A (p. 76)	Schools that test less than 90% of eligible students in the all students or any subgroup will be automatically considered to be focus schools.	Schools that test less than 90% of eligible students in the all students group or any individual subgroup will automatically be considered as a school that did not	Under-testing is not a required reason for focus school status, and, in alignment with FAQs provided by the US Dept. of Education, is more appropriately considered as part of determining which	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the

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			meet its AMOs.	schools have met their AMOs.	perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
3	2A (various pages for example p. 73, 76, 82, 91, 94)	The term “non-cognitive skills” is used in the waiver to define such non-academic skills (e.g., mindsets, self-management).	Change the term “non-cognitive skills” to social-emotional skills.	Some social emotional skills have a cognitive component, and some districts already use the term social emotional skills in district-wide initiatives, whereas no districts use the term non-cognitive skills on a systemic level. The	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and

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				change is being requested to facilitate communication with stakeholders about the importance of these measures.	ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 19, February 6, 2014, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
4	2A (p. 99)	We will determine the weighting for the Social-Emotional and Culture-Climate Domain factors through piloting and system development in the 2013-14 school year.	We will determine the weighting among Social-Emotional and Culture-Climate Domain factors through piloting and system development in the 2013-14 school year,	Per our commitments in the approved Waiver, we have been collecting baseline data for some metrics and piloting measures for others. Those baseline and pilot data will be analyzed this summer and shared	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the

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			finalizing weights by November 2014, which will allow for sufficient stakeholder engagement in regard to the baseline data and proposed weights that will be released in Summer/Fall 2014.	with stakeholders – along with possible weights – in order to inform the finalized weights and performance thresholds by November 2014.	perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
5	2A (p. 84-85)	(Not directly included)	Add guiding principles with associated commitments for the rollout of new metrics in the SQII to include limited stakes the first time a metric is introduced, providing up to three years of historic data	The SQII will evolve over the next two years. This is occurring in the context of new state standards and assessments, as well as in the context of lacking any new student assessment results in Summer 2014. Our objective is to provide	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various

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			(if feasible) by November for the year in which a metric counts for the first time, ongoing stakeholder engagement and refinement of measurement thresholds/targets and weights, and clear, transparent decision-making processes for establishing and refining metric performance thresholds and weights.	educators with the opportunity to understand and utilize the SQII's new indicators of academic and culture-climate/social-emotional performance to inform school improvement. These principles are designed to meet that objective, and to recognize the significant changes occurring in how we hold schools accountable and build their capacity to improve.	stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): February 6, 2014, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
6	2A (various pages throughout for example pp. 85-86)	In 2013-14, the SQII includes academic performance on the CSTs/CAPA/CMAs in ELA, Math, History/Social Science, and Science; API Growth; grad rates at high school; and persistence rates at middle school.	In 2013-14, the SQII will include 2012-13 CST/CAPA/CMA performance in ELA and Math in grades 2 to 8 and 2012-13 performance on the CAHSEE in grade 10 in ELA and math,	Without new assessment data for the SQII, we can only utilize data that are a year old (2012-13). Because we did not use that data in our designations for 2013-14, the 2012-13 data has	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the

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			<p>consistent with California's approach to measuring ELA and math performance for AYP, and consistent with the CORE approach for making initial designations for the 2013-14 school year. API growth for 2012-13 will be the growth measure. Grad rates will be used at high school on the SQII. At middle school, persistence will be introduced, but will not be incorporated into the SQII until 2014-15.</p>	<p>not yet been part of the CORE Waiver effort and we are thus not duplicating use of data that has already been used. We intend to take science and history/social science out of the SQII for the Fall 2014 SQII because a new state law (AB 484) eliminates such tests for the foreseeable future, and introducing those measures for one year only risks substantial inconsistency with the SQII future years. We intend to make the middle school persistence rate an "information only" metric in fall 2014, given that it will be the first year that educators and stakeholders receive information about their</p>	<p>perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, February 6, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>

