

# ESEA Flexibility

## Peer Panel Notes



**State Request:** Mississippi

**Date:** 3/27/2012

## 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 Peer Response**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 6 Yes, 0 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA consulted with many stakeholder groups including teachers and their representatives (p. 8).
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA actively sought input into the flexibility request from teachers and their representatives: the waiver information was posted on the SEA's website, a dedicated email address for stakeholders to provide input was created, a series of Town Hall type meetings where the input was collected via the feedback forms were conducted throughout the State, several webinars were conducted (p. 8, Attachment 2).</li> <li>• As a result of SEA's consultation with a variety of stakeholder groups, changes were made to the SEA's request (p. 9). These addressed ways to simplify the teacher appraisal system, procedures for identifying and providing incentives to the reward schools, interventions needed to make quality improvements as well as resources needed to implement those.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apart from the engagement associated with the teacher evaluation rubric in principle 3, the consultation consisted primarily of notice and comment and did not engage educators in actual design activity.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	None.

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 Peer Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 5 Yes, 1 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	Although, the SEA consulted with a diverse mix of stakeholder groups no evidence of consultation with groups representing English Learners is provided (p.10).
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from parents and community representatives was collected via a survey (p. 10, attachment 2).</li> <li>• The SEA consulted with the Special Education Advisory Council (p. 10).</li> <li>• Roundtable discussion with invited representatives from the NAACP, Southern Echo, Mississippi Economic Council, Children's Defense Fund, Southern Poverty Law Center, Mississippi Center for Educational Innovation, Mississippi Association of Educators, Parents for Public Schools, and Mississippi Parent Teacher Association regarding the waiver application was held in December 2011, and the follow-up roundtable – in February 2012 were conducted.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of consultation with groups representing English Learners is provided.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>

## 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 Peer Response, Part A

*Tally of Peer Responses: 4 Yes, 2 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The overall plan for the implementation of the CCSS complies with the required timeline.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA adopted the CCSS not only in English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, but also in Literacy in History/Social Sciences, Science, and Technical Subjects (p. 16).</li> <li>• The implementation timeline is realistic (p. 17).</li> <li>• Practitioners’ response to the implementation of the common core standards is positive (p. 17).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted a outreach and information dissemination campaign to provide various stakeholders including the Mississippi Special Education Parent Advisory Council with information on adoption of the CCSS (p. 24)</li> <li>• The SEA’s Education Achievement Council, which includes the SEA and IHEs provides a strong connection between K-12 and college. The SEA conducted training for 200 higher education faculty on CCSS (p. 25).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted an alignment study with the Southeast Comprehensive Center, finding good alignment between the existing and CCSS ELA standards, but significantly more CCSS rigor compared to the existing to mathematics standards in earlier grades (p. 18).</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “barriers” to implementation are actually goals (p.13). The barriers to reaching those goals certainly exist, but they are not listed.</li> <li>• No evidence of disseminating information on the adoption of the CCSS to the representatives of English Learners is provided.</li> <li>• There were no steps identified to realign teacher preparation programs in the State to conform to the CCSS.</li> <li>• The SEA did not provide sufficient information about the instructional material’s development to determine whether they are meant to be used for all students.</li> <li>• The English Language Proficiency (ELP) training appeared to focus on teachers, but did not mention parallel principal training on scaffolding of academic language instruction.</li> <li>• The SEA has decided not to upgrade its State assessments or change its cut scores during the transition to PARCC, and the relatively high rates of proficiency statewide, particularly in math, suggest that some interim realignment is desirable (pp. 36-37, 49, and addendum 1).</li> <li>• Apart from Advanced Placement (AP), the college and career programs described by the SEA provide no indication on how many students are getting the benefit of the programs; some information on AP participation is provided, but no information on AP success is furnished, and there appears to be no coherent statewide strategy for maximizing access for students to these programs (p. 31-35).</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should consider increasing the rigor of at least the State math assessments or increasing the cut score to more closely approximate college and career readiness in advance of PARCC.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider articulating a coherent plan with integrated components that LEAs and schools could follow in implementing CCSS. Examples to consider are the plans of KY, LA, and IL.</li> </ul>

