

ESEA Flexibility

Peer Panel Notes



State Request: Delaware

Date: 3/26/2012

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate State educational agency (SEA) requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have during the on-site review. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

This document provides guidance for peer review panels as they evaluate each request during the on-site peer review portion of the review process. The document includes the specific information that a request must include and questions to guide reviewers as they evaluate each request. **Questions that have numbers or letters represent required elements.** The italicized questions reflect inquiries that reviewers will use to fully consider all aspects of an SEA's plan for meeting each principle, but do not represent required elements.

In addition to this guidance, reviewers will also use the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, including the definitions and timelines, when reviewing each SEA's request. As used in the request form and this guidance, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Review Guidance

Consultation

1. Did the SEA meaningfully engage and solicit input on its request from teachers and their representatives?

- *Is the engagement likely to lead to successful implementation of the SEA's request due to the input and commitment of teachers and their representatives at the outset of the planning and implementation process?*
- *Did the SEA indicate that it modified any aspect of its request based on input from teachers and their representatives?*

Consultation Question 1 Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) meaningfully engaged teachers and their representatives in the flexibility request process and confirmed that their input influenced the work.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and their representatives were instrumental in formalizing the DDOE Education Plan in 2009, the Race to the Top (RTTT) award in 2010 and the ongoing revisions to the statewide teacher evaluation system. The ESEA flexibility request reflects an extension of the foundation laid through that collaborative process. • DDOE used a variety of communication methods to engage teachers. For example, the Secretary of Education provided updates and requests for comments to educators through email (p.10). • The Teacher of the Year Advisory Board was engaged to collect and provide feedback from colleagues. • The District Support Program was created to build capacity and assist in implementation of RTTT plans, which correlate to the ESEA flexibility request. • DDOE's 19 local bargaining presidents signed MOUs to support the RTTT grant. • A good level of transparency was maintained during the development of the flexibility request. • The Innovation Action Team included over 100 educators, education experts, parents, principals of teachers' unions, nonprofits, corporations, and civic groups, including advocates for students with disabilities, English Learners, and students from other minority groups.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel would have appreciated more specific examples of how DDOE modified its flexibility request based on input from groups, particularly regarding English Learners and students with disabilities. • One peer felt that the State did not appear to make efforts to consult with smaller groups that may reflect more local concerns. • A peer shared a concern that the consultation efforts related to English Learners and students with disabilities did not include teachers or practitioners. • Peers asked for additional documentation to verify that the comments and feedback were reflected in the flexibility request.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None indicated.

2. Did the SEA meaningfully engage and solicit 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?

- *Is the engagement likely to lead to successful implementation of the SEA's request due to the input and commitment of relevant stakeholders at the outset of the planning and implementation process?*
- *Did the SEA indicate that it modified any aspect of its request based on stakeholder input?*
- *Does the input represent feedback from a diverse mix of stakeholders representing various perspectives and interests, including stakeholders from high-need communities?*

Consultation Question 2 Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historical engagement of stakeholders from many diverse communities and respect for their feedback provides the impetus for change and successful implementation. Documentation confirms the many opportunities available for Delaware's citizens to become informed and respond to the flexibility request.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in the process included: Governors Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, State Board of Education, Delaware Education Support System Advisory Council (the Committee of Practitioners), Rodel Foundation, Delaware Business Roundtable, Delaware State Education Association, Chief State Officers Association, Delaware Association of School Administrators, Teachers of the Year Advisory Board, Charter Directors and the public. • The Innovation Action Team included over 100 educators, education experts and parents, leaders of teachers' unions, nonprofits, corporations, and civic groups, including advocates for Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and other minorities. • Emails, town hall meetings, teleconference calls, webinars, website postings with feedback options, memos, advisory meetings, blog posts, news articles, and brochures were utilized to communicate with stakeholders.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific civil rights organizations, community-based organizations, and organizations that represent English Learners, Indian tribe, and other minority groups are not identified. However, the inclusion of English Learners, and representatives for other minority groups is noted (p.11). It is unclear whether significant consultation with parents occurred. • The panel would have appreciated more evidence, including specific examples, of how DDOE modified its flexibility request based on input from groups, particularly regarding English Learners and students with disabilities, and how DDOE will engage them in the future. • Some peers feel that outreach to English Learners did not appear to reflect the full diversity of the population. • Peers asked for additional documentation to verify that DDOE's flexibility request reflected public comments and feedback.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some peers expressed the belief that it would be appropriate to develop a strategic communication plan to ensure that stakeholders, including parents, are informed of the changes made as a result of the flexibility request.

Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Note to Peers: Staff will review 1.A Adopt College-And Career-Ready Standards, Options A and B.

1.B Transition to college- and career-ready standards

- 1.B Part A:** Is the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the 2013–2014 school year realistic, of high quality?

Note to Peers: See ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance for additional considerations related to the types of activities an SEA includes in its transition plan.

1.B Panel Response, Part A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE has developed a comprehensive plan for College-And Career-Ready Standards (CCSS) implementation to ensure that all students will graduate college- and career-ready, with the freedom to choose his or her life’s course. The achievable timeline and high quality of the plan are evident.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE’s crosswalk with the CCSS indicated a 100 percent match with English Language Arts (ELA) and 79 percent with mathematics. Math Learning Progressions and Literacy Concept Organizers that accurately align to CCSS have been completed. Initial instructional implementation for grades K-12 began during 2011-12 (p. 25). DDOE is a member of World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) and National Clearinghouse of English Language Acquisition (NCELA) and has adopted the newest English Language Proficiency standards for 2012, which are closely aligned with CCSS and provide opportunities for English Learners to attain college and career readiness (p. 31). Grade Band Extensions (GBEs) for ELA and math were adopted in May 2011 to provide rigorous standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (p. 25). Understanding by Design and Learning Focused frameworks were the basis for development of model differentiated lessons to address various learning styles and abilities and promote the inclusion of and achievement of students with disabilities and English Learners in the general education content and environment (pp 26-27). A grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supports the efforts of the Delaware PTA to provide parent and community training on CCSS with the goal of improving outcomes for students (p. 26). DDOE has provided comprehensive professional development and curriculum lesson modules in a variety of formats to teachers, including teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities, principals, and other educators. Supports include train-the-trainer models, online training, webinars, instructional resources, differentiated lesson modules, and benchmark assessments, all aligned to CCSS. DDOE’s Early Learning Foundations (ELF) program is aligned with the CCSS (pp.29-30).

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals are included in professional development for CCSS, but additional training may be warranted for improving instructional leadership skills to achieve the rigorous goals of college and career readiness for all students. How IHEs that prepare teachers, principals, and other educators are implementing CCSS in their programs is not clear. It is unclear whether English Learners teachers are involved in reading or math cadre (p.26). The State did not describe a plan to encourage increased dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate participation for high school students.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be appropriate for DDOE to integrate efforts for English language proficiency into the ELF program and throughout K-12. DDOE should work with its IHEs to ensure that their faculty is integrating CCSS in their programs that prepare teachers, principals, and other educators.

Part B: Is the SEA’s plan likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with the college- and career-ready standards?

Note to Peers: See ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance for additional considerations related to the types of activities an SEA includes in its transition plan.

1.B Panel Response, Part B

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE has crafted its plan with attention to college- and career-readiness for all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students. With two of three phases of implementation complete, the expectation is that continuation of current, along with future, endeavors will provide significant progress toward success for all students.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Data Coach Project and professional learning communities (PLCs) provide the opportunities for teachers to analyze data to drive instruction (p.34). • DDOE implemented the computer-adapted Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS), which includes formative and summative assessments and is aligned to CCSS in 2010-11. The same exam is given to all test-takers, including students with disabilities and English Learners, and is adjusted to their level of knowledge. • The Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System Alternate Assessment (DCAS-Alt1) measures performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities against GBEs. DDOE is a member of CCSSO State Collaborative on Assessments and Student Standards – Assessing Special Education Students (p.36). • DDOE has joined the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (p.36). • In April 2011, DDOE began statewide school day administration of the SAT to all public school 11th graders in the state. English Learners and students with disabilities were provided accommodations. PSAT is used as an early indicator of college readiness and is used to indicate success in advanced courses (p.36). • P-20 System is cohesive. Early Learning Foundations for birth to eight align (at least 90%) to CCSS. The adoption of the SAT for college readiness and PSAT for advanced coursework indicate the rigor of standards and access for all students. The DCAS has been linked statistically to PISA and NAEP. • Student Success Plans are personalized and track courses to ensure that students graduate with a plan for entering the workforce or college. An Early Warning System indicates the need for intervention. • There is alignment between general education and education for students with disabilities in developing grade band extensions (GBEs). • The State partnered well with IHEs to develop curriculum and assessments for English Learners and students with disabilities. • The development of exemplary lessons with differentiated instruction addresses improved learning for all students. • The State’s participation in efforts to share test items with other States as founders of the Item Bank Collaborative (p.37).