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				performance on the persistence metric (per the principles above).	
7	2A (various pages throughout, for example pp. 87, 89, 90)	Social-Emotional and Culture-Climate factors will be collected for baseline data in 2013-14 and become part of the SQII in 2014-15.	Social-Emotional and Culture-Climate factors based upon data that utilize district administrative data (e.g., absenteeism, suspension/expulsion rates, English Learner re-designation rates, disproportionality in Special Education identification rates) are being collected in 2013-14, reported as information only in fall 2014 in order to set SQII targets/thresholds and will become part of the SQII in 2014-15. For metrics where new data collection methods are being	The adjustments and clarifications broadly follow from the aforementioned principles for rolling out new measures in the SQII, whereby stakeholders will be given the opportunity to learn from baseline data prior to including any given metric in the SQII. For some measures, we will provide such baseline results this fall, as the measures are based upon data that districts already have and are submitting to the CORE-wide 3 <sup>rd</sup> party data analysis partner for analysis and reporting this fall. Both the social emotional skills data	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads for the topic(s) in question convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 19, 2013, December 9, 2013, February 6, 2014,

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			<p>piloted in 2013-14 at select schools [social emotional (non-cognitive) skills and culture-climate surveys], pilot data will be used to determine system-wide data collection in 2014-15. All schools will receive baseline data in fall 2015 for such measures, and these measures will become part of the SQII in 2015-16.</p>	<p>and culture-climate survey data are different in that we are developing new methods of data collection (e.g., piloting items for common survey instruments). The SQII Committee will review analytics from these pilots and stakeholder feedback on the pilot measures in order to advise the CORE board in making decisions about which measures will be included in a CORE-wide data collection effort in 2014-15 such that all schools will have baseline data in fall 2015 from which to set targets.</p>	<p>March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Additionally, the CORE Oversight Panel discussed this topic at length in January 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
8	2A (various pages throughout for example	The SQII in 2014-15 is designed to include all of the Social-Emotional and Culture-Climate factors.	The SQII will include most of the Social-Emotional and Culture-Climate	(See above)	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus

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	pp. 87, 89, 90)		factors with the exception of social-emotional (non-cognitive) skills and student/staff/parent surveys.		<p>on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 19, 2013, December 9, 2013, February 6, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Additionally, the CORE Oversight Panel discussed this topic at length in January 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>

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10	2A (pp. 91, 92, 93)	Possible methods for translating performance on particular metrics into SQII points were described in the initial CORE Waiver with the caveat that we would be further developing these methods this school year.	The final method for translating performance metric performance into SQII points involves examining metric against ten thresholds of performance to determine a SQII level for that metric (e.g. 1, 2, 3...9, 10). The SQII level is then multiplied by the weight and then by 10 to get the total SQII points earned.	This approach is similar to states like Idaho, where performance on any given metric are analyzed against a set of performance thresholds and translated into points for an overall 100 point rating. In Idaho, a five point system is used for each metric. Here, we use a ten point system to provide additional precision and to help stakeholders understand the link between metric performance levels and overall performance. The finalized approach for the SQII is fairly similar to the conceptual examples included in the original CORE Waiver. The concept of translating metric performance into SQII levels has been	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): February 6, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.

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				<p>developed in order to address differences in metrics. With ten levels, the range between performance levels will be small enough to provide actionable targets for schools. Ten levels also facilitates communication of the SQII in that a school that has level 6 performance in most measures will have a SQII score of approximately 60, a school with all tens will be at 100, etc. The use of a leveling system, in general, allows the SQII to accommodate measures with different ranges of performance (e.g., graduation rates tend to be in the 60 to 100 percent range, while proficiency rates</p>	

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				at high school tend to be across the 100 point spectrum). Finally, the leveling system can be designed to include metrics that schools are trying to minimize such as chronic absenteeism, where the lowest rates will receive the high scores on the index.	
11	2B & 2F (pp. 111-115, 173-174)	Establishing the baseline of each school's SQII score for the purposes of setting a School Quality Improvement Goal will be in 2014-15.	The baseline year for the School Quality Improvement Goal will be 2015-16. At the end of 2013-14, we will continue to use the bottom 30% of API scores as the interim AMO. At the end of 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17, the interim AMO will be the bottom 30% of SQII scores. At the end of 2017-18, the AMO will be two point growth in	In draft analyses of the 2013-14 SQII that incorporates a growth metric, we noticed the substantial impact growth can have on overall results. Further, our proposed amendments shift the social-emotional skills and culture-climate measures to being part of the SQII in 2015-16. So the SQII metrics will change in noteworthy way as we move from 2014-15 to 2015-16. At	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments,