**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?

**1.B Peer Response, Part B**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 1 Yes, 5 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA’s plan is not likely to lead to all students being provided with access to the high-quality learning content aligned with the new standards.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA conducted an alignment study of the current standards with the common core standards. As a result, it was found that the alignment in mathematics was the weakest, so more time was allocated for the implementation of the common core standards in mathematics (p. 18). The Southeast Development Laboratory (SEDL) has developed videos for each grade level on the CCSS in Mathematics.</li> <li>• The SEA in cooperation with the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) will analyze the linguistic demands of the common core standards to inform the development of the corresponding ELP standards (p. 19).</li> <li>• The SEA analyzed the accommodation necessary for the students with disabilities to achieve to the new standards (p. 20).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted a significant outreach campaign to disseminate information on the new standards (p. 24).</li> <li>• Professional development focused on preparing teachers to instruct all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities, to the new standards, use instructional materials aligned to those standards, use data on multiple measures of student performance was conducted (p. 25).</li> <li>• Train-the-trainers model used by the SEA is educationally sensible (p. 26).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted both in-person and online sessions providing an overview of the CCSS as well as the two-day training seminars to school administrators to prepare them for providing leadership for a successful implementation of the CCSS.</li> <li>• The use of the iTunes U as a communication center for professional development (p. 28-29) for teachers including the teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities is an interesting and promising idea.</li> <li>• The description of the pathways to success is comprehensive (p.32). The implementation is sound combining high academic standards with career exploration.</li> <li>• The SEA increasing the rigor of its assessment system (p. 36) with the full implementation of the PARCC scheduled for the 2015-16 (p. 17).</li> <li>• The SEA as a member of WIDA is committed to the development of the ELP standards and assessments aligned with the CCSS (p. 20).</li> <li>• The SEA is developing a new alternate assessment for students with disabilities, which will give students more opportunities to demonstrate that they can learn content aligned with the CCSS.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results of the study regarding the graduation rate of AP students can be easily misinterpreted: they should not be used as a justification to push students who are not yet ready to enroll in the AP courses (p.30). The enrollment proportions are presented, but the AP outcomes are omitted.</li> <li>• The timeline for the implementation of the ELP standards and assessments is not provided.</li> <li>• The attention to English Learners and students with disabilities in the CCSS transition that is described in the flexibility request focuses mainly on developing new standards (ELP) and assessments (ELP and alternate), but includes no discussion of curriculum and instructional supports for teachers with English Learners and students with disabilities in their classrooms (pp. 19-23, 26-27, 29).</li> <li>• The SEA does not present a coherent plan with integrated components that LEAs and schools could follow in implementing CCSS.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should consider articulating a coherent plan with integrated components that LEAs and schools could follow in implementing CCSS. Examples to consider are KY, LA, IL.</li> <li>• The SEA should ensure in-depth follow-up of the findings of the alignment study of high school courses to ensure successful implementation of the CCSS at the high school level.</li> </ul>