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How IHEs that prepare teachers, principals, and other educators are implementing CCSS in their programs is not clear. • The changes that DDOE proposes to its Title III accountability system are unclear (p.31). • The State does not adequately describe the assessment procedures for early childhood readiness and outcomes (p.38).
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to LEAs to build their capacity to conduct quality control for external service providers. • Ensuring that coaches are carefully selected and receive high-quality training and monitoring their performance would strengthen the program. • Building capacity at the district level for professional development and including processes for evaluating the success of that professional development would strengthen the system. • As the State develops test items, link them to the curriculum to ensure alignment.

1.C Develop and Administer Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth

- 1.C** Did the SEA develop, or does it have a plan to develop, annual, statewide, high-quality assessments, and corresponding academic achievement standards, that measure student growth and are aligned with the State’s college- and career-ready standards in reading/language arts and mathematics, in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school, that will be piloted no later than the 2013–2014 school year and planned for administration in all LEAs no later than the 2014–2015 school year, as demonstrated through one of the three options below? Does the plan include setting academic achievement standards?

Note to Peers: Staff will review Options A and C.

If the SEA selected Option B:

If the SEA is neither participating in a State consortium under the RTTA competition nor has developed and administered high-quality assessments, did the SEA provide a realistic, high-quality plan describing activities that are likely to lead to the development of such assessments, their piloting no later than the 2013–2014 school year, and their annual administration in all LEAs beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year? Does the plan include setting academic achievement standards?

1.C, Option B Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 1.C, Option A or Option C

Tally of Peer Responses: NA

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	NA
<i>Strengths</i>	NA
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	NA
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	NA

Principle 1 Overall Review

Is the SEA’s plan for transitioning to and implementing college- and career-ready standards, and developing and administering annual, statewide, aligned high-quality assessments that measure student growth, comprehensive, coherent, and likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

Principle 1 Overall Review Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE’s Education Plan establishes the vision of all students graduating college- and career-ready, with the freedom to choose his or her life’s course. Implementation of a comprehensive plan to achieve that goal is well articulated.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early buy-in, adoption, and transition to CCSS have set the stage for success. • Grade Band Extensions (GBEs) for ELA and math provide rigorous standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Understanding by Design and Learning Focused frameworks were the basis for development of model differentiated lessons to address various learning styles and abilities and promote the inclusion of and achievement of students with disabilities and English Learners in the general education content and environment. • Student Success Plans are personalized and track courses to ensure that students graduate with a plan for entering the workforce or college. An Early Warning System indicates the need for intervention. • In April 2011, DDOE began statewide school day administration of the SAT to all public school 11th graders in the state. English Learners and students with disabilities were provided accommodations. PSAT is used as an early indicator of college readiness and is used to indicate success in advanced courses. • P-20 System provides cohesion. Early Learning Foundations for birth to eight align (> 90%) to CCSS. The adoption of the SAT for college readiness and PSAT for advanced coursework indicate the rigor of standards and access for all students. The DCAS has been linked statistically to PISA and NAEP. • The Data Coach Project and Professional Learning Communities provide the opportunities for teachers to analyze data to drive instruction. • DDOE has provided comprehensive professional development and curriculum lesson modules in a variety of formats to teachers, including teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities, principals, and other educators. Supports include train-the-trainer models, online training, webinars, instructional resources, differentiated lesson modules, PLCs, and benchmark assessments, all aligned to CCSS. • Emails, town hall meetings, teleconference calls, webinars, website postings with feedback options, memos, advisory meetings, blog posts, news articles, and brochures were utilized to communicate with stakeholders. • The State’s collaborative partnerships drive the many elements of implementation toward a successful result.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of professional development to determine effectiveness is an essential component that is not addressed. • Some peers felt that it was not clear how the State will ensure that LEAs and schools have the tools they need to build capacity to ensure success for all students. • Specific examples of changes to the flexibility request that resulted from stakeholders’ feedback are not adequately described.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide technical assistance to districts to fully implement a process to evaluate the quality, depth, and effectiveness of professional development and ensure the fidelity of implementation.• Some peers expressed the belief that it would be appropriate to develop a strategic communication plan to ensure that stakeholders, including parents, are informed of the changes made as a result of this flexibility request.

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

2.A Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

2.A.i Did the SEA propose a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, and a high-quality plan to implement this system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, that is likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students? (*note to Peers, please write to this question after completing 2.A.i.a and 2.A.i.b*)

2.A.i Panel Response.

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE proposes a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that will be implemented no later than 2012-2013. The proposed plan provides nuanced degrees of support based on current outcomes on multiple metrics incorporating performance of all students, including specific subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities, English Learners, and students who qualify for free- or reduced-price meals). The new accountability system should help drive improvements in instruction and contribute to closing the achievement gap.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE’s Education Plan provides a robust framework for a single accountability system that includes Title I and non-Title I schools. DDOE proposes to enhance its current accountability system that explicitly tracks multiple outcomes (e.g., reading/language arts and math, graduation rates, and school performance over time, including for subgroups) in order to provide appropriate levels of support, including targeted assistance for LEAs and schools. DDOE plan outlines approach to provide differing levels of support and incentives to reward, recognition, Partnership Zone (including priority), and focus schools. Incentives range from financial incentives to recognition incentives. These incentives have the potential to have both symbolic and substantive value. Demarcation of a “Partnership Zone” (including priority schools) with a state-level support system creates a distinct space for schools with the greatest needs. This demarcation reflects emerging research about effective turnaround efforts and has the potential to concentrate resources on schools with the greatest needs. This focus should foster analysis of data to inform instructional practices that can spur improvements in student outcomes. The proposed system builds on the state’s existing statewide system of support and initiatives catalyzed by the RTTT grant.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnostic tool that is part of state suite of “additional supports” to priority and focus schools should help align and prioritize supports and specific school needs.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE needs to provide evidence of progress to date (e.g., early indicators of impact of relevant RTTT initiatives) to explain the rationale for keeping the existing system in place and to determine whether proposed approaches will drive changes in practice and outcomes. For instance, the structure of support has been in place and it is unclear the extent to which the new structure will lead to different outcomes for the schools. • Peers raised concerns about the use of combined subgroups in the identification of reward schools and the exit criteria for focus schools (pp.64 and 75). • Need explanation of how the State will continue to monitor system over time to ensure continuous improvement.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE should support schools and LEAs to develop the capacity to implement the improvement strategies in a high-quality way using external technical assistance providers as needed. Some districts may need targeted assistance related to developing performance-based contracts with external vendors to make certain that the contracts lead to the greatest positive impact for students.

- a. Does the SEA’s accountability system provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all LEAs in the State and for all Title I schools in those LEAs based on (1) student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, and other subjects at the State’s discretion, for all students and all subgroups of students identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II); (2) graduation rates for all students and all subgroups; and (3) school performance and progress over time, including the performance and progress of all subgroups?

2.A.i.a Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE proposes a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that will provide nuanced degrees of support based on current outcomes on multiple metrics incorporating performance of all students and specific subgroups.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE proposes to enhance its current accountability system that explicitly tracks multiple outcomes (e.g., reading/language arts and math, graduation rates, and school performance over time, including subgroups) in order to provide appropriate levels of support, including targeted assistance for LEAs and schools. • DDOE plans to continue to use AYP but establish new annual measurable objectives (AMOs) that include growth model targets. This new approach will provide a more nuanced understanding of overall school progress. • DDOE’s Education Plan provides a robust framework for the single accountability system that includes Title I and non-Title I schools. • The additional supports to be provided based on “research-based school level diagnostic tool” should help schools prioritize their school improvement efforts (p. 54). • DDOE plans to extend LEA flexibility to use Title I funds in alignment with their needs which should limit superfluous programs and actions geared more toward compliance than student learning (p. 54).
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers felt that, while it is arguably appropriate to provide supports to charter schools as dictated by state charter statute, charter schools that don’t meet the performance expectations outlined in their charter (i.e., most likely any charter school that is identified as a priority school) should be closed. • The menu of options on p.54 assumes that focus schools have the capacity to determine the interventions that would best address their needs, but the schools may not have the ability to select and implement appropriate strategies.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE might consider adding to the needs assessment and plan supporting documentation, including research, that focus schools must complete before selecting an option from the menu of interventions on page 54. • DDOE could disseminate resources related to best practices to ensure that schools and LEAs choose improvement strategies that have the most potential for impact to improve instruction and learning. • DDOE should support schools and LEAs to develop the capacity to implement the improvement strategies in a high-quality way using external technical assistance providers as needed.

- b. Does the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system create incentives and provide support that is likely to be effective in closing achievement gaps for all subgroups of students?