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			two years or an overall score of 90 (e.g., the School Quality Improvement Goal).	the end of 2015-16, though, we will have included all of the metrics included in the CORE Waiver for the SQII, and it will thus represent a comprehensive and more appropriate baseline.	decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
12	2B, 2D & 2E (various pages throughout for example pp. 129, 150, 151, 160	Lists of Priority and Focus schools will be updated at the end 2014-15.	Lists of Priority and Focus schools will be updated at the end 2015-16.	Given the important role the SQII will play in designations and that the SQII will not include all metrics until we complete the 2015-16 school year and release a corresponding SQII in Fall 2016, we would now prefer to update the Priority and Focus lists with that more comprehensive understanding of school quality. This will also provide schools the opportunity to learn from and respond to	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought

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				their first year of SBAC results in a lower stakes context (in summer/fall 2015) before those results impact priority/focus designations (in summer/fall 2016).	to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
13	2C (pp. 121, 122, 123)	Criteria for identifying Reward schools in the fall of 2014-15 will be based on SQII measures.	<p>Criteria for identifying Reward schools in Fall of 2014-15 will be based on a comparable methodology to the methods that were used in our initial identification of Reward schools for 2013-14 school year, adjusting the data included to utilize 2013 results.</p> <p>SQII-based criteria will be introduced using 2014-15 results for</p>	Given that there will be no new assessment results in summer/fall 2014, we want to limit the amount of change in our approach to designating schools this coming summer/fall. LEAs have spent considerable time and effort communicating the initial designation criteria, and changing those criteria before we have new data would represent a substantial communications and implementation challenge. As we move into summer/fall 2015,	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for

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			designations made in summer/fall 2015 for the 2015-16 school year. Minor adjustments to those criteria are included to reflect federal criteria and our updated concepts for the SQII.	we will have several new SQII metrics and new ELA & Math results from the SBAC administration, making it a more sensible time to communicate new designation criteria.	approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
14	2C (p. 123)	Reward school recognition includes the media.	Recognition of reward schools may include the media.	Given that media recognition is outside of districts' control, we have amended this to be optional.	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought

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					to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
15	2C (p. 124)	The pairing of priority schools with other high performing non-Reward schools is called out in a table but not in the text.	Text has been added to clarify that priority schools can be paired with other higher performing and/or high progress schools, where there is evidence that the pairing will be fruitful.	Especially at secondary, there are cases where there are not enough reward schools to meet the needs of the priority school population. In these cases, we apply a cascading set of criteria to identify meaningful matches.	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for

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					approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, 2014, and March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
16	2C, 2D, 2E (various pages throughout for example pp. 124, 140, 152)	At several points in the waiver, we refer to idea that Priority and Focus school participating in school pairings will experience a formal peer review by their partner school in addition to completing a needs assessment.	As one of their first activities, Priority & Focus school teams will conduct a needs assessment, or utilize a recently completed needs assessment. The process may be similar to a School Quality Review or may utilize the needs assessment tools a District is already implementing (e.g., via the Single Plan for Student Achievement process). Priority schools will share their needs assessment with their	In implementation, we found that positioning Reward schools as peer evaluators conflicted with the role of Reward school as peer coach and support provider, especially in establishing initial relationships. CORE districts remain committed to evaluating the progress of schools against their plans and holding schools accountable for quality implementation. That responsibility will remain with the Priority or Focus school's LEA, and not the partner	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic

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			<p>partner school. Focus schools will share relevant portions of their needs assessment within their CoPs or with their partner schools. Reward school partners may be asked to participate in peer reviews, but the role of evaluating schools (e.g., in terms of monitoring the implementation of school improvement plans) will be the responsibility of the LEA. Similarly, priority and focus schools that exit may be asked to act as peer reviewers.</p>	<p>school, though.</p>	<p>was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, 2014, and March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
17	2C (p. 125)	The Waiver says that Reward schools are required to pair if asked.	The language has been changed to “Reward schools may be required to	Due to a variety of factors, LEAs have requested some flexibility in identifying	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus

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			participate in the school pairing program.”	schools as being appropriate or inappropriate to participate in the pairing program. For instance, a change in leadership at a Reward school may make it an inappropriate partner.	on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, 2014, and March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
18	2C (pp. 125)	The waiver does not explicitly allow SIG priority schools that have met Reward criteria as high progress schools to serve as	Allow schools that are priority due to SIG, but that are also meeting Reward high progress criteria	Schools may be several years into their SIG plans, and showing significant success. As noted in the waiver,	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to

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		partners to other Priority schools.	to act as pairs for other Priority schools.	these schools are showing great promise to serve partners to other Priority schools.	and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, 2014, and March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
20	2D, 2E (pp. 127, 149)	The waiver includes a set of schools that are not included in the Priority and Focus school analysis (e.g., credit recovery programs, independent study schools).	We have added transitional schools for incoming English Learners (e.g., “newcomers schools”) to the list	Such schools, similar to the other excluded schools, are designed to meet the needs of a special population of students – typically	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in

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			schools excluded from Priority and Focus school lists.	those that enter US schools as English Learners after the early elementary grade levels. Students spend a brief period of time there in order to help them acquire English language and academic skills before entering a comprehensive school environment. For these students, accountability is with the school that receives them after spending a brief period of time in the newcomer school environment.	implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
21	2D (p. 129)	The waiver does not include updated criteria for identifying priority schools that reflects the SQII.	For districts that join in 2014-15, the 2013-14 criteria will be used to identify Priority schools. For schools that join in 2015-16 and for updating the list of	We wanted to confirm the continued use of our current federally approved criteria for Priority schools for any updates to the list of Priority schools this summer (based upon the	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these

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			<p>Priority schools in 2016-17 (utilizing 2015-16 results), we have provided criteria that incorporate the SQII and that address federal requirements.</p>	<p>possible addition of districts).</p> <p>In order to make the SQII a meaningful part of the School Quality Improvement System, it has been incorporated as an identification criterion for Priority schools such that schools in the bottom 10% of SQII scores (along with meeting additional federally required criteria) will be considered for addition to the Priority school list starting with any updated priority school lists being released in August/September 2015 and beyond.</p>	<p>district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 11, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
22	2D (pp. 130, 132, 139)	The waiver includes a set of required interventions for non-SIG priority schools based upon the 7 turnaround principles.	Clarifying language to ensure that such interventions will be implemented in alignment with	All of these changes reflect items that have come up in implementation. The changes maintain the	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to

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			<p>collective bargaining agreements, to allow that the implementation of a particular intervention may be in one or more years of the three-year plan, and to allow that priority schools may hire an instructional school or utilize an external coach (e.g., from the LEA).</p>	<p>spirit and intent of the existing waiver language, while ensuring that districts can work effectively within their circumstances (e.g., in terms of their collective bargaining agreements). In terms of the notion that some interventions may be implemented in some, but not all years, the idea is that a school may need a certain support in one year and another in the next. There may, for instance, be a period of gradual release from instructional coaching if a school is showing significant progress.</p>	<p>and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
23	2D (p. 134)	All Priority schools pair with pair with a Reward or other high performing/progress schools.	If a school's SIG plan already includes partnering within an education management	Through the SIG process, some current SIG schools operate within an EMO or in an active partnership with a	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to