## 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 Peer Response**

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

*Tally of Peer Responses:*

<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 Peer Response

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"> <li>• The overall plan for the implementation of the CCSS complies with the required timeline.</li> <li>• The SEA's proposed plan of implementation of the new standards is comprehensive. It will likely lead to all students being provided with access to the high-quality learning content aligned with the new standards.</li> </ul>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The timeline for the implementation of the CCSS is realistic (p.17).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted an outreach and information dissemination campaign to provide various stakeholders including the Mississippi Special Education Parent Advisory Council with information on adoption of the CCSS (p. 24).</li> <li>• The SEA's Education Achievement Council, which includes the SEA and IHEs offers a strong connection between K-12 and college. The SEA conducted training for 200 higher education faculty on CCSS (p. 25).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted an alignment study of the current standards with the common core standards. As a result, it was found that the alignment in mathematics was the weakest, so more time was allocated for the implementation of the common core standards in mathematics (p. 18). SEDL has developed videos for each grade level on the CCSS in mathematics.</li> <li>• The SEA in cooperation with WIDA will analyze the linguistic demands of the common core standards to inform the development of the corresponding ELP standards (p. 19).</li> <li>• The SEA analyzed the accommodation necessary for the students with disabilities to achieve to the new standards (p. 20).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted a significant outreach campaign to disseminate information on the new standards (p. 24).</li> <li>• Professional development focused on preparing teachers to instruct all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities, to the new standards, use instructional materials aligned to those standards, use data on multiple measures of student performance was conducted (p. 25).</li> <li>• Train-the-trainers model used by the SEA is educationally sensible (p. 26).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted both in-person and online sessions providing an overview of the CCSS as well as the two-day training seminars to school administrators to prepare them for providing leadership for a successful implementation of the CCSS.</li> <li>• The use of the iTunes U as a communication center for professional development (p. 28-29) for teachers including the teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities is an interesting and promising idea.</li> <li>• The description of the pathways to success (p. 32) is comprehensive. Their implementation is a sound idea combining high academic standards with career exploration.</li> <li>• The SEA increasing the rigor of its assessment system (p. 36) with the full implementation of the PARCC scheduled for the 2015-16 (p. 17).</li> <li>• The SEA as a member of WIDA is committed to the development of the ELP standards and assessments aligned with the CCSS (p. 20).</li> <li>• The SEA is developing a new alternate assessment for students with disabilities, which will give students more opportunities to demonstrate that they can learn content aligned with the CCSS.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The timeline for the implementation of the ELP standards and assessments is not provided.</li> <li>• The attention to English Learners and students with disabilities in the CCSS transition that is described in the request focuses mainly on developing new standards (ELP) and assessments (ELP and alternate), but includes no discussion of curriculum and instructional supports for teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities in their classrooms (pp. 19-23, 26-27, 29).</li> <li>• No evidence of disseminating information on the adoption of the CCSS to the representatives of English Learners is provided</li> <li>• The ELP training appeared to focus on teachers, but did not mention parallel principal training on scaffolding of academic language instruction.</li> <li>• The SEA does not present a coherent plan with integrated components that LEAs and schools could follow in implementing CCSS.</li> <li>• There were no steps identified to realign teacher preparation programs in the State to conform to the CCSS.</li> <li>• The SEA did not provide sufficient information about the instructional material's development to determine whether they are meant to be used for all students.</li> <li>• The SEA has decided not to upgrade its State assessments or change its cut scores during the transition to PARCC, and the relatively high rates of proficiency statewide, particularly in math, suggest that some interim realignment is desirable (pp. 36-37, 49, and addendum 1).</li> <li>• Apart from AP, the college and career programs described by the SEA provide no indication on how many students are getting the benefit of the programs; some information on AP participation is provided, but no information on AP success is furnished; and there appears to be no coherent statewide strategy for maximizing access for students to these programs (p. 31-35).</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should consider increasing the rigor of at least the State math assessments or increasing the cut score to more closely approximate college and career readiness in advance of PARCC.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider articulating a coherent plan with integrated components that LEAs and schools could follow in implementing CCSS. Examples to consider are the plans of KY, LA, and IL.</li> </ul>