2.A.i.b Panel Response*Tally of Peer Responses: 5 Yes, 1 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE’s proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system creates incentives (financial as well as recognition) and provides support that are likely to be effective in closing achievement gaps for all subgroups of students.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE plans to publicly recognize and provide incentives to schools that are awarded the designation of Reward or Recognition school (e.g., financial, banner, certificate, visit ceremony) • State plan outlines approach to provide differing levels of support and incentives to reward, recognition, Partnership Zone (including priority), and focus schools. • Incentives range from financial incentives to recognition incentives. The allocation of funding has symbolic and substantive value. • Demarcation of Partnership Zone schools (including priority schools) creates a distinct space for schools with the greatest needs. This demarcation reflects emerging research about effective turnaround efforts. • If implemented successfully, the various supports (e.g., extended time, strategies to address social, emotional and health needs, coaches that will focus on improving instruction, and parent engagement) have the potential to close the achievement gap for subgroups.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure of support (e.g., Partnership Zone) is already in place. It would be informative to see data regarding early indicators of success to fully evaluate extent to which the plan will close achievement gaps. For example, what if any changes have occurred in the first cohort of schools in the Partnership Zone)? • DDOE did not provide evidence that this approach has been working in Delaware. • DDOE did not explain how the State will continue to monitor this over time to ensure continuous improvement. • All peer reviewers expressed concerns that the use of a combined subgroup (pp.64, 75, and 85) could mask the performance of individual subgroups and diminish accountability and appropriate supports.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider reducing the “n-size” to increase inclusion of subgroups in order to minimize the need to combine subgroups for various calculations.

c. *Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.A.i.c*

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.A.ii Option A.

ONLY FOR SEAs SELECTING OPTION B: If the SEA elects to include student achievement on assessments other than reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system by selecting Option B, review and respond to peer review questions in section 2.A.ii. If the SEA does not include other assessments, go to section 2.A.iii.

- 2.A.ii** Did the SEA include student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools?
- a. Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.A.ii.a
 - b. Does the SEA’s weighting of the included assessments result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve the State’s college- and career-ready standards?
 - c. Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.A.ii.c

2.A.ii.b PANEL RESPONSE

Not applicable because the SEA selected 2.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: NA

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	NA
<i>Strengths</i>	NA
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	NA
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	NA

2.B Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives

2.B *Note to Peers: Staff will review Options A and B.*

Did the SEA describe the method it will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics, for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups, that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts through one of the three options below?

If the SEA selected Option C:

Did the SEA describe another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups?

- i. Did the SEA provide the new AMOs and the method used to set these AMOs?
 - ii. Did the SEA provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs?
 - iii. If the SEA set AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, do the AMOs require LEAs, schools, and subgroups that are further behind to make greater rates of annual progress?
 - iv. Did the SEA attach 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? (Attachment 8)
- *Are these AMOs similarly ambitious to the AMOs that would result from using Option A or B above?*
 - *Are these AMOs ambitious but achievable given the State’s existing proficiency rates and any other relevant circumstances in the State?*
 - *Will these AMOs result in a significant number of children being on track to be college- and career-ready?*

2.B, Option C (including Questions i–iv) Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 2.B, Option A or Option B

Tally of Peer Responses: NA

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	NA
<i>Strengths</i>	NA
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	NA
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	NA

2.C Reward Schools

2.C.i Did the SEA describe its methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools?

2.C.i PANEL RESPONSE

Tally of Peer Responses: 3 Yes, 3 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DDOE explained a methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools (pp. 64 – 67) that includes evidence of demonstrating AYP and a weighted formula that incorporates performance of subgroups. Peers expressed concern about the use of combined subgroups.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The method for identifying both high-performing and high-progress schools includes all students. DDOE proposes to identify recognition schools to give credit to additional high-performing and high-progress schools.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need more clarity regarding analysis of subgroups. On page 64, DDOE states that “at-risk students were defined as being in one or more of the following subgroups...” While we applaud the state's commitment to ensuring accountability for subgroup performance, we are concerned that combining them may mask certain individual subgroups not making progress while the school as a whole may be identified as a reward school (p.64). The peers are concerned about the constitution of the “at-risk” group and the inherent assumptions of the correlation of certain factors (e.g., race) with underachievement.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to be a safeguard in place to ensure that all subgroups are accounted for and that interventions are provided. Consider reducing “n size” to increase inclusion of subgroups in order to minimize the need to combine subgroups for various calculations.

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.C.ii.

2.C.iii Are the recognition and, if applicable rewards, proposed by the SEA for its highest-performing and high-progress schools likely to be considered meaningful by the schools?

➤ *Has the SEA consulted with LEAs and schools in designing its recognition and, where applicable, rewards?*

2.C.iii PANEL RESPONSE

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE has reserved funds to provide financial incentives to reward and recognition schools.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward schools are Title I schools and recognition schools are non-Title I schools that posted meaningful gains.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information about the amount and justification based on assumptions about motivation would strengthen the model. For instance, if the dollar amount is not large enough to have an impact on the school or the individuals working in the school, the reward could be expensive yet not have the desired impact. • Awards come in multiple forms but the ones proposed are relatively standard (p.66).
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider options for innovative awards, such as fewer reporting requirements for reward and recognition schools, and directing funds to teacher and build principal leadership opportunities (e.g., provide honoraria to teachers or principals to speak to other schools about their efforts to close the achievement gap, and identification of “lab schools”).

2.D Priority Schools

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.D.i and 2.D.ii.

- 2.D.iii** Are the interventions that the SEA described aligned with the turnaround principles and are they likely to result in dramatic, systemic change in priority schools?
- a. Do the SEA's interventions include all of the following?
- (i) providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
 - (ii) ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;
 - (iii) redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
 - (iv) strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;
 - (v) using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
 - (vi) establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
 - (vii) providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement?

2.D.iii.a (including questions (i)-(vii)) Panel Response*Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE has developed a framework for priority schools in the Partnership Zone and codified it in regulations. The regulations are implemented by a SEA turnaround unit. The framework includes adopting the SIG interventions.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership Zone structure provides a distinct cohort of schools that will be provided with a suite of supports and interventions that are largely driven by the state due to regulations that give the state authority to exert a great deal of control of low-performing schools. • Strong State role in creating and directing the schools in the Partnership Zone creates incentive for local agreement.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State role in Partnership Zone (including priority) schools appears to minimize the role of the local school board and potentially the superintendent. While this may be important if either of these offices are not equally committed to accountability, it may hinder local buy-in. • The role of local community, including parents, businesses, and community-based organizations, in determining turnaround strategies is unclear. • Some peers thought that requiring schools not making AYP within 2 years of implementing to change the model being implemented was problematic because it would not allowing enough time to demonstrate systemic change.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance and an intentional communication strategy regarding interventions for priority schools could foster local buy-in for reforms. • Tracking of leading indicators of turnaround success will enable the DDOE to closely monitor efforts and, if necessary, make adjustments if efforts are not leading to substantive changes. For instance, if the principal has not been able to demonstrate the ability to obtain buy-in from staff or improve instruction in a tangible way within the first two years, serious consideration of whether the leader is the right fit is warranted.

- b. Are the identified interventions to be implemented in priority schools likely to —
- (i) increase the quality of instruction in priority schools;
 - (ii) improve the effectiveness of the leadership and the teaching in these schools; and
 - (iii) improve student achievement and, where applicable, graduation rates for all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and the lowest-achieving students?

2.D.iii.b (including questions (i)-(iii)) Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations and procedures are in place to drive changes that will influence instruction, leadership, and outcomes.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU outlines specific expectations related to processes developed to improve instruction, leadership, and student achievement (e.g., walkthroughs, early warning indicator system, DPAS evaluations, school climate survey). • Regulations requiring the LEA and local bargaining unit to negotiate flexibility should help remove barriers to meaningful change. Furthermore, the clause that grants the DDOE Secretary of Ed authority to make decisions in the face of an impasse should provide significant motivation for all parties to negotiate in good faith. • Aggressive timeline has most schools implementing turnaround reforms by fall of 2012 reflecting the urgency appropriate given the low performance. • State plays a role in choosing appropriate vendors. • Alignment across the Principles; DDOE will monitor progress against Principle 3.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While multiple actions will indirectly impact leadership, the panel wanted more details required regarding leadership pipeline, induction, support, and evaluation. See concerns about Principle 3. • The State timeline (2 years) for seeing improvements in priority schools may be too short (p.68). Unclear of the criteria against which DDOE will make a decision about whether to require a priority school to change course after 2 years and whether those criteria are realistic. • Unclear what the requirements are for LEAs to provide additional professional development and support for teachers and principals in implementation of the models.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See emerging research about assessment relative to leading turnaround indicators. • Develop a 3- to 5-year evaluation plan with ambitious but realistic annual benchmarks, and mid-point check-ins. • Consider the balance between monitoring and giving teachers and principals time to implement reforms and avoid unintended consequences such as grade inflation and questionable assessment results.

c. Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.D.iii.c

2.D.iv Does the SEA’s proposed timeline ensure that LEAs that have one or more priority schools will implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year?

