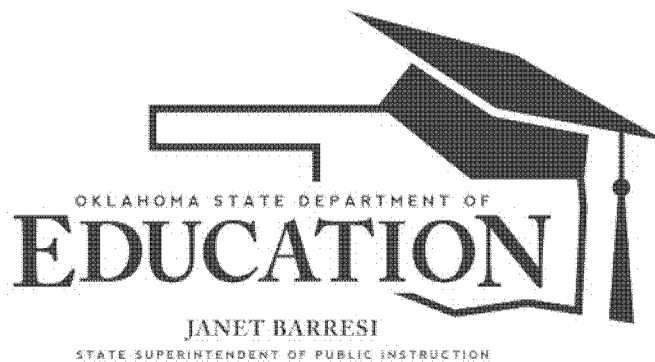




**Oklahoma will be C<sup>3</sup> by 2020:  
All children will graduate from high school  
College, Career, and Citizen Ready by 2020.  
Amended: July 27, 2012**



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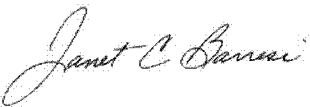
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5	Memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) certifying that meeting the State's standards corresponds to being college- and career-ready without the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level (if applicable)	N/A
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7	Evidence that the SEA has submitted high-quality assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review, or a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (if applicable)	N/A
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## COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: Oklahoma State Department of Education	Requester's Mailing Address: 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request	
Name: Dr. Chris A. Caram	
Position and Office: Deputy Superintendent	
Contact's Mailing Address: Oklahoma State Department of Education 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105	
Telephone: (405) 521-3332	
Fax: (405) 522-0091	
Email address: <a href="mailto:Chris_Caram@sde.state.ok.us">Chris_Caram@sde.state.ok.us</a> , <a href="mailto:Chris.Caram@sde.ok.gov">Chris.Caram@sde.ok.gov</a>	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Janet C. Barresi	Telephone: (405) 521-4885
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: 11/14/2011 Approved: 2/9/2012 Amended: 7/27/2012
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

**WAIVERS**

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

- 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools.

- 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools.
- 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.
- 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.
- 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools.

Optional Flexibility:

An SEA should check the box below only if it chooses to request a waiver of the following requirements:

- The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

**ASSURANCES**

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

- 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
- 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
- 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools. (Principle 2)
- 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

- 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
- 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).
- 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).
- 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.

**If the SEA selects Option A or B in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:**

- 14. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)



## CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State’s Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (State Education Agency [SEA]) has four primary methods of communicating and collaborating with teachers, administrators, and their representatives: (1) email listserves and web postings, (2) videoconference network and webinars, (3) surveys, (4) focus groups and advisory committees, including the Regional Educators Advancing College, Career, and Citizen Readiness Higher (REAC<sup>3</sup>H) Network, which is the State’s communication network for initiative implementation (detailed in Overview Section and Section 1.B).

**Email listserves and web postings:** The SEA operates a variety of email listserves specific to various content area teachers and supervisors, counselors, curriculum specialists, and administrators. In addition, the SEA posts information and resources on the SEA’s web site. Beginning in the fall of 2009, the SEA has provided numerous communications to teachers, administrators, and their representatives regarding the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE). Recently, bilingual educators have been given web links for the revised World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Language Development Standards 2012 in order to provide comments on the realignment of the WIDA standards to the CCSS. In the fall of 2011, the SEA used these methods to provide information to teachers, administrators, and their representatives regarding the State’s Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System as part of the State’s entire *ESEA Flexibility Request* (see Attachment 1: Notice to LEAs). While these are primarily one-way communication tools, they do spur personal conversations between LEAs and the SEA. For example, one email listserve message caused several administrators to study the TLE in depth and to provide significant feedback to the TLE Commission. This feedback is reflected in the work detailed in Section 3.A of this request.

**Videoconference network and webinars:** The videoconference network and webinars provide two-way communication with teachers, administrators, and their representatives. Beginning in the fall of 2009, the SEA has used the statewide videoconference network to host collaborative sessions with teachers and their representatives regarding the adoption and implementation of the CCSS and the TLE. A series of webinars regarding the TLE system solicited input about the use of the TLE (Section 3.B) in particular as it relates to the State’s new Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System (Section 2.A). Teachers and administrators were primarily concerned about and provided input into how the new TLE Evaluation System would impact the school’s A-F Grade (detailed in Section 2.A).

