

# Colorado

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## **ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST**

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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### Paperwork Burden Statement

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS


Insert page numbers prior to submitting the request, and place the table of contents in front of the SEA's flexibility request.

CONTENTS	PAGE
Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request	4
Waivers	5
Assurances	7
Consultation	9
Evaluation	16
Overview of SEA's ESEA Flexibility Request	16
<b>Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students</b>	<b>21</b>
1.A Adopt college- and career-ready standards	21
1.B Transition to college- and career-ready standards	23
1.C Develop and administer annual, statewide, aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth	36
<b>Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support</b>	<b>38</b>
2.A Develop and implement a State-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support	38
2.B Set ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives	66
2.C Reward schools	83
2.D Priority schools	85
2.E Focus schools	98
2.F Provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools	103
2.G Build SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning	112
<b>Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership</b>	<b>117</b>
3.A Develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	117
3.B Ensure LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	126

<b>LABEL</b>	<b>LIST OF ATTACHMENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1	Notice to LEAs	135
2	Comments on request received from LEAs (if applicable)	141
3	Notice and information provided to the public regarding the request	181
4	Evidence that the State has formally adopted college- and career-ready content standards consistent with the State's standards adoption process	186
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)	NA
6	State's Race to the Top Assessment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (if applicable)	192
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)	NA
8	A copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the “all students” group and all subgroups (if applicable).	228
9	Table 2: Reward, Priority, and Focus Schools	233
10	A copy of any guidelines that the SEA has already developed and adopted for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems (if applicable).	252
11	Evidence that the SEA has adopted one or more guidelines of local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems	254

<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. Postsecondary Workforce Definition	288
2. Accountability Timeline	291
3. Important Milestones Leading to Colorado's Current System	293
4. Technical Rules for Performance Framework Calculations	296
5. Unified Improvement Plan Templates (School and District levels)	310
6. SB-191 Legislation	334
7. Annotated School Performance Framework	367

## COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: <b>Robert K. Hammond</b>	Requester's Mailing Address: Colorado Department of Education Office of the Commissioner 201 E. Colfax Ave., Suite 500 Denver, Colorado 80202
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request  Name: <b>Keith Owen</b>  Position and Office: <b>Associate Commissioner, Division of Accountability, Support and Improvement</b>  Contact's Mailing Address: Colorado Department of Education 201 E. Colfax Ave., Suite 405 Denver, Colorado 80202  Telephone: 303-866-6099  Fax: 303-830-0793  Email address: <b>owen_k@cde.state.co.us</b>	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): <b>Robert K. Hammond</b>	Telephone: <b>303-866-6646</b>
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: November 14, 2011
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.
- 11. The requirements of ESEA section 3122(a) that prescribe how CDE must establish annual measurable achievement objectives tied to English language proficiency, English language attainment, and content proficiency among English language learners. CDE requests this waiver so that it may develop its own ambitious but achievable goals for English language attainments and ELL content proficiency.

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.
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.

Notices inviting public comment, public and stakeholder group comments received, and letters of support can be found in Attachments 2 and 3.

Colorado recognizes that stakeholder engagement is critical to the effective implementation of the state's education initiatives and, ultimately, to moving the state to college- and career- readiness for all students. This is why our ESEA waiver request builds upon existing Colorado reform efforts in standards and assessments, recognition, accountability and support, and educator effectiveness, each of which has been shaped extensively by the input of our stakeholders. We have continued to seek stakeholder input as we develop our waiver request and, as we value a system of continuous improvement, are firmly committed to ensuring that stakeholder input remains central in our implementation efforts.

The foundation of Colorado's system has been built through three key pieces of legislation: SB-212 (Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids, standards and assessments), SB-163 (Education Accountability Act, school and district accountability), and SB-191 (Great Teachers and Leaders, educator evaluation). In each case, the legislative and rule-making process has included extensive public and stakeholder input. This process is summarized below, with details provided in each relevant section of this request.

### **Principle I: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for all Students**

#### *CAP4K: Defining Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness*

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) worked together to develop a "postsecondary and workforce readiness" (PWR) description (included in Appendix 1) that includes the knowledge, skills and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy.

To accomplish this, the two departments jointly convened 13 regional meetings around the state between November 2008 and June 2009. The purpose of these meetings was to engage local communities in conversations about the skills and competencies students need to succeed after high