➤ *Does the SEA’s proposed timeline distribute priority schools’ implementation of meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in a balanced way, such that there is not a concentration of these schools in the later years of the timeline?*

2.D.iv Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed timeline ensures that LEAs that have one or more priority schools will implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year. Under RTTT, a cohort of schools is already actively engaged in turnaround efforts.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE timeline dictates that all priority schools will begin implementation by 2012-2013. • State-developed MOU clearly outlines process of progress monitoring to ensure that LEAs are implementing reforms.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear to what extent local school boards are provided support related to understanding the implications of the MOU. Given their control of the budget and expectations regarding sustaining reforms, boards should be proactively engaged in a meaningful manner.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None indicated.

2.D.v Did the SEA provide criteria to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status?

- a. Do the SEA’s criteria ensure that schools that exit priority status have made significant progress in improving student achievement?
 - *Is the level of progress required by the criteria to exit priority status likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools?*

2.D.v and 2.D.v.a PANEL RESPONSE

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit performance goals (make AYP or AMO exit targets) and timeline (within two years) set the conditions for a successful turnaround (p.72).
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit performance goals (make AYP or AMO exit targets) and timeline (within two years) set the conditions for a successful turnaround.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some peers thought that schools not making AYP within 2 years of implementing a change model being required to change models would be problematic, not allowing enough time to demonstrate systemic change (p.68). • In the box on p.72, the language under Option 1 is unclear. Specifically, the sentence regarding maintaining consistency seems out of place. DDOE did not provide clarification upon request. • Some peers expressed concern about priority schools being dropped from Intense Support after 2 years of progress (p.73).
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to district and partnership zone personnel regarding a communication strategy should the state need to intervene because schools don’t meet targets, which would trigger state involvement. • State should consider continuing supports for schools to ensure they continue to demonstrate progress.

2.E Focus Schools

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.E.i, 2.E.i.a, and 2.E.ii

2.E.i Did the SEA describe its methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State’s Title I schools as focus schools? If the SEA’s methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but is instead, e.g., based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), did the SEA also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department’s “Demonstrating that an SEA’s Lists of Schools Meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions” guidance?

- a. Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.E.i.a.
- b. Is the SEA’s methodology for identifying focus schools educationally sound and likely to ensure that schools are accountable for the performance of subgroups of students?

2.E.i.b Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process to identify focus schools is logical and based on a nuanced assessment of performance that highlights status of subgroups (pp. 73-74).
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE proposes to identify focus schools based on achievement gaps and subgroup performance. According to these metrics, focus school represent 10 percent of DDOE’s Title I schools. Ensuring that flexibility does not diminish accountability for specific subgroups, schools eligible for focus based on low subgroup performance were ranked on the 2010-11 combined ELA and Math percent proficient on each of the following subgroups: Free/Reduced Lunch, African American, Hispanic, English Learner, and students with disabilities. Those not qualifying to be priority schools would be focus schools. The method ensures that the state captures large gaps in heterogeneous schools, and captures lowest performance in subpopulations in homogeneous schools.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None indicated.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None indicated.

2.E.ii *Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.E.ii*

2.E.iii Does the SEA’s process and timeline ensure that each LEA will identify the needs of its focus schools and their students and implement interventions in focus schools at the start of the 2012–2013 school year? Did the SEA provide examples of and justifications for the interventions the SEA will require its focus schools to implement? Are those interventions based on the needs of students and likely to improve the performance of low-performing students and reduce achievement gaps among subgroups, including English Learners and students with disabilities?

- *Has the SEA demonstrated that the interventions it has identified are effective at increasing student achievement in schools with similar characteristics, needs, and challenges as the schools the SEA has identified as focus schools?*
- *Has the SEA identified interventions that are appropriate for different levels of schools (elementary, middle, high) and that address different types of school needs (e.g., all-students, targeted at the lowest-achieving students)?*

2.E.iii Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 5 Yes, 1 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE’s process and timeline ensures that each LEA will identify the needs of its focus schools and their students and implement interventions in focus schools at the start of the 2012–2013 school year. The plan includes a comprehensive needs assessment that will position schools to seek supports that align with their distinct and prioritized needs. The needs and planned interventions will be outlined in a 3-year plan. Interventions based on the needs of students are likely to improve the performance of low-performing students and reduce achievement gaps among subgroups, including English Learners and students with disabilities. However, the panel expressed concerns about the capacity of LEAs.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed process to identify needs will ensure that supports match needs (e.g., conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the schools, including an intense focus on the reason(s) the schools was identified as a focus school). LEAs will be required to develop a three year plan to address prioritized areas of need identified through the comprehensive needs assessment. • Aggressive timeline that requires that all focus school implement reforms by fall of 2012 communicates importance of initiative. • Regular monitoring by the DDOE (i.e., every other month) reinforces DDOE’s commitment and infuses immediate accountability to implement key actions steps.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear whether focus schools would have the capacity to choose the interventions that would be appropriate. • Clause that allows LEAs to opt out of state interventions and adopt an “intervention that is educationally sound” could lead to highly individualized approaches but may also run the risk of watering down the approach analogous to the “other significant reform” under NCLB (p.74). • Limited information about how the DDOE will go about working with the LEA to identify personnel responsible for LEA monitoring and how the LEA would be held accountable. • DDOE did not describe the elements of the needs assessment and rubric so their quality could not be determined (p.74). • Unclear how the needs assessment and rubric would differentiate approaches by school grade levels. • Although DDOE provides a list of options (pp. 74-75) it does not provide examples of and justifications for the interventions it will require its focus schools to implement.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide LEAs with support regarding recruiting, negotiating contracts, and assessing external providers. • Provide LEAs personnel responsible for monitoring focus schools with support about coaching about crucial conversations to make certain that the role is substantive and not symbolic. • DDOE should build LEAs capacity around conducting needs assessment and selecting aligned interventions.

2.E.iv Did the SEA provide criteria to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status?

a. Do the SEA’s criteria ensure that schools that exit focus status have made significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps?

➤ *Is the level of progress required by the criteria to exit focus status likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools?*

2.E.iv and 2.E.iv.a PANEL RESPONSE

Tally of Peer Responses: 2 Yes, 4 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE has outlined a criterion to exit focus status based on improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps. However, the plan to base exit on combined subgroups may mask performance of some subgroups.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE defines specific criteria for focus schools to exit (i.e., meet specified targets for two consecutive years). Baselines for each focus school would be established using Spring 2012 ELA and Math DCAS data. Each school will have its own unique set of targets that require a trajectory toward reducing the number students who are not proficient by 2016-17.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear how targets will be set. More information required to adequately assess notion of significant progress (p.75). • DDOE does not designate a specific timeline by which schools need to meet criteria. Absent a specific goals (e.g., within two years) it is unclear if there would be consequences for a school languishing in the focus category for years. • The use of a combined subgroup could mask the performance of individual subgroups and diminish accountability for performance of at-risk groups such as English Learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families (p.75).
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide LEA’s assistance about how to set ambitious but reasonable targets that would ideally have schools exit focus status before 2016-2017. • Needs to be a safeguard in place to ensure that all subgroups are accounted for and that interventions are provided. • Consider reducing n-size to increase inclusion of subgroups in order to minimize the need to combine subgroups for various calculations.

2.F Provide Incentives and Support for other Title I Schools

2.F.i Does the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools that, based on the SEA’s new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps?

2.F.i Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 3 Yes, 3 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of a combined subgroup in the identification of LEAs for levels of support diminishes accountability for performance of individual subgroups (p.85).
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE intends make recognition schools eligible for support and incentives even though they are not Title I schools. In year one the SEA anticipates identifying up to 10 recognition schools (p.80). DDOE plans to allocate RTTT and Title I funds to support recognition schools and provide incentives. The allocation of resources communicates that the DDOE is committed to supporting a range of schools The SEA also plans to utilize the state system of support to provide LEAs with technical assistance and resources targeted low-performance and the achievement gap. Supporting LEAs is a wise investment in the long-term sustainability of reform efforts.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear what if any role parents and community will play in supporting recognition schools. Engaging them may make various incentives more meaningful. Other Title I schools would be identified for support based on the performance of a combined subgroup (p.85). The use of a combined subgroup was not persuasive and raised concerns about perpetuating perceptions that race correlates with low-performance. DDOE did not respond to peer reviewer concerns raised in the phone call on March 26, 2012.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance to school boards and superintendents about the initiative to build support and local buy-in.

2.F.ii Are those incentives and supports likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for all

students, including English Learners and students with disabilities?