**Surveys:** Online as well as paper surveys provide an opportunity for teachers, administrators, and their representatives to provide input in a confidential manner. In March 2010, the SEA used an online survey to solicit input from teachers and the public about the CCSS. The SEA has chosen to leave this survey open for ongoing input; to date, 273 teachers and 109 administrators have provided comments about the quality of the standards through this survey. In September 2011, the SEA used an online survey to solicit input from teachers and the public about the TLE. To date, 806 teachers and 173 administrators have provided comments about the elements of a valuable evaluation system through this survey. On October 28, 2011, the SEA hosted a Community Engagement Forum to receive input on the *ESEA Flexibility Request*, including a focus group of teachers and their representatives. Participants completed paper surveys as part of the event

(see Attachment 2A: Summary of Survey Results). Many of the suggestions from these surveys were included in the State’s plan for components of the accountability system (Section 2.A), recognitions for successful schools (Section 2.C), and interventions for unsuccessful schools (Sections 2.D, 2.E, and 2.F).

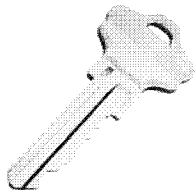
**Focus Groups and Advisory Committees:** The SEA has several standing focus groups and advisory committees comprised of teachers and administrators. These include Academic Advisory, which includes curriculum directors and assistant superintendents from LEAs; Curriculum Consortium, a collaborative of curriculum directors and administrators focused on implementation of CCSS; Content Area Consortia, comprised of content experts, instructional facilitators, and district administrators; Title III Part A Consortium; and the Title I Committee of Practitioners, to name a few.

State Superintendent Janet Barresi has engaged in a comprehensive listening tour across the State since taking office in January 2011. The listening tour site visits are focused on in-depth engagement with teachers, administrators, students, and parents. Site visits have been extremely effective in gathering information about the full spectrum of viewpoints, from anxieties to aspirations and from best practices to innovative strategies. Many of the suggestions provided during this listening tour have been implemented in Oklahoma’s *ESEA Flexibility Request*.

The REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network was recently designed to provide training, collaboration, and partnerships throughout the State to facilitate the implementation of statewide initiatives, including CCSS and the TLE. As will be discussed in Section 1.B, the SEA’s Offices of Instruction, Student Support, and Assessment are developing Toolkits for use by LEAs in implementing the CCSS and TLE. After release of the first toolkit, REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network leaders provided suggestions for improvement and volunteered to serve on a Toolkit Development Committee. This is just one example of how teachers and administrators are providing guidance for the reform initiatives in Oklahoma.

Focus groups of teachers and administrators from the 70 REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network Leadership Districts have provided direct support to the development of the State’s *ESEA Flexibility Request*. Leadership Districts sent a total of 22 teachers and their representatives to provide input during the Community Engagement Forum (see Attachment 2B: Summary of Public Input from Community Engagement Forum). In addition, administrators from the lead districts were invited to participate in ESEA Working Groups that met face-to-face and electronically throughout the development of the request. The underlying structures as well as many of the specifics in Sections 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D, 2.E, 2.F, and 2.G are a direct result of these ESEA Working Groups.

Additional comments from LEAs and the public regarding the ESEA Flexibility Request are provided in Attachment 2C: Public Comments. These messages informed the final touches on the request.



**Key Take Away:** The beliefs, suggestions, and innovations of Oklahoma teachers and administrators have shaped Oklahoma’s commitment to college- and career-ready expectations for all students (Principle 1), as well as accountability, recognition, and support systems for teachers, leaders, schools, and districts (Principles 2 and 3).

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

As mentioned in the previous section, the SEA hosted a Community Engagement Forum on the *ESEA Flexibility Request* on October 28, 2011 (see Attachments 3A: Invitation to the Community Engagement Forum, 3B: Agenda of the Forum, and 3C: Notice to the Public). In addition to the teachers, administrators, and their representatives that attended the forum, 14 other community members attended, including one student, several parents, and several representatives from community-based organizations, businesses, and Indian tribes. As part of the event, the SEA asked the participants to comment on the major components of the request and to complete a survey, providing direct input into the development of the *ESEA Flexibility Request* (see Attachments 2A: Summary of Survey Results and 2B: Summary of Public Input from Community Engagement Forum).