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			<p>organization, within a SIG Turnaround Office, or within a similar organization, then that school has the option of partnering within their EMO, SIG Turnaround Office or similar organization, provided that their EMO, SIG Turnaround Office or similar organization structures peer learning with other schools into the intervention approach.</p>	<p>comparable external agency. These relationships already involve peer learning, and the idea is to avoid disruption in the process established in the SIG plans.</p>	<p>and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, 2014, and March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
24	2D (p. 135)	<p>The original language in the CORE Waiver refers to the use of social-emotional and culture climate factors in teacher and principal evaluation.</p>	<p>In Principle 3, we do not commit to using social emotional and culture-climate factors in teacher and principal</p>	<p>Create consistency between our commitments in Principle 3 and our narrative in Principle 2.</p>	<p>In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in</p>

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			<p>evaluation, so the language in the waiver has been amended as follows: Since principal and teacher performance reviews and subsequent personnel decisions will be substantially affected by student academic performance and since social-emotional and culture-climate factors are drivers of academic performances, greater accountability for student outcomes will be supported at the classroom and building levels.</p>		<p>implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.</p>
25	2D (p. 150-151)	The waiver does not include updated criteria for identifying focus schools	For districts that join in 2014-15, the 2013-14 criteria will	We wanted to confirm the continued use of our current federally	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a

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		that reflect, where appropriate, the SQII.	be used to identify Focus schools. For schools that join in 2015-16 and for updating the list of Focus schools in 2016-17 (utilizing 2015-16 results), we have provided criteria that incorporate the SQII, where appropriate, and that address federal requirements.	<p>approved criteria for Focus schools for any updates to the list of Focus schools this summer (based upon the possible addition of districts).</p> <p>In order to make the SQII a meaningful part of the School Quality Improvement System, it has been incorporated as an identification criterion for Focus schools such that schools in the bottom 10% of SQII scores will be considered for addition to the Focus school list if they also have (a) low performing subgroup(s) starting with any updated Focus school lists being released in Summer/Fall 2015 and beyond.</p>	regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 11, 2014, March 20, 2014 and April 14, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
26	2E (pp. 152,	Communities of practice	Focus schools will	Based upon learnings	In general, the CORE districts’

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	153, 154)	(CoPs) are designed to focus on a particular problem of practice with limited additional description for how CoPs will be organized.	address the reason that they have been identified as a Focus school. Schools' problem(s) of practice will derive from their needs assessment, which will include a deeper analysis of several data points (quantitative and qualitative). The Communities of Practice may be organized based upon a variety of factors, including, but not limited to the reason a school was identified as focus, similarity in problems of practices, similarity in the interventions being used to address problem(s) of practice,	from implementation, allowing greater flexibility in the formation of the Communities of Practice will facilitate timely, meaningful launch of plan/do/study/act cycles that yield improvements in student performance.	process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): November 14, 2014, and March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.

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			geography, and/or similarities in school population. All Communities of Practice will reflect the general principles of plan/do/study/act cycles as reflected in updated version of Figure 45.		
27	2E (p. 156)	Requires a certain amount of contact between Focus schools and their paired school, as well as between the principals of the two schools.	If a Focus school is paired with a Reward school, they will have contact with each other at least monthly either in person, or via telephone. Principals will also contact each other on a monthly basis in person, by internet meeting, by phone and/or via email, in order to establish and maintain a productive	Additional flexibility has been added to allow for some communication occurring in person and other communication through remote mechanisms, while ensuring that school staff and principals will connect on a monthly basis. This is based upon the experience during implementation, where geography and other factors required the use of multiple	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments,

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			relationship.	means of interaction. The intensive nature of pairing intervention is maintained in this and other language in the waiver.	decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
28	2E (p. 156)	Focus schools may optionally participate in school pairing.	Focus schools may choose to participate in a school pairing in lieu of participating in a CoP. All Priority schools need to be paired before offering pairing opportunities to Focus schools. Both the LEA and the Reward school need to support the pairing.	Given the intensive nature of both the school pairing and Community of Practice interventions, from an implementation perspective, if a school opts for the more intensive intervention (pairing), it becomes challenging to also participate in a Community of Practice. Participating in both may, indeed, be disruptive to the school improvement process, as key instructional staff may be offsite too often.	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the