2.F.ii Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 2 Yes, 4 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of details regarding financial incentives and plan to implement supports (e.g. RTI, Universal Designs for Learning) makes it difficult to assess potential impact. It is unclear whether the implementation would be effective because the description outlines what the supports are but does not address steps necessary to implement with fidelity.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports to be provided reflect current research and appear to be meaningful.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details regarding incentives are not provided. • The level of depth of supports is unclear. DDOE does not demonstrate how the capacity at the SEA and LEA level is sufficient to ensure the high-quality implementation of the supports or fidelity across sites. • DDOE does not address how it will overcome the structural barriers to implementing interventions. For example, Response to Intervention can be effective but there are challenges that can hinder implementation (p.86). • Unclear whether DDOE has considered how to serve high schools. This weakness is reflected in the request’s lack of attention to graduation rates. • Unclear how supports available to a school change as they move up the tiers in the system. • Unclear how DDOE will “support and promote” retention of native languages for English Learners (p. 91) • Some peers felt that although the SEA made an effort to provide multiple career tracks to English learner students, such opportunities should be made available to all students (p. 92). While some students may opt to seek a vocational track it is critical that all students have the opportunity to pursue all tracks and not face limitations stemming from assumptions about their goals or potential.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide TA regarding implementation of incentives and encourage development of innovative incentive options (e.g., offer stipend to teachers or principals of schools that make gains to give presentations about their work) • SEA needs to make concerted effort to prevent targeting subgroups to different tracks (college preparation versus career and technical education).

2.G Build SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning

2.G Is the SEA’s process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, likely to succeed in improving such capacity?

i. Is the SEA’s process for ensuring timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools likely to result in successful implementation of these interventions and in progress on leading indicators and student outcomes in these schools?

➤ *Did the SEA describe a process for the rigorous review and approval of any external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support the implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools that is likely to result in the identification of high-quality partners with experience and expertise applicable to the needs of the school, including specific subgroup needs?*

ii. Is the SEA’s process for ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools under the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources) likely to result in successful implementation of such interventions and improved student achievement?

iii. Is the SEA’s process for holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools, likely to improve LEA capacity to support school improvement?

2.G (including i, ii, and iii) Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 3 Yes, 3 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed, DDOE has developed a detailed plan to modify its existing state system of support to provide multiple tiers of support to districts focused on building the districts’ capacity to provide high quality instruction to all students. Heavy reliance on coaches for which the DDOE has provided little information about their selection, training, and evaluation raises questions about the extent to which the plan can achieve desired outcomes.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on consultation with key constituents, the DDOE plans to revise its statewide system of support to reflect new flexibility. The revised model would focus on providing support to LEAs according to specific needs • The Delaware Education Support System (DESS) should provide efficient allocation of resources to LEAs based on need (i.e., minimal, moderate, advanced, intense) which is determined using an analysis of school-level scores averaged within LEAs and examined on an annual basis (pp.81-84). • Revised DESS system positioned to provide timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools. Focus on providing TA related to RTI, UDL, accessible instructional materials, and positive behavioral support and instructional improvement system reflect current research on effective practices, especially for students with special needs • Partnerships with institutions of higher education as well as other non-profits such as the Center for Applied Linguistics and the Center for Applied Linguistics at George Washington University have promise of building the DDOE’s capacity to support LEAs as they seek to build their capacity to educate English Learners. • Plan to provide job-embedded professional development reflects goals of ESEA. • DDOE plans to monitor implementation of support services and resources and has created a “check engine” light system that represents and early indicators that change is not in fact occurring. This system will infuse accountability into the support services.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development coaches, instructional coaches, and data coaches have promise but more clarity is required regarding recruitment, selection, training, and accountability of coaches (pp.90-91). • Limited information regarding how the DDOE plans to hold LEAs, as opposed to schools, accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools. Limited information about navigating the relationship between the SEA and the LEA related to the priority schools. Unclear how the SEA plans to build LEA capacity to actively support the schools in the partnership zone. • Unclear how DDOE will ensure high-quality implementation of a manageable number of strategies at the SEA, LEA, and school level.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to LEAs to build their capacity to conduct quality control for external service providers, e.g. the development of performance-based contracts. • Ensure that SEA resources are used to support professional development that builds LEA capacity to implement strategies involving high-quality coaches, staff developers, and others.

Principle 2 Overall Review

Is the SEA's plan for developing and implementing a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for students? Do the components of the SEA's plan fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive system that supports continuous improvement and is tailored to the needs of the State, its LEAs, its schools, and its students? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

PRINCIPLE 2 OVERALL REVIEW PANEL RESPONSE

Tally of Peer Responses: 3 Yes, 3 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed opinion. DDOE has developed a well-thought-out differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that is likely to improve outcomes for students, close the achievement gap, and improve equality of education for all students. However, to adequately assess the extent to which the plan will be successful, more information is required regarding progress to date of multiple initiatives referenced in the flexibility request but being conducted under RTTT (e.g., Partnership Zones). Concerns were also raised about the loss of accountability through use of combined subgroups.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear criteria to identify schools by category. • Clearly articulated plan to provide support bolstered by state policy that grants DDOE authority to hold LEAs and schools accountable (i.e., DDOE takeover option) (p.68). • Types of support to be provided to schools and districts reflect best practices (e.g., instructional walk-through, RTI practices, behavior supports). • Creation of Partnership Zone structure reflects current research on effective turnaround strategies.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit criteria for priority and focus schools is not time-limited, making it unclear when the SEA will intervene with sanctions. A clear timeline provides stakeholders with an understanding of expectations and communicates a sense of urgency. Yet, the bold timeline must be realistic in line with magnitude of changes to be implemented. • Unclear what role local boards of education will play in supporting the initiatives. Given their district policy setting and budget allocation role, engaging these stakeholders should increase likelihood of fidelity of implementation of the reforms. • Unclear how state will hold various support personnel (e.g., coaches) accountable for performance. Given their prominence in the model, developing robust systems to recruit, select, induct, support and evaluate would increase positive impact of these reform actors. • The use of combined subgroups for the purpose of identifying reward and recognition schools is problematic due to the possibility of masking the performance of individual subgroups and diminishing accountability for at-risk groups (p.64). • Lack of specificity in implementing supports and interventions. Does not address potential barriers to effective implementation (e.g. complexity of implementing a high-quality RTI model and changing the practices that have been implemented in prior years to improve their effectiveness).
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement communication strategy to cultivate buy-in from a diverse array of constituents. • DDOE's aggressive timeline to implement the system reflects the urgency to address low-performance but this must be balanced with the need to set realistic goals to achieve systemic change.

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

3.A Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

3.A.i Has the SEA developed and adopted guidelines consistent with Principle 3 through one of the two options below?

If the SEA selected **Option A:**

If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3:

- i. Is the SEA's plan for developing and adopting guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to result in successful adoption of those guidelines by the end of the 2011–2012 school year?

3.A.i, Option A.i Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option B

Tally of Peer Responses: NA

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	NA
<i>Strengths</i>	NA
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	NA
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	NA

- ii. Does the SEA's plan include sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines?

3.A.i, Option A.ii Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option B

Tally of Peer Responses: NA

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	NA
<i>Strengths</i>	NA
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	NA
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	NA

- iii. Note to Peers: Staff will review iii.

If the SEA selected **Option B**:

If the SEA has developed and adopted all guidelines consistent with Principle 3:

- i. Are the guidelines the SEA has adopted likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? (See question 3.A.ii to review the adopted guidelines for consistency with Principle 3.)

3.A.i, Option B.i Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 4 Yes, 2 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE regulations and guidelines establish the basis of a comprehensive plan for evaluating DDOE educators and administrators. Based on years of implementation experience, DDOE’s Performance Appraisal System (DPAS) has been enhanced to reflect changes in priorities and requirements within RTTT and now within the flexibility request.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since initial implementation, DDOE has consistently secured stakeholder input in its design. This has consisted of opportunities for public comment through focus groups, surveys, and town meetings. DDOE also recruited approximately 500 educators during the design process by capitalizing on the expertise and practical knowledge of classroom teachers. • State law in 2000 and RTTT grant requirements precipitated modifications and improvements to the DDOE Performance Appraisal System II (DPAS II) – many of which are in direct alignment with RTTT requirements and Principle 3, including (1) student improvement as an explicit component; and (2) definitions of effective teachers and administrators. • The advisory committee is composed of teachers, administrators, parents, higher education faculty, and legislators. • 2010 regulations specify that in order for a teacher to be rated as effective and highly effective, the educator must demonstrate sufficient student growth. • The establishment of data coaches and development coaches to ensure principals and teachers can use student data and teacher effectiveness data effectively to inform instructional practice. • DDOE regulations differentiate evaluation cycles removing the requirement for an annual evaluation for educators rated as effective – though the student improvement component is still required annually (p.97). • DPAS requires professional development plans and activities for areas rated as unsatisfactory (p.97). • Evaluation results can be used to make human capital decisions if a pattern of ineffective teaching is established (p. 97). • An annual evaluation of DPAS has been conducted and is required to be reviewed annually by the State Board of Education.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little alignment between principal 1, 2, and 3 was noted throughout the application. As assessments for CCSS are developed, DDOE would do well to consider the implications for using those measures to determine student growth for purposes of teacher evaluation. Likewise, student growth is unlikely to be achieved if alignment with the CCSS in curriculum and instructional practice is not completed in a strategic and comprehensive manner. Illustrating a clearer alignment between the 3 Principles would have strengthened DDOE’s application. • The supporting documentation did not indicate how the effectiveness of DPAS II for teachers and principals will be determined. • Little mention of DPAS II for principals was noted throughout the flexibility request. Review of additional supporting documentation provided more specifics, however an alignment between the teacher and administrator evaluation was not readily apparent.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a clear description of DPAS II goals and how progress and the supporting data and benchmarks will be established across 1, 3, and 5 years of implementation. • Ensure that the strategies and initiatives within Principle 1, 2 and 3 align and work collaboratively and strategically toward the same vision. Academic growth for students is more likely to be achieved if all 3 Principles work cohesively so that all students exit school college and career ready. • Consider appropriate ways to align teacher and leader evaluations.

ii. Note to Peers: Staff will review ii.

iii. Did the SEA have sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines?