Community members have also responded to the online surveys discussed in the last section. Since March 2010, the SEA has received input from 14 individuals who are not employees of public school districts regarding the CCSS through an online survey. Since September 2011, the SEA has received input from 150 students, parents, business owners, government employees, representatives of philanthropic organizations, and other community members regarding the TLE through an online survey.

As stated above, many of the suggestions made through comments and survey responses were included in the State's plan for components of the accountability system (Section 2.A), recognitions for successful schools (Section 2.C), and interventions for unsuccessful schools (Sections 2.D, 2.E, and 2.F).

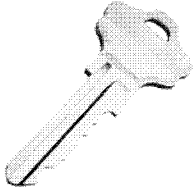
Because of the low response rate to the Community Engagement Forum and the CCSS online survey, the SEA has continued to reach out to the community. Executive staff members of the SEA have met with legislators, parent organizations, business representatives, and organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners. Town hall meetings, round tables, State Superintendent listening tours, and State Superintendent site/community visits are designed to learn about the partnerships in successful schools and the needs of communities in struggling schools.

These meetings have resulted in feedback that has informed the ongoing development of the *ESEA Flexibility Request*. For example, the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence has agreed to offer STEM grants and other professional development opportunities in Priority and Focus Schools. Upon approval of the *Request*, the SEA will continue to engage all stakeholders and education partners to ensure that the initiatives included in this *Request* are implemented with fidelity and result in transparent communication, easily interpreted accountability reports, and increased student achievement.

Further, the SEA has ongoing collaboration with several stakeholder committees and advisory groups such as the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition, P-20 Data Council, legislator advisory groups, State Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, IDEA-B Advisory Panel, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Commission, State System of Institutions of Higher Education, State System of Career and Technology Education Centers, and Oklahoma Intertribal Council. The SEA has engaged these groups throughout the past several years to discuss the adoption and implementation of statewide reform initiatives, which include the Achieving Classroom Excellence Act (ACE, detailed in the Overview Section), CCSS, and TLE. Much of the work of these groups over the past several years, particularly the work of the TLE Commission, has provided direct and indirect input into this *ESEA Flexibility Request*.

In order to facilitate this ongoing outreach to educational partners across the state and the country, the SEA has hired an Executive Director of Parent and Community Engagement. The primary responsibilities of the Executive Director of Parent and Community Engagement include connecting community-based resources with local school districts and identifying the education stakeholders on a state level that can support implementation of the state education reform initiatives.

Of great importance is the ongoing collaboration between the State Superintendent and the legislature in development of the State’s educational reform agenda. This policy work is detailed in the Overview Section as the foundation of reform for the State’s *ESEA Flexibility Request*.



**Key Take Away:** The reforms outlined in this *ESEA Flexibility Request* have widespread support of a variety of stakeholders, indicating that the reforms are likely to be implemented with fidelity and fervor across the State. The beliefs, suggestions, and innovations of Oklahoma community leaders have shaped Oklahoma’s commitment to college- and career-ready expectations for all students (Principle 1), as well as accountability, recognition, and support systems for teachers, leaders, schools, and districts (Principles 2 and 3).

**EVALUATION**

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

## OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and
2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Oklahoma in 2011 has arrived at a challenging and promising crossroads for its educational system.

The challenge: Recent results indicate that Oklahoma's students have fallen behind in the global competition for excellence (one study ranked Oklahoma among the worst 10 states in producing top-achieving math students), while remediation numbers for high school graduates entering college remain high. The promise: This year, Oklahoma finally turned the corner toward positive transformation with a commitment to rethink our approach to education, to restructure outdated and inefficient systems, and to enact real reforms.

Oklahoma can be a leader in education, but only if we are committed to new fundamentals for the 21st Century – and to an unambiguous goal. Superintendent Barresi has issued a call for the State: By the year 2020, each student graduating from an Oklahoma high school must be *college, career, and citizen ready*.

It is called the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan**. Building on the success of a slate of reforms passed by the State Legislature and signed into law this year, the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan** sets the stage for Oklahoma to win the competition for excellence. This ESEA waiver package will provide Oklahoma with the flexibility it needs to press forward with implementation of reforms, while giving schools room to grow.