## 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 Peer Response

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA did not propose a differentiated system and high-quality implementation plan that is likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students. The SEA proposed to use an existing State system for evaluating schools based on an achievement status index coupled with very modest consequences that potentially apply to most schools and to subgroup achievement and an undeveloped system of support. The proposed system does not yet reflect high-quality and coherence.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA's proposed use of a status-based Quality of Distribution Index (QDI<sub>o</sub>) as the measure of overall school and LEA achievement, and the comparison of the within-school and within-LEA gaps (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>) could be a valuable component of a differentiated accountability system (pp. 42-43, Attachment 8).</li> <li>• The proportions of the traditional ESEA subgroups within the lowest performance groups are calculated and reported, which could enable the SEA to diagnose needs and target interventions to these students (p. 46).</li> <li>• The SEA acknowledges that financial incentives to schools and LEAs are desirable (p. 46).</li> <li>• Providing staff in high-performing schools an opportunity to serve on councils of excellence is a thoughtful teacher incentive.</li> <li>• Asking stakeholders to help design meaningful incentives (p. 46) is a promising idea.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<p><i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The statewide system of support (SSOS) is being designed and is not yet functional. It is not clear from the request whether the SSOS, once created, will be able to provide necessary support to schools and LEAs.</li> <li>• The SEA proposes a compensatory index that may mask poor performance by some students in two ways:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awarding points for non-proficient students (e.g. basic), together with awarding substantial extra points for advanced achievement, could result in a school with substantial numbers of students performing below proficiency meeting the SEA’s target of 200 points. One panel member disagreed that this was a weakness.</li> <li>○ It appears that the student scores on math, English language arts (ELA), and science assessments included in the accountability system are used in the calculation of the one overall QDI index score, leaving the potential for a school improving on the overall index even though the performance of students in one or more particular subject areas is slipping. This is particularly of concern because the State’s students appear to perform somewhat better on science assessments than on the other core subjects (p. 49).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There are no consequences tied to subgroup achievement beyond public reporting.</li> <li>• There is no longitudinal growth model in place although one is proposed. The majority of the panel was particularly concerned, especially with the absence of a growth model, with the proposal to award points for basic achievement even for students who have remained at the basic level or who have fallen from the proficient level.</li> <li>• As discussed in more detail in the comments to 2.D-2.G, the system of support is not yet developed.</li> <li>• The incentives created by the QDI achievement status index are unlikely to be effective in closing achievement gaps. The approach will promote a continued focus on students on the cusp of proficiency rather than a focus on sustained high growth rates that will close gaps. Moreover, the information furnished does not translate easily to actual proficiency levels for different groups of students that could be used to inform diagnostics and improvement planning.</li> <li>• The recognition system is undeveloped and early-stage as evidenced by the description on p.46.</li> <li>• Because there are no consequences (apart from public reporting) for any outcomes other than being designated as a priority or focus school the majority of schools will have little incentive to continue improving their students’ achievement.</li> <li>• In the absence of strong incentives for schools other than avoiding priority or focus status, the emphasis within school gaps between the top and bottom 25% in determining consequences (focus school designation) could have the unintended effects of (1) leading schools to minimize the achievement of their top 25% or (2) concentrating poor performing students in the same school. One panel member disagrees on treating this as a weakness.</li> <li>• There is no mention of specific supports for educators of students with disabilities and English Learners in all classrooms.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider using other ways to reward or recognize schools for helping students to attain advanced status that do not compensate for non-proficient students in the QDI.</li><li>• Consider including the attainment of proficiency by members of each ESEA subgroup achievement, as well as by the “all students” group, in the QDI.</li><li>• Consider creating a tiered set of consequential incentives that encourage schools to move up a “ladder” of improvement by having more and more of their students, especially members of ESEA subgroups, attaining proficiency and high longitudinal growth rates every year.</li></ul>

- 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 Peer Response**

*Tally of Peer Responses: Yes 1, No 5*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA’s accountability system does not yet provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all LEAs in the State and for all Title I schools in those LEAs. The proposed system has a number of strengths and weaknesses as described below.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA’s proposed use of a status-based index (QDI<sub>o</sub>) as the measure of the overall achievement, and the comparison of the within-school and within-LEA gaps (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>) could be a valuable component of a differentiated accountability system (pp. 42-43, Attachment 8).</li> <li>• The proportions of the traditional ESEA subgroups within the lowest performance groups are calculated and reported, allowing for targeted interventions to be provided (p. 46).</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA proposes a compensatory index that may mask poor performance by some students in two ways:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awarding points for non-proficient students (e.g., basis), together with awarding substantial extra points for advanced achievement, could result in a school with substantial numbers of students performing below proficiency meeting the SEA’s target of 200 points. One panel member disagreed that this was a weakness.</li> <li>○ It appears that the student scores on math, English language arts (ELA), and science assessments included in the accountability system are used in the calculation of the overall QDI index score, potentially allowing a school to improve on the overall index even if the performance of students in one or more particular subject areas is slipping. This is a particular concern because the State’s students appear to perform somewhat better on science assessments than on the other core subjects (p. 49).</li> <li>○ There are no consequences tied to subgroup achievement beyond public reporting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There is no longitudinal growth model in place although one is proposed. The majority of the panel was particularly concerned, especially with the absence of a growth model, with the proposal to award points for basic achievement for students who have not made any progress in improving their academic achievement, or even for those who may have lost ground (i.e., students who have remained at the basic level or fallen from the proficient level).</li> <li>• There is little meaningful differentiated accountability for most schools, given the absence of consequences for all but priority and focus schools.</li> <li>• The statewide system of support (SSOS) is under design and not yet in place; consequently, it is not clear from the request whether the SSOS will be able to provide necessary support to schools and LEAs.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider reducing the minimum “n-size” to 20 or changing the definition of the lowest and highest performance groups in the schools to include the upper and lower thirds of the distribution (instead of quartiles).</li> <li>• Consider using other ways to reward or recognize schools for helping students to attain advanced status that do not compensate for non-proficient students in the QDI.</li> <li>• Consider including the attainment of proficiency by members of each ESEA subgroup achievement, as well as by the “all students” group, in the QDI.</li> <li>• Consider separately weighting outcomes on math, ELA, and science assessments, and consider giving less weight to science outcomes.</li> <li>• Consider eliminating the point values for non-proficient achievement from the QDI.</li> </ul>