3.A.i, Option B.iii Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE has garnered and sustained sufficient educator involvement in development and piloting of DPAS II.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE employed a variety of methods to garner stakeholder input into the design of DPAS II. Approximately 500 teachers, principals, parents and community members participated in work groups and focus group meetings to establish a common vision for educational accountability (p.95). • DDOE has been using, piloting, and refining DPAS II since 1987. Through the establishment of a DPAS II Advisory and Review Committee, general and special education teachers, administrators, parents, students and higher education faculty convene regularly to review, discuss, and revise any necessary changes (p. 95). • DDOE is recruiting the assistance of another 400 educators across the state to identify and/or develop other internal measures of student growth for teachers of students in non-tested subjects. This includes recruiting the expertise of local practitioners with strong content knowledge to identify/develop potential measures with consultation from national experts (p.98). • Stakeholder input is also obtained through the State’s Administrative Procedures Act which establishes a process for public comment. Additionally, DPAS II is annually evaluated by an outside entity – which includes input from DDOE teachers, administrators, and specialist (p. 99)
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While DDOE has taken substantial steps to ensure stakeholder input into the design and refining of DPAS II, it is crucial to continually pursue ways to improve communication with stakeholders to ensure DPAS II is understood and appreciated.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE would do well to develop a strategic communication plan detailing the steps to inform the broader school community of district implementation efforts, progress, results, and future plans for implementation.

ONLY FOR SEAs SELECTING OPTION B: If the SEA has adopted all guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support

systems by selecting **Option B** in section 3.A, review and respond to peer review question 3.A.ii below.

3.A.ii Are the SEA’s guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 — *i.e.*, will they promote systems that:

a. Will be used for continual improvement of instruction ?

➤ *Are the SEA’s guidelines likely to result in support for all teachers, including teachers who are specialists working with students with disabilities and English Learners and general classroom teachers with these students in their classrooms, that will enable them to improve their instructional practice?*

3.A.ii.a Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 4 Yes, 2 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOEs plan includes improving instructional practice as an outcome of DPAS II for teachers and principals; however explicit plans to ensure that teachers and principals are provided intensive, research-based professional development that result in implementation of instructional and professional practice with fidelity, along with mechanisms to evaluate its success was not directly evident in the supporting documentation.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE’s plan for developing effective teachers and principals demonstrates practices that are likely to result in improvements in instructional practices. • Both DPAS II for teachers and DPAS II for principals are based on DDOE professional standards (which align to Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for Educational Administrators) (p.99). • Goals of DPAS II for teachers – to ensure and support: (1) educators’ professional growth; (2) continuous improvement of student outcomes; and (3) quality educators in every classroom (p. 102). • Goals of DPAS II for administrators: (1) professional growth; (2) continuous improvement, and (3) quality assurance (Administrators Guide). • DPAS II for educators provides detailed and rigorous rubrics enabling immediate feedback on instructional and professional practice. • Teachers with performance evaluations rated unsatisfactory are required to receive an improvement plan, including the identification of areas in which the teacher struggles. Details include depicting the area(s) of performance that need to be improved and professional development activities that are required in an effort to improve practice (p. 102). Teachers and evaluators work collaboratively in the development of the plan, with final authority given to the evaluator (p.104). • Online training and coach-to-coach training has been provided for teachers and specialists (p.98) – coupled with online guides and support materials (p.102). • DDOE has considered the special challenges in evaluating non-instructional staff, such as nurses, school psychologists, and counselors, often involved in the support of students with special needs and their teachers.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the documentation suggest that improvements in instructional practice is an expected outcome of DPAS II, explicit plans to ensure that teachers and principals are provided intensive professional development was not evident in the supporting documentation. There is no evidence there is going to be research-based support for all teachers and principals. • Principles 1 and 2 identify instructional practices that are important to DDOE. These practices are not explicitly evaluated in Principle 3. For example, Principle 1 indicated that DDOE has worked extensively with the National Clearinghouse for English Language learners to identify standards for English Learners, as well as the provision of professional development for English as Second Language Coordinators and teachers; however, use of the identified competencies within the needs assessment for English Learners (p. 32) did not appear to be referenced within the evaluation of teacher performance. • Little mention of DPAS II for principals was noted throughout the flexibility request. Review of additional supporting documentation provided more specifics, however an alignment between the teacher and leader evaluation was not readily apparent.]
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a means to evaluate outcomes related to improved teacher and administrator capacity as a result of professional learning would likely validate and strengthen professional development efforts. • Demonstrate the alignment between the professional teaching and principal standards to ensure that the accountability systems for teachers and administrators align. • DDOE should ensure alignment between the instructional practices valued in Principles 1 and 2 and those evaluated under Principle 3.

b. Meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels?

- *Does the SEA incorporate student growth into its performance-level definitions with sufficient weighting to ensure that performance levels will differentiate among teachers and principals who have made significantly different contributions to student growth or closing achievement gaps?*

3.A.ii.b Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPAS II includes four levels of educator and administrator proficiency that includes student growth as one component of the evaluation - with specific requirements that student achievement be weighted as least as high as other components.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE legislation specifies that student improvement be one component of the statewide educator evaluation system weighted at least as high as other components (p.94). • Revisions in the 2010 regulations requiring an educator demonstrate sufficient student growth in order to be rated as effective or highly effective (p.96). • Educators rated as highly effective or effective are not required to have an annual evaluation; however the Student Improvement Component is required to be reviewed annually regardless of performance status (p.97).
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student growth is designated as a specific component; however, questions about the methodology in obtaining and attributing student growth remain. • It is not clear in the supporting documentation whether the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners are included within the “growth” model component of educator evaluation.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the link between Principle 1 and the development of new assessments aligned to the common core and the need to ensure that those new assessments can be used to measure student growth for use in educator evaluations.

- c. Use multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including as a significant factor data on student growth for all students (including English Learners and students with disabilities), and other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous teacher performance standards, teacher portfolios, and student and parent surveys)?
- (i) Does the SEA have a process for ensuring that all measures that are included in determining performance levels are valid measures, meaning measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA?

3.A.ii.c(i) Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE guidelines call for the use of multiple component (with no more than 5) to determine teacher and administrator effectiveness – with one specific component on student growth. DPAS II requires annual evaluations.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE calls for the use of multiple components (with no more than 5), including one specific measure specific to student growth. DPAS II for teachers specifies the following 5 components: 1) Planning and Preparation, 2) Classroom Environment, 3) Instruction; 4) Professional Responsibility. DPAS II for Administrators uses the following 5 components: 1) Vision and Goals, 2) Culture of Learning, 3) Management, 4) Professional Responsibilities, and 5) Student Improvement.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting documentation provides a list of potential evidence (e.g. lesson plans, student knowledge) to inform performance on professional practice; however, it is unclear which measures (e.g. rubric, student survey) will be used to collect data to inform performance.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE might compose an alignment with required components in both DPAS II for educators and administrators to potential measures (e.g. rubric, student surveys) to enhance transparency and clarity. DDOE would do well to incorporate the use of data coaches (included in Principle 1) to assist evaluators and teachers in analyzing and interpreting formal and summative assessment results to identify professional development needs.

- (ii) For grades and subjects in which assessments are required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3), does the SEA define a statewide approach for measuring student growth on these assessments?

3.A.ii.c(ii) Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE provides a state growth model for teachers in grades 4-8 ELA and Math.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state has an existing state growth model for use for teachers of students in tested subjects. • DDOE’s level of involvement in the development and adoption of the CCSS, as well as the associated assessments, positions DDOE to produce valid and reliable student growth data for the purposes of teacher evaluation.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not clear in the supporting documentation whether the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners are included within the “growth” model component of teacher evaluation.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct correlation studies between the growth model results and educator professional practice performance. • Conduct an analysis to determine what effect including students with disabilities and English Learners in the growth model component has on the performance rating of teachers. As new assessments are developed, ensure that the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners are considered to ensure that these student populations are provided equal opportunity to demonstrate performance. • Continue to work with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to ensure that newly developed assessments can be used to measure student growth for the purposes of teacher evaluation. • DDOE would do well to consider how the information gained from the AMO work could guide decisions relative to determining the performance of teachers of English Learners.