Oklahoma's reforms are briefly summarized here:

*Reforms Emphasizing Literacy, Accountability, & Choice* - State Superintendent Barresi, Governor Fallin, and Oklahoma's State Legislature advanced a bold package of legislation in the 2011 session, which included ending social promotion after the third grade for children who are not reading proficiently at grade level, the implementation of an A-F report card on individual school performance, and an expanded menu of educational choices for parents. These reforms will identify struggling schools and students in need of additional supports for continuous improvement.

*Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE)* - The Senior Class of 2012 will be the first full class of students that must demonstrate mastery in college and career preparatory courses in order to graduate. State end of instruction (EOI) tests, college entrance tests, workforce training preparedness tests, and advanced coursework validation exams, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams, serve as high school exit criteria.

*Data Drives Decisions* - The SEA is beginning the process of developing a comprehensive, user-friendly, accessible, and robust longitudinal data system that will drive decision-making in classrooms, schools, districts, and the SEA. Bringing useful and timely student-level data into the hands of educators will allow them to be more efficient in facilitating optimal learning and better support student outcomes from Pre-K through postsecondary education and into the workforce.

*High-Quality Digital Learning* - Oklahoma is working toward fully embracing the “Ten Elements of High-Quality Digital Learning” unveiled by the bipartisan Digital Learning Council last year and expanded this year with the 72-point “Roadmap for Reform” (<http://digitalllearningnow.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Roadmap-for-Reform-pdf>). This effort will include an expansion of the supports available to schools in order to address the unique professional development needs for educators in online and blended learning environments, as well as creating new expectations for the integration of digital tools in all Oklahoma classrooms.

*Common Core State Standards* – In 2010, Oklahoma adopted the CCSS and subsequently joined the governing board of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a state-led collaborative effort developing a common set of K-12 assessments in English language arts and mathematics, anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. Oklahoma districts have embraced the CCSS and are transitioning by developing their own curricula in line with these standards. The State is on track for a full implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments over the next three years.

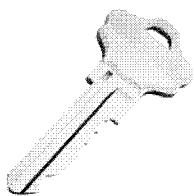
*Chiefs for Change* - Oklahoma is honored to be a part of the reform-minded Chiefs for Change organization. Superintendent Barresi joins other state education leaders who share a common approach toward improving the nation’s education system. Chiefs for Change has already provided USDE with a Statement of Principles for Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Oklahoma looked to this document as a guide to inform development of this *ESEA Flexibility Request*. In keeping with the direction of this document, Oklahoma looks forward to the Congressional reauthorization of ESEA and offers this plan as a blueprint for consideration.

*An Effective Teacher in Every Classroom; An Effective Leader in Every School* - Oklahoma is nearing completion of the development of the State’s new Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE). The TLE Commission will finish drafting rules for State Board of Education approval by December for piloting in 2012-2013 and full implementation in 2013-2014. The TLE promises to support all teachers and administrators toward continuous improvement of instructional practices and student outcomes.

*REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network* - To implement its broad slate of reforms, to introduce the new TLE system, and to assist schools with the transition to the CCSS, the SEA has also created a grassroots network called Regional Educators Advancing College, Career, and Citizen Readiness Higher (*REAC<sup>3</sup>H*) utilizing volunteer coordinating districts to work with other districts to disseminate information, share best practices, offer training, and more.

Oklahoma’s reform movement, in short, is an empowerment agenda. We are empowering students by preparing them to be successful and informed citizens in the real world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are empowering parents by providing them with easy-to-understand information about schools, by utilizing data to drive decisions, and by expanding choice. And we are empowering educators through reforms like our new TLE system – encouraging teachers and administrators to reach their full potential.

Oklahoma’s *ESEA Flexibility Request* reflects the intersection of the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan**, diverse constituencies across the State, and the four waiver principles. The time is urgent. Oklahoma can turn its crisis into an opportunity. With the flexibility provided by this ESEA waiver package, the State can usher in this transformation all the more rapidly.



**Key Take Away:** Oklahoma sets the reform agenda known as the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan** as the foundation for this *ESEA Flexibility Request*, and the State acknowledges that any relaxation of its commitment to these reforms would risk denial of the ESEA waiver package.

## PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

### 1A ADOPT COLLEGE-AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

<p><b>Option A</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p>	<p><b>Option B</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.</p> <p>i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State’s standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)</p> <p>ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)</p>
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## 1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE-AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Since 1991, Oklahoma has had a fully-defined set of standards, the *Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)*, for grades one through twelve in the core content areas of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and world languages. Standards for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten in all content areas except world languages were added in 2002. Local curricula must meet the broad array of ambitious goals set forth in the Oklahoma Administrative Code:

*The curriculum translates the school's statement of philosophy (and/or mission) and goals into learning objectives and activities. The core curriculum shall be designed to teach competencies for which students shall be tested. The curriculum shall be designed to prepare all students for employment and/or post secondary education. The school shall use varied measures to determine the extent to which individual students are achieving the goals and levels of competencies. The instructional program is designed to impart the knowledge and skills essential to function successfully in a democratic society. (210:35-3-61, effective 5-17-91)*

As this passage makes clear, Oklahoma had made the commitment of setting college-, career-, and citizen-ready standards for our students 20 years prior to the adoption of the CCSS. By law, the SEA must review and revise the *PASS* standards at a minimum of every six years, which perfectly situated Oklahoma to be ready for adoption of the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts in June 2010. Upon release of the CCSS, the State Board of Education initiated the process for formal adoption of the standards (see Attachments 4A: State Board of Education Minutes – June 2010 and March 2011, 4B: Oklahoma Administrative Code – 210:35-3-61, 4C: Letter of Approval from former Governor Henry). The adoption process included a timeline of implementation for all CCSS content standards to be taught in each LEA not later than the 2013-2014 school year with assessments of the standards to follow in the 2014-2015 school year (see Attachment 4D: Implementation Timeline).

As a further result of the State’s six-year standards review cycle, 2011 revisions to *PASS* 6-12 Science Standards incorporated concepts and expectations from the CCSS ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. The 2012 *PASS* Social Studies Standards revision, now in progress, will result in the addition of an entirely new competency strand for literacy, PK-12. Thus, Oklahoma’s science and social studies standards already will be aligned intentionally with CCSS in ELA and mathematics when the CCSS are codified. While science and social studies assessments will not be a part of the Partnership for Assessment for Readiness in College and Careers (PARCC) suite of assessments, the anticipation of high levels of informational literacy and problem-solving demanded by PARCC tests has deeply informed the revisions to *PASS*.

Oklahoma educational leadership has joined the forward progress of common state standards in science and social studies, as well. The State Board of Education approved the SEA’s participation as a monitoring state in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards. The SEA continues its membership in the Social Studies Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction collaborative, which is

organized by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and is currently at work on creating guidelines to develop state standards for social studies in partnership with the National Council for Social Studies and 14 other content organizations. As host of the 2010 International Creativity Forum, the State understands that the promotion of multiple modes of thinking not only supports artistry, but develops problem-solving skills, engaged citizens, and entrepreneurship. The arts are a vital part of Oklahoma's core curriculum. The SEA has sent a representative to participate in discussions of the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education and the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards as the collaborative begins exploration of a multi-state fine arts framework.

As our State transitions to the CCSS, our generational commitment to the 1991 Administrative Code can serve as a legacy to remind us that college-, career-, and citizen-ready learning standards have long been at the core of what Oklahomans expect for their children.

### **Raising the Rigor of *PASS* through the American Diploma Project and the Achieving Classroom Excellence Act of 2005 (as amended)**

Within the last ten years, Oklahoma's standards reform efforts have intensified. In order to better understand why Oklahoma adopted the Common Core State Standards, as well as to appreciate the State's commitment to the full implementation of college- and career-ready expectations for all students, a brief background of the State's most recent actions is helpful.

In 2002, the State's education leaders – including the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition (OBEC), the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (Regents), the SEA, and the governor – invited Achieve, Inc. to review the *PASS* standards and assessments in ELA and mathematics, for the purpose of comparing them against the best standards from states across the United States and from other nations, as well as the ACT. As a result of the review, Achieve recommended that Oklahoma raise the rigor of its standards and assessments, and in response, Oklahoma moved to strengthen the *PASS* standards and the state assessments (<http://www.achieve.org/node/276>).