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					CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
29	2E (pp. 153, 154)	The waiver describes Communities of Practice as being facilitated by CORE with some ambiguity as to whether they will be inter- or intra-district or both.	CoPs may occur within or across districts. That said, CORE districts are committed to inter-district learning. Every year there will be at least one inter-district COP focusing on one topic (e.g., helping special education students access the core curriculum in secondary schools), where select schools and districts will participate. This inter-district COP will take place virtually and/or in	This language clarifies the range of possible Communities of Practice and therefore facilitates implementation in future years.	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic

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			person.		was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
30	2F (p. 172-174)	Interventions for “other title I schools” not meeting their AMOs are based upon missing the AMO for one year in 2014-15, and then it shifts to requiring two years of missing the AMO before interventions begin. Also these schools are simply referred to as “other title I schools” in the Waiver.	<p>Starting with the identification of schools for Communities of Practice that are neither Priority or Focus for implementation in 2014-15, schools will need to have missed their AMO for two consecutive years to be required to join a Community of Practice.</p> <p>We also request a change to allow CORE districts to refer to these schools as “other support schools.”</p>	<p>Given, that there is no new test data coming from 2013-14 with which to identify schools in need of additional support, we seek to continue focusing on the schools that initiated Communities of Practice this year, and then to get into a consistent approach where schools are identified based upon two consecutive years of concerning results.</p> <p>Calling these schools “other support schools” will facilitate communications in the CORE districts.</p>	<p>In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following</p>

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					inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
31	2F (p. 175)	Schools not meeting AMOs in two or more consecutive years attend a CoP.	Schools not meeting AMOs in two or more consecutive years participate in a CoP.	The intent is to add clarity that, like focus schools, schools that do not meet AMOs in two or more consecutive years fully participate in CoPs.	In general, the CORE districts' process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March

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					20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
32	2E (pp. 139, 140, 156)	The CORE Waiver references a Community of Practice for Reward schools.	We request to change the commitment to a Community of Practice for Reward schools to the following: “Since the pairing of Reward and Focus and Priority schools is at the heart of the SQIS's process, it is important to note that Reward schools may be provided professional development and have the option to participate in a community of practice network to help Reward teachers and principals identify, name, and share the	We learned in implementation that given the intensive nature of the pairing role, it is not necessarily feasible to have an additional, formal Community of Practice for Reward schools. Both priority and collaborative partners will be supported together via the annual pairing institute, etc.	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars

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			strategies that have been effective in their schools, while also considering any demographic, contextual, or resource disparities between Reward and Priority schools.”		of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
33	2B (p.110)	The CORE Waiver describes the idea that, “In 2015-16, CORE will analyze the first year of SBAC results, and the impact of adding growth to the School Quality Improvement Index, and recalibrate goals of reaching 90 [points on the SQII, if necessary].”	To that, our amended request includes reviewing the objectives of a 2 point increase in 2 years, and a 4 point increase in four years.	This addition is in keeping with our initially approved Waiver that acknowledges the need to monitor the evolution of the SQII with respect to the new metrics that will be added over the next several years.	In general, the CORE districts’ process for consultation is that district leads convene on a regular basis to build consensus on prospective adjustments to and aspects involved in implementing the CORE Waiver. When possible, these district leads bring the perspectives, concerns and ideas of the various stakeholders in their districts (e.g., teachers, principals, other school staff, parents, students, board members, other community members). For proposed waiver amendments, decision points are then brought to the CORE Board (e.g., the

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					CORE superintendents) for approval. This particular topic was discussed at the following inter-district session(s): March 20, 2014. Please find exemplars of relevant consultation materials attached to this letter.
34	3A (p. 191)	The CORE Waiver Principle 3 commits the LEAS to “create meaningful evaluation systems for teachers and principals that include...ratings that meaningfully differentiate among levels of effectiveness using at least four categories.”	The amended request adjusts the minimum number of effectiveness levels from four to three. With four remaining the ultimate goal of each LEA.	In USED guidance, SEAs are required to “Meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels.” Therefore, the amended request in support of the CORE LEAs, aligns to USED expectations.	The CORE LEA Professional Capital leaders have and continue to meet monthly for the purposes of holding discussions related to the CORE Waiver commitments and development. Educator Evaluation Systems and operate in an accordion like fashion by deeply engaging local stakeholders in their individual LEAs and bringing feedback, comments and recommendations back to the larger CORE team to inform and influence amendments.
35	3A (p.186-187 and 193-195)	In the approved CORE Waiver, Participating LEAs are committed to include student achievement data in their educator evaluation	Participating LEAs are requesting to scale up to full implementation of both the <i>Professional</i>	Due to California’s delay of state summative assessments (STAR) and lack of student achievement	The CORE LEA Professional Capital leaders have and continue to meet monthly for the purposes of holding discussions related to the