- 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 Peer Response***Tally of Peer Responses: Yes 0, No 6*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system does not create meaningful incentives or provide support that is likely to be effective in closing achievement gaps for all subgroups of students. The proposed system includes some strengths, as well as substantial weaknesses, that are described below.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA acknowledges that financial incentives to schools and LEAs are desirable (p. 46) but currently lacks funding to implement such incentives.</li> <li>• Providing staff in high-performing school an opportunity to serve on councils of excellence is a thoughtful teacher incentive.</li> <li>• Asking stakeholders to help design meaningful incentives (p. 46) is a promising idea.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The incentives created by the QDI achievement status index are unlikely to be effective in closing achievement gaps. The approach will promote a continued focus on students on the cusp of proficiency rather than encouraging sustained high growth rates that will close gaps. Moreover, the information furnished does not translate easily to actual proficiency levels for different groups of students that could be used to inform diagnostics and improvement planning.</li> <li>• An accreditation system is alluded to (p.47) but is not described.</li> <li>• The recognition system is undeveloped and early stage as evidenced by the description on p.46.</li> <li>• The support system appears to be in an early stage of development. The SEA will be convening stakeholders to serve on a SSOS Roundtable to determine how to coordinate support services with a unified delivery system (p.47).</li> <li>• Because there are no consequences (apart from public reporting) for any outcomes other than being designated as a priority or focus school the majority of schools will have little incentive to continue improving their students' achievement.</li> <li>• In the absence of strong incentives for schools other than avoiding priority or focus status, the emphasis within-school gaps between the top and bottom 25% in determining consequences (focus school designation) could have the unintended effects of (1) leading schools to minimize the achievement of their top 25% or (2) concentrating poor-performing students in the same school. One panel member disagreed that this was a weakness.</li> <li>• There is no mention of specific supports for general and special educators of students with disabilities and English Learners.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider creating a tiered set of consequential incentives that encourage schools to move up a “ladder” of improvement by having more and more of their students, especially members of ESEA subgroups, attaining proficiency every year.</li> <li>• In the process of developing a support system consider the examples provided by other SEAs (e.g., Illinois and Louisiana).</li> <li>• Provide more clarity on the role of the Office of Instructional Enhancement in developing and implementing a statewide system of support.</li> </ul>

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.B.