Two years later, Achieve released the American Diploma Project (ADP) College- and Career-Ready (CCR) Benchmarks and policy recommendations designed to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be prepared for success after high school.

In June 2005, the Oklahoma legislature adopted sweeping reforms through the Achieving Classroom Excellence Act (ACE) that reflected the college- and career-readiness goals of the ADP agenda. This landmark legislation established a common core of courses as the default curriculum for high school graduation. The curriculum was designed to prepare all students for success in work and postsecondary education, beginning with students who entered ninth grade in 2006-2007 (anticipated graduating class of 2010). Four credits of English, three credits of mathematics, three credits of science with a laboratory component, three credits of social studies, two credits of a foreign language or computer science, and two credits of fine arts are included in the CCR curriculum. The mathematics requirements were designed so that students complete courses through at least the level of Algebra II.

During the same time period, Oklahoma's education leaders joined Achieve's American Diploma Project (ADP) network to collaborate with other states also working to implement the ADP college- and career-readiness agenda. Leaders across the country embraced the rigor of the "specific content and skills that graduates must have mastered by the time they leave high school if they expect to succeed in postsecondary education or in high-growth jobs" (<http://www.achieve.org/node/604>).

In February 2006, an Oklahoma team participated in the ADP Alignment Institute for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Benchmarks to build on the State's earlier alignment work with Achieve and to provide a foundation of rigorous content for the new courses and assessments required under ACE.

With minor adjustment to its ELA standards, Oklahoma received an Affirmation of Alignment of the ADP Benchmarks and Oklahoma’s standards from Achieve. An action plan for implementing the benchmarks was approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education in March 2006. Additional changes were made to the mathematics standards in 2007 to better reflect CCR expectations. The subsequent ADP Quality Final Review found both Oklahoma’s ELA and Mathematics standards to be well aligned to the ADP College and Career Readiness benchmarks.

In a 2008 report, “Out of Many, One; Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards From the Ground Up,” Achieve suggested that college- and career-ready standards in a significant number of states had converged to the point that common state standards were possible (<http://www.achieve.org/commoncore>). Within a year, 48 states and the District of Columbia agreed to work together to develop common college- and career-ready standards. Oklahoma served as a state reviewer of drafts of the new standards and adopted the final Common Core State Standards in June 2010.

**For more than eight years, Oklahoma has remained fully committed to raising the bar for all students to the college- and career-readiness level in ELA and mathematics. In addition, Oklahoma has collaborated with other states to establish college and career readiness as the norm through the ADP Network and the CCSS Initiative.**

### CCSS Implementation

Implementing the Common Core State Standards will be a multi-year, multi-phased process. Oklahoma has looked to the Achieve Common Core Implementation Workbook to inform the development of its own four-year implementation plan. Immediately upon adoption of the CCSS, the State’s four-year implementation plan was launched. In Oklahoma, “full implementation” is intended to include administration of assessments based on CCSS in the 2014-2015 school year. Full implementation of curriculum and instruction aligned to the CCSS will be completed by June 2014 (see Attachment 4D: Implementation Timeline).

The success of the CCSS in Oklahoma depends on the effectiveness of this plan in bringing the following new expectations to the classroom level and in supporting all students as they prepare to graduate from high school college, career, and citizen ready:

- The initial efforts focus on getting the word out – communicating with key stakeholders and educating educators about what the CCSS are and how they build upon and raise the expectations established in *PASS*.
- The second phase of implementation focuses on aligning instructional materials and providing technical assistance/professional development to teachers so that they will be able to teach the new CCSS to their students. Integrated into phase two is the transition to the new PARCC assessments that will measure student mastery of the CCSS starting in 2014-15.
- The third phase will involve aligning the State’s student information system and accountability system with the expectations contained in the CCSS and measured by PARCC.
- The fourth phase will focus on strengthening relationships across education sectors to ensure that the full education system in Oklahoma is well aligned with CCSS expectations embedded throughout. In addition, reinforcing implementation with technical assistance from each education sector will allow Oklahoma to accomplish more than if CCSS implementation were the sole responsibility of the SEA.

- The fifth phase will be to measure and evaluate the State’s progress in delivering a rigorous and well-rounded education to all students. Students will enter kindergarten ready to learn, making progress and staying on track until they graduate college, career, and citizen ready.