- (iii) For grades and subjects in which assessments are not required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3), does the SEA either specify the measures of student growth that LEAs must use or select from or plan to provide guidance to LEAs on what measures of student growth are appropriate, and establish a system for ensuring that LEAs will use valid measures?

3.A.ii.c(iii) Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 4 Yes, 2 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE is working to develop valid and reliable assessments for teachers of students in non-tested subjects and grades. With the collaboration and efforts of local practitioners and national experts and the final approval from the Delaware Technical Advisory Group, DDOE has attempted to establish a process to increase the likelihood of valid and reliable assessments for this significant population of teachers.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE has capitalized on the expertise of local practitioners and national experts to develop a process of measuring growth for students in non-tested subjects and grades. The following examples highlight DDOE's efforts for this significant population of teachers. • With the guidance of Research in Action, over 400 educators contributed to the identification and development of potential assessments that would be valid and reliable as a measure of growth for the purposes of teacher evaluation. The Delaware Technical Advisory Group will provide final approval of these measures, which will later be recommended to the Secretary of Education for final approval (p. 103). • DDOE is also considering measures for the evaluation of Student Instructional Support Personnel (e.g. occupational therapist, nurses, speech, and language pathologist). • Five-day workshop designed by Research in Action would train participants in each content area to develop pre- and post-assessments for each grade level. • Each group is expected to provide test specifications, test blueprints, pre-test, post test, scoring guidelines, and administrative guides. Growth goals are being developed in non-graded subject areas. • External and internal rubrics have been developed to determine the level of rigor and comparability in identified or developed assessments (p. 103).
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supporting documentation indicated that measures of student growth are in development; however, DDOE did not provide specifics in how student growth will be factored into the performance appraisal in the interim, until more specific assessments have been validated and adopted. The development of student growth assessments containing the psychometric properties to ensure validity and reliability is a lengthy process. • There was no specific mention within the application as to if the special challenges in measuring the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners are being considered when developing measures of student growth.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify how teachers will be held accountable for student growth until newly designed assessments have been validated. Conduct research alongside implementation to validate these new or developed measures to ensure they are technically defensible in making human capital decisions. DDOE would do well to consider the special challenges in measuring the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners.

d. Evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis?

3.A.ii.d Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guidelines include the provision of an annual evaluation - with the exception of those teachers and principals identified as highly effective and effective. However, component 5 – measures of student growth – needs to be conducted annually.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures of student growth must be conducted on an annual basis, regardless of performance. Inexperienced school principals and principals who performance appraisal indicates needs improvement and unsatisfactory must participate in an annual appraisal cycle.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None indicated.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None indicated.

- e. Provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development?
- *Will the SEA's guidelines ensure that evaluations occur with a frequency sufficient to ensure that feedback is provided in a timely manner to inform effective practice?*
 - *Are the SEA's guidelines likely to result in differentiated professional development that meets the needs of teachers?*

3.A.ii.e Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 1 Yes, 5 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE specifically indicates that performance results should provide feedback relative to performance and be used to target professional development.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE established the Evaluation Reporting System as a mechanism to support districts and schools to track the performance of teachers. This database can also be used to monitor teacher needs, their participation in professional development, and summative evaluation results.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The request does not address how evaluators would use evaluation results to provide explicit feedback and guidance to teachers. For example, there was no mention of the need to conduct pre- and post-observation conferences.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE might consider providing additional guidance as to the type and frequency of feedback expected during the evaluation cycle. • Consider encouraging peer evaluators so that the burden of conducting evaluations does not rest on few administrators and so that evaluators can be matched according to content and specialty areas. • Consider conducting training with principals and evaluators on how to provide constructive feedback to teachers, particularly having difficult conversations. • Consider having quick, short observations to provide real-time feedback to teachers.

f. Will be used to inform personnel decisions?

3.A.ii.f Panel Response

Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A

Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE has indicated that DPAS II performance results will be used to make human capital decisions. The use of student growth measures in this determination will be waived until measures have been validated and are technically defensible.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE indicated the DPAS II performance results would be made to make human capital decisions. DDOE should be commended for making a concerted effort to ensure the measures were valid and reliable prior to making high-stakes decisions.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None indicated.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate research at the early stages of DPAS implementation so that the measures can be validated and therefore, technically defensible as human capital decisions are made.

3. B Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

3.B Is the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines likely to lead to high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems?

- *Does the SEA have a process for reviewing and approving an LEA's teacher and principal evaluation and support systems to ensure that they are consistent with the SEA's guidelines and will result in the successful implementation of such systems?*
- *Does the SEA have a process for ensuring that an LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems with the involvement of teachers and principals?*
- *Did the SEA describe the process it will use to ensure that all measures used in an LEA's evaluation and support systems are valid, meaning measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA (i.e., process for ensuring inter-rater reliability)?*

- *Does the SEA have a process for ensuring that teachers working with special populations of students, such as students with disabilities and English Learners, are included in the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation and support systems?*
- *Is the SEA's plan likely to be successful in ensuring that LEAs meet the timeline requirements by either (1) piloting evaluation and support systems no later than the 2013–2014 school year and implementing evaluation and support systems consistent with the requirements described above no later than the 2014–2015 school year; or (2) implementing these systems no later than the 2013–2014 school year?*
- *Do timelines reflect a clear understanding of what steps will be necessary and reflect a logical sequencing and spacing of the key steps necessary to implement evaluation and support systems consistent with the required timelines?*
- *Is the SEA plan for providing adequate guidance and other technical assistance to LEAs in developing and implementing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to lead to successful implementation?*
- *Is the pilot broad enough to gain sufficient feedback from a variety of types of educators, schools, and classrooms to inform full implementation of the LEA's evaluation and support systems?*

3.B Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 5 Yes, 1 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE is building off of an existing evaluation system which ensures that it has the structures and systems in place to support LEAs as they roll out this modified evaluation system while they continue to have the challenge of integrating student growth. There is confidence that their existing systems support the roll out of this modified system.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The longevity of DPAS has provided ample opportunity for implementation, reflection, and refinement. • Documentation indicates that DDOE has considered stakeholder input and made modifications accordingly. • DPAS II requires training/certification of evaluators – both online, in person and printed guidelines and resources are available to LEAs. • DDOE has developed the Evaluation Reporting System (ERS) database to allow districts to enter, track, and monitor the status of DPAS II • DDOE offers Developmental Coaches as supports for schools principals. • The level of requirements within DPAS II is differentiated for teachers identified as highly effective and effective. For example, distinguished teachers are not required to have an annual evaluation. This allows for a more strategic use of resources. • DDOE is required to monitor the evaluation process in all LEAs.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supporting documentation did not indicate how the effectiveness of DPASS II for educators and administrators will be determined. • Although the regulations require that DDOE monitor the evaluation process in all LEAs, it is not explicit as to how monitoring will be conducted, as well as the consequences of failure to implement (with fidelity). • Principle 1 includes the provision for data coaches to assist teachers in using, interpreting data to make informed instructional decisions; however, there is no mentioned within Principle 1 or 3 in how these data coaches could be used to influence the professional development needs and offerings for teachers.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE should consider providing a clear description of DPAS II goals and how progress and the supporting data and benchmarks will be established across 1, 3, and 5 years of implementation. • Engage school boards in order to build buy-in, given their role in working with superintendents to make personnel decisions.

Principle 3 Overall Review

If the SEA indicated that it has not developed and adopted all guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by selecting Option A in section 3.A, is the SEA’s plan for the SEA’s and LEAs’ development and implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems comprehensive, coherent, and likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

If the SEA indicated that it has adopted guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with Principle 3 by selecting Option B in section 3.A, are the SEA’s guidelines and the SEA’s process for ensuring, as applicable, LEA development, adoption, piloting, and implementation of evaluation and support systems comprehensive, coherent, and likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

Principle 3 Overall Review Panel Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 4 Yes, 2 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDOE regulations and guidelines establish the basis of a comprehensive plan for evaluating DDOE educators and administrators. Although the student growth component of the evaluation system has not been finalized, DDOE has established a plan to ensure that student growth measures are valid and reliable, and therefore, technically defensible in making human capital decisions.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since initial implementation, DDOE has consistently secured stakeholder input in its design. • State law in 2000 and RTTT grant requirements precipitated modifications and improvements to the Delaware Performance Appraisal System II (DPAS II) – many of which are in direct alignment with RTTT requirements and Principle 3, including (1) student improvement as an explicit component; and (2) definitions of effective teachers and principals. • The longevity of DPAS has provided ample opportunity for implementation, reflection, and refinement. Measures of student growth must be conducted on an annual basis, regardless of performance. • DDOE has considered the special challenges in evaluating non-instructional staff, such as nurses, school psychologists, and counselors, often involved in the support of students with special needs and their teachers. • 2010 regulations have established a safeguard for students, specify that in order for a teacher to be rated as effective and highly effective, the teacher must demonstrate sufficient student growth. • The use of data coaches and development coaches to ensure principals and teachers can use student data and teacher effectiveness data effectively to inform instructional practice. • DDOE regulations differentiate evaluation cycles removing the requirement for an annual evaluation for educators rated as effective – though the student improvement component is still required annually (p.97) • DPAS requires professional development plans and activities for areas rated as unsatisfactory (p.97).

