

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY COLORADO TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, Colorado made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

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

- Colorado described in more detail its plans to ensure that students with disabilities and English Learners have access to rigorous content aligned with college- and career-ready standards, including how the State will work with all teachers to help them support these students. Participants in professional development activities that focus on the needs of English Learners include a broad array of school staff, such as content teachers, language teachers, and literacy coaches. In addition, a variety of professional development opportunities will target all teachers who teach students with disabilities, on topics such as multi-tiered systems of support, improving math outcomes, and assessment and progress monitoring within a Response to Interventions framework.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

- Colorado demonstrated that the normative growth targets in its growth model (which incorporates both normative growth and growth-to-standard) are rigorous enough that they do not compensate for failure to meet growth-to-standard targets. Eight-eight percent of elementary schools not making sufficient growth-to-standard also do not make their normative growth targets, and this level of rigor is consistent across grade levels.
- Colorado elaborated on the requirements of its Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) process, which is required of all schools, specifying that the plans must include research-based approaches to improve student performance. Further, the UIP process requires districts with schools identified for subgroups not meeting performance targets to focus on students that are furthest behind and making the least progress.
- Colorado set student achievement performance targets requiring progress in equal annual increments over five years from a baseline set at the 50th percentile of proficiency based on 2010 assessment data to a target set at the 90th percentile based on 2010 assessment data. The State maintains these same rigorous targets for all subgroups and will add a report to its SchoolView system comparing the achievement of each subgroup to its performance targets.
- Colorado will identify for targeted supports those schools with one or more ESEA subgroups that miss student achievement performance targets.