### ***Phase One***

The first goal for the initial year of adoption (2010-2011) focused on educating key stakeholders, including PK-12 educators, Career and Technical educators, Higher Education faculty, and SEA leadership and staff about the CCSS and how they differ from *PASS*.

Following is a list of representative professional development efforts designed to create awareness and build consensus through presentations, meetings, videoconferences, and regional conferences:

- July 2010 State Superintendent’s Leadership Conference presentations: Two sessions at a conference of 1,500 attendees provided an overview of the CCSS and the implementation timeline. Audience: PK-12 superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, federal programs directors, teacher leaders.
- July 2010 State Superintendent’s Mathematics Academy *Working on Common Ground*: Keynote presentations at two academies highlighted the shifts in mathematics instruction imminent with adoption of CCSS. Audience: 600 PK-12 mathematics educators.
- Fall 2010 Common Core State Standards videoconferences: Overviews and frequently asked questions. Audience: PK-12 educators at ten regional videoconference centers.
- December 2010 and August 2011 First-Year Superintendents training: CCSS overview sessions. Audience: 100 first-year superintendents.
- Winter 2010 Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education Committee on Instruction presentation: Overview and discussion with Deans of Arts and Sciences for Oklahoma comprehensive and regional two- and four-year colleges. Audience: 45 deans and assistant deans.
- April 2011 Oklahoma State Department of Education all-employee training: overview and frequently asked questions. Audience: 250 agency employees.
- June 2011 Oklahoma *PASS*ages Regional Curriculum Conferences keynotes and CCSS strand: Keynote addresses and dedicated CCSS classroom strategies breakout strand at each of six regional conferences. Audience: 1,000 PK-12 educators.
- July 2011 State Superintendent’s Alternative Education Summer Institute: Two-day summer institute for educators of low-achieving and at-risk students. Content-specific and integrated classroom strategies for CCSS implementation. Audience: 400 educators.
- August 2011 State Superintendent’s Master Teachers Project Summer Institute: Three-day summer institute for Title II commended program to build teacher leadership. Keynote and content-specific training for CCSS implementation; members return to districts to conduct study groups throughout school year. Audience: 120 Master Teacher members.
- October 2011 Oklahoma CareerTech presentation: Overview and frequently asked questions. Audience: 50 Career Technology Center superintendents, assistant superintendents, and professional development directors.
- Ongoing from September 2010 CCSS Regular Agenda Updates Mathematics State Consortium and Language Arts State Consortium: Monthly meetings for math and ELA district leaders provide more current information on CCSS and allow for advisory input. Audience: 25 PK-12 curriculum specialists and directors.

### ***Phase Two***

The second goal for the initial year of adoption (2010-2011) focused on providing technical assistance to districts as they moved toward full implementation. Two important CCSS technical assistance initiatives were launched in fall 2010 to support the work of CCSS. (1) Both educator-led and independently-conducted alignment studies were directed by the SEA in order to assist LEAs in understanding the similarities and differences in the *Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)* ELA and Mathematics standards and the CCSS. (2) A CCSS webpage was developed to house CCSS information and resources.

- October 2010 PASS/CCSS Alignment Institute: 200 mathematics and English language arts K-12 educators, as well as representatives from business, higher education, and the community met for two days to align the Oklahoma state *PASS* standards with the CCSS, using the alignment tool and protocol developed by Achieve. Results are posted on the SEA's CCSS webpage and educators were notified through the SEA's various listserves.
  - Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC): The SEA contracted with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research to conduct an alignment study of *PASS* with CCSS using the SEC model. The study gives LEAs information regarding the relative emphasis within each set of standards of particular concepts and skills, as well as the depth to which these concepts should be taught. The study results are linked to the SEA's CCSS webpage (<http://www.seconline.org>).
  - Common Core Webpage: A page on the SEA's website has been established to provide educators and other stakeholders with important information and technical assistance for implementing the CCSS. The page includes:
    - The English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards and Appendices;
    - Oklahoma adoption rules and implementation timeline information;
    - Presentations and videos on CCSS for public use;
    - Multiple links to teacher, administrator, and parent resources for assistance in developing curriculum, improving classroom practice, and helping students at home; and
    - Templates and guiding questions for District 3-year Transition Plans, required for every Oklahoma district to develop and submit to local board of education.
- (<http://sde.state.ok.us/Curriculum/CommonCore/default.html>)