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		systems by the year 2015-16.	<i>Practice and Impact on Student Learning</i> elements of evaluation systems in 2016-17.	data in the 2013-14 school year, the Participating LEAs and the CORE Board have revised the implementation timeline for this renewal request.	CORE Waiver commitments and development. Educator Evaluation Systems and operate in an accordion like fashion by deeply engaging local stakeholders in their individual LEAs and bringing feedback, comments and recommendations back to the larger CORE team to inform and influence amendments.
36	3A (p. 200-205 and Appendix: CORE Education Evaluation System Handbook)	In the approved CORE Waiver, the participating LEAs committed to develop common educator evaluation guidelines to support implementation of waiver commitments and a USED Peer Review was conducted in December 2013.	As was promised, the CORE Educator Evaluation Guidelines Handbook with supporting documents was jointly developed by the LEAs to support EES development, pilots, implementation, self- and peer-review processes and protocols.		The CORE LEA Professional Capital leaders have and continue to meet monthly for the purposes of holding discussions related to the CORE Waiver commitments and development. Educator Evaluation Systems and operate in an accordion like fashion by deeply engaging local stakeholders in their individual LEAs and bringing feedback, comments and recommendations back to the larger CORE team to inform and influence amendments.
37	3A (p. 200-	In the approved CORE	The LEA evaluation	Based on feedback	The CORE LEA Professional

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	205 and Appendix: CORE Education Evaluation System Handbook)	Waiver, the participating LEAs committed to engage in mutual accountability activities in the form of peer-review to measure implementation of Educator Evaluation Systems commitments.	system design and implementation peer-review rubric was collectively refined by the CORE Districts to ensure rigorous expectations and maximize mutual accountability across all of the Participating LEAs.	received from the USED Peer-Review notes, comments and concerns, the CORE Districts determined that the best method to address the points raised was best suited by building those expectations in the implementation evaluation process.	Capital leaders have and continue to meet monthly for the purposes of holding discussions related to the CORE Waiver commitments and development. Educator Evaluation Systems and operate in an accordion like fashion by deeply engaging local stakeholders in their individual LEAs and bringing feedback, comments and recommendations back to the larger CORE team to inform and influence amendments.

Attached to this letter is a redlined version of the pages from our approved ESEA flexibility request that would be impacted with strikeouts and additions to demonstrate how the request would change with approval of the proposed amendments. We have also included exemplars of stakeholder engagement that have impacted these amendment request. Please contact Noah Bookman at [noah@caedpartners.org](mailto:noah@caedpartners.org) or by phone at (916) 471-9934 if you have any questions regarding these proposed amendments.

The CORE districts acknowledge that the U.S. Department of Education may request supplementary information to inform consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Mike Hanson, Superintendent  
Fresno Unified School District



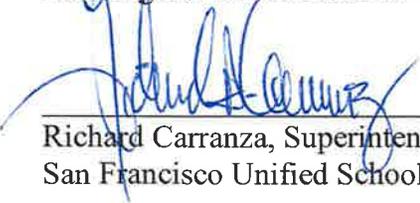
Rick Miller, Superintendent  
Santa Ana Unified School District



John Deasy, Superintendent  
Los Angeles Unified School District



Chris Steinheiser, Superintendent  
Long Beach Unified School District



Richard Carranza, Superintendent  
San Francisco Unified School District



Gary Yee, Acting Superintendent  
Oakland Unified School District



Matt Navo, Superintendent  
Sanger Unified School District