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic communication plan detailing steps to inform the broader school community of district implementation efforts, progress, results, and future plans for implementation may increase the potential for increased stakeholder buy-in. • Student growth is designated as a specific component however questions about the methodology in obtaining and attributing student growth remain. • Little alignment between Principles 1, 2, and 3 was noted throughout the application. As assessments CCSS are developed, DDOE would do well to consider the implications for using those measures to determine student growth for purposes of teacher evaluation. Likewise, student growth is unlikely to be achieved if alignment with the CCSS in curriculum and instructional practice is not completed in a strategic and comprehensive manner. • While the documentation suggest that improvements in instructional practice is an expected outcome of DPAS II, explicit plans to ensure that teachers and administrators are provided intensive professional development was not evident in the supporting documentation. • There was no specific mention within the application as to if the special challenges in measuring the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners are being considered when developing measures of student growth. • The supporting documentation did not indicate how the effectiveness of DPASS II for educators and administrators will be determined. • Little mention of DPAS II for school principals was noted throughout the flexibility request. Review of additional supporting documentation provided more specifics, however an alignment between the teacher and administrator evaluation was not readily apparent.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<p><i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategic communication plan detailing the steps to inform the broader school community of district implementation efforts, progress, results, and future plans for implementation. • Ensure that the strategies and initiatives within Principle 1, 2 and 3 align and work collaboratively and strategically toward the same vision. Academic growth for students is more likely to be achieved if all 3 Principles work cohesively so that all students exit school, college and career ready. For example, ensuring that newly designed assessments can inform the student growth component of the educator evaluation and/or the competencies teachers need in order to address the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners are included within the evaluation framework would strengthen the educational framework of DDOE. • Consider ways to align the professional teaching and leading standards to ensure that the accountability systems for teachers and principals align. • Establish a means to evaluate outcomes related to improved teacher and leader capacity as a result of professional learning would likely validate and strengthen professional development efforts. • Provide a clear description of DPAS II goals and how progress and the supporting data and benchmarks will be established across 1, 3, and 5 years of implementation. • Ensure alignment with required components in both DPAS II for teachers and principals to potential measures (e.g. rubric, student surveys) to enhance transparency and clarity. • Incorporate the use of data coaches (included in Principle 1) to assist evaluators and teachers in analyzing and interpreting formal and summative assessment results to identify professional development needs. • Specify how teachers will be held accountable for student growth until newly designed assessments have been validated. • Conduct research alongside implementation to validate these new or developed measures to ensure they are technically defensible in making human capital decisions. • Consider the special challenges in measuring the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners.

Overall Request Evaluation

Did the SEA provide a comprehensive and coherent approach for implementing the waivers and principles in its request for the flexibility? Overall, is implementation of the SEA’s approach likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

Overall Request Evaluation Panel Response

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE’s Education Plan establishes the vision of each student graduating college- and career-ready, with the freedom to choose his or her life’s course and the state lays out a well-articulated and cohesive plan for the translation of this vision into reality. DDOE has developed a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that is aimed at identifying and supporting schools, administrators and educators in a manner that builds their capacity to improve outcomes for students, close the achievement gap, and improve equality of education for all students. • Political and technical challenges exist around the issues of fairly and comprehensively measuring schools’ and educators’ impact on student academic achievement and growth, especially in light of the proposed consequences attached to such determinations. DDOE will also need to ensure the quality of its implementation, capacity-building efforts and support structures in order to successfully foster systemic and long-lasting changes. The Peers felt that DDOE demonstrated an overall level of thoughtfulness with respect to the complexities of its proposed plans and has identified structures and processes that will facilitate implementation over the next several years. DDOE would do well to develop a plan to continually monitor the progress of the various strands of work, as well a strategic plan to communicate ongoing efforts and changes, in order to increase the level of buy-in and support for continually improving the effectiveness of its systems.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE’s early buy-in, adoption, and transition to the CCSS have set the stage for success. The incorporation of the CCSS framework into DDOE’s P-20 System provides cohesion. • Student Success Plans are personalized and track courses to ensure that all students graduate with a plan for entering the workforce or college. An Early Warning System indicates the need for intervention. • Grade Band Extensions (GBEs) for English Language Arts and mathematics provide rigorous standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Understanding by Design and Learning Focused frameworks were the basis for development of model differentiated lessons to address various learning styles and abilities, and to promote the inclusion of and achievement of students with disabilities and English Learners in general education content and environment. • DDOE has provided comprehensive professional development and curriculum lesson modules in a variety of formats to all educators including English Learners and students with disabilities teachers, principals and other educators. It has also identified and trained data coaches and development coaches to ensure that teachers and principals can develop and implement lessons and assessments, and use the resulting student data and teacher effectiveness data effectively to inform and improve instructional practices. • The state has developed clear criteria to identify schools by performance levels, and a clearly articulated plan to provide LEAs and schools with supports that reflect best practices (e.g., instructional walk-through, RTI practices, behavior supports etc.). The school accountability framework is bolstered by state policy that grants DDOE authority to hold LEAs and schools accountable, such as through the ability of DDOE take over low-performing schools. • Changes to Delaware’s state laws in 2000 and its subsequent application for RTTT supports precipitated modifications and improvements to the Delaware Performance Appraisal System II (DPAS II), many of which are directly aligned with Principle 3, including the requirement that in order for teachers to be rated as effective or highly effective, they must demonstrate sufficient levels of student growth in addition to high levels of professional practice. • The State’s collaborative partnerships will help to drive the many elements of implementation toward a successful result.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of specificity in implementing supports and interventions. Does not address potential barriers to effective implementation (e.g. complexity of implementing a high-quality RTI model and changing the practices that have been implemented in prior years to improve their effectiveness). • Some peers felt that it was not clear how the State will ensure that LEAs and schools have the tools they need to build capacity within schools and among educators and principals to ensure success for all students. • While the documentation suggests that improvement in instructional practice is an expected outcome of all initiatives undertaken under Principles 1, 2 and 3, explicit plans to ensure that all teachers and administrators are provided intensive, on-going, high-quality, job-embedded professional development were not always evident in the supporting documentation. • Evaluation of professional development to determine effectiveness is an essential component that is not addressed. • Unclear how state will hold various support personnel (e.g., coaches) accountable for performance. Given their prominence in the model, developing robust systems to recruit, select, induct, support, and evaluate would increase positive impact of these reform actors. • The peers all expressed concerns over the State’s proposed use of combined subgroups for the purpose of identifying reward and recognition schools, concluding that the construct introduces too much risk of masking the performance of individual subgroups and diminishing accountability for at-risk groups. • Student growth is designated as a specific component in educator evaluations; however questions about the methodology proposed to obtain and attribute student growth remain. • There was no specific mention within the application as to if the special challenges in measuring the growth of students with disabilities and English Learners are being considered when developing measures of student growth.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDOE’s aggressive timeline to implement the system reflects the urgency to address low-performance but this must be balanced with the need to set realistic goals to achieve systemic change. • Develop a strategic communication plan to ensure that stakeholders, including parents and school boards are informed of the changes made as a result of this flexibility request • Ensure that the strategies and initiatives within Principle 1, 2 and 3 align and work collaboratively and strategically toward the same vision. Academic growth for students is more likely to be achieved if all 3 Principles work cohesively so that all students exit school, college and career ready. Ensuring that newly designed assessments are valid for measuring student growth for the purposes of evaluation; or that the competencies that teachers need to address the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners are included within the teacher evaluation framework, can only serve to strengthen the educational framework that DDOE is proposing. • Ensure alignment of training and roll-out across the Principles. • Provide technical assistance to districts to fully implement a process to evaluate the quality, depth, and effectiveness of professional development and ensure the fidelity of implementation. • Demonstrate the alignment between the professional teacher and principal standards to ensure that the accountability systems for teachers and principals align. • Provide a clear description of all DPAS II goals and develop a strategic evaluation plan to evaluate how progress towards those goals (including supporting data and benchmarks) will be measured across 1, 3, and 5 years of implementation. • Consider the special challenges involved in measuring the academic growth of students with disabilities and English Learners, and incorporating such measures into the DPAS II framework.