In addition, Oklahoma is a member of the PARCC governing board and will begin piloting PARCC-like items within the state assessment system in 2011-2012, with continued refinement as additional information becomes available through PARCC. Beyond integrating pilot PARCC items into existing state assessments, the SEA will make these pilot items and others developed to illustrate the level and complexity of PARCC items aligned with the CCSS to teachers, along with guidance on integrating these items into classroom-level formative assessments and lesson plans. The SEA's plans for providing the professional development required for such efforts to be successful are described in *Phase Three*.

### ***Phase Three***

This request outlines Oklahoma's approach to accountability in support of the CCSS and college, career, and citizen readiness for all students, but it is worth stressing that work is underway to enhance the SEA's student information system. With a stronger data system linked with other education agencies, Oklahoma will be able to produce a complete picture of a student's progress from Pre-K through high school graduation and into college, training programs, and the workforce as the State implements the CCSS and transitions to the PARCC assessments in 2014-2015.

**REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network:** To further reinforce the SEA's relationship with the LEAs, Oklahoma launched the REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network in August 2011, comprised of 70 volunteer districts throughout Oklahoma who have agreed to serve as coordinating agents for professional development, capacity-building efforts, and feedback from parents and local community members. The REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network is designed to advance the transition to college- and career-ready standards on multiple fronts throughout the 2011-2014 timeframe to

full implementation of the CCSS. To provide additional support to coordinating districts, the SEA is integrating existing partnerships with the state system of Higher Education and the Career and Technical Education system into the REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network.

Each REAC<sup>3</sup>H coordinating district serves by doing the following:

- Develops a detailed regional plan for implementing CCSS with assigned districts;
- Identifies a training timeline and delivery methods;
- Develops partnerships to coordinate a training network;
- Enlists local higher education institutions and CareerTech to support REAC<sup>3</sup>H activities;
- Describes how capacity-building would look in area served;
- Hosts regular meetings based on SEA guidelines;
- Provides SEA-developed training on CCSS and other related topics;
- Disseminates professional development (tools, resources, model curricula, etc.) to area districts;
- Collects data on implementation effectiveness;
- Submits annual report on REAC<sup>3</sup>H activities, participation, and implementation; and
- Defines other appropriate responsibilities.

The SEA is responsible for “leading the leaders.” Defined roles of SEA include the following:

- Organizing and hosting three network summits per year through 2013-14;
- Developing and delivering “train-the-trainers” CCSS professional development, via videoconferences and webinars;
- Developing and distributing professional toolkits for trainer and district use. Each toolkit to include suggested agenda, PowerPoint presentation, follow-up activities, and resources.
  - Toolkit #1 Making the Case for the Common Core – an Overview
  - Toolkit #2 Aligning School Curriculum to the Common Core
  - Toolkit #3 Changing Instruction for the Common Core
  - Toolkit #4 Developing Effective Teachers and Leaders for the Common Core
  - Toolkit #5 Assessing Student Performance for the Common Core
  - Toolkit #6 Using Data to Implement the Common Core
  - Toolkit #7 Integrating the Common Core across the Curriculum
  - Toolkit #8 Collaborating about the Common Core
  - Toolkits #9-12: Focus determined through district input
- Providing technical support;
- Seeking incentives for REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network coordinating districts, including grant opportunities and pilot programs; and
- Other services to be determined.

The REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network’s greatest asset is the synergy created through local ownership of professional development and instructional practice. Early feedback indicates that LEAs are designing systems of support for transitioning to CCSS based on local needs.

In addition, the OSDE is collaborating with the REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network to develop a shared vision for the new State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). In the fall of 2011, the SEA formed an SLDS committee within the REAC<sup>3</sup>H Network comprised of 15 district superintendents from across the state to discuss how to improve the exchange of data between the state and districts, including improving the quantity and quality of useful information, streamlining reporting (a significant burden on districts), and getting data into the hands of teachers and parents that will enable them to understand the progress of their students against the expectations of the Common Core, to anticipate where students will be relative to the expectations of the PARCC assessments, and predict the success of graduates in college, the workplace, and as citizens.