**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 or 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 PEER RESPONSE**

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

*Tally of Peer Responses: 1 Yes, 5 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's implied weighting of ELA, mathematics, and science assessments does not result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve the State's college- and career-ready standards.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apart from concerns stated below, the inclusion of science assessments can add to the rigor of the SEA's accountability system.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific weighting scheme is described. Instead all assessment results will be mapped onto the overall distribution (p. 240 in the Attachments). The QDI<sub>o</sub> and QDI<sub>A</sub> accountability indices are then calculated based on that overall distribution.</li> <li>• Given the possibility that science assessments will be weighted equally in the grades in which they are administered, and given the evidence that outcomes on science assessments tend to be higher than for other core subjects, there is a concern that including science assessments could weaken the rigor of the accountability system.</li> <li>• It appears that the student scores on math, English language arts (ELA), and science statewide assessments included in the accountability system are used in the calculation of the one overall QDI index score, potentially allowing a school to improve on the overall index even if the performance of students in one or more particular subject areas is slipping. This is a particular concern because the State's students appear to perform somewhat better in science than in the other core subjects (p. 49).</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject specific AMOs should be expressed in actual percentages of proficient and advanced students.</li> </ul>

**2.B Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives**

**2.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?

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

**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) Peer Response**

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

Tally of Peer Responses: 1 Yes, 5 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<p>The SEA did not describe an educationally sound rationale for its AMOs. The SEA proposes to use achievement status and graduation rate AMOs for all students and a combined subgroup. The AMOs would be based on the SEA's Quality of Distribution Index (QDI), an index that weights basic, proficient, and advanced achievement into an index that can total 300 points. An index would be created for all students, highest-achieving students, lowest-achieving students, and a gap QDI calculated by subtracting the index scores for the highest- and lowest-achieving groups. While several strengths were identified, the AMOs are unlikely to result in significant numbers of students being on track to college and career readiness.</p>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed AMOs will require the lowest-performing subgroup to improve its academic achievement at a higher rate than required for the “all students” group, thus providing an incentive to reduce achievement gaps.</li> <li>• The proposed AMOs will require the lowest-performing schools and LEAs to demonstrate higher rates of improvement.</li> <li>• In the opinion of one panel member the proposed State-level AMOs for all ESEA subgroup are ambitious.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AMOs for the highest-performing schools will not require any growth in QDI for the “all students” group (p. 53).</li> <li>• The proposal asserts that the status-based AMOs provide all of the information necessary for implementing an accurate and reliable accountability model established by the waiver guidance. This is simply not the case. The model must be useful for targeting support and providing complete information to educators and the public and work as a coherent part of a differentiated system of support and intervention</li> <li>• An educationally sound rationale was not provided for the proposed AMOs. The complexity of the method for setting AMOs (described on p. 52) decreases the face validity of the evidence and diminishes its value for public and educator engagement in the results. The point targets for 2012 to 2017 do not easily translate into percentages of students proficient for all students and by disaggregated group or to college and career readiness.</li> <li>• In addition, maintaining the minimum “n-size” of 40 and using the school’s “bottom 25%” subgroup in a State where a substantial number of schools have highly concentrated populations of poor-performing students means that a majority of the members of the ESEA subgroups are excluded from this definition. One panel member disagreed that this was a weakness.</li> <li>• A growth model, which could strengthen the proposal, remains in an exploration stage with the intent to use it in the differentiated system (p.43).</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider increasing the value of QDI set as the goal for the higher performing schools and LEAs.</li> <li>• Consider decreasing the minimum “n-size” to 20.</li> </ul>

## 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

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA proposes to use the QDI index to identify the top 20% or 25% of schools in High Performing or High Progress (change in status). All but one panel member expressed substantial concerns about the educational soundness of the methodology proposed to identify reward schools. The SEA provided no listing of the actual proficiency levels or the size of the achievement gaps of the schools identified expressed as differences in proficiency levels nor how the proposed growth model the SEA intends to use will factor into determinations of reward schools. The panel's concern is that the actual proficiency of students in these schools will be too low to be exemplars for others and to provide incentives to improve the achievement of low-performing populations.
<i>Strengths</i>	None.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	None.
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	None.

*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? 2ci

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

### 2.C.iii PEER RESPONSE

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recognition system is under development and consultation with the field under development as well. The nature of the measurement system and early stage of recognition system does not make it possible to state that the system is likely to be meaningful by the schools.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA acknowledges that financial incentives to schools and LEAs are desirable (p. 46)..</li> <li>• The SEA has a board-approved method to provide monetary rewards to Title I schools based on their meeting AMOs for two consecutive years or reducing the within-school achievement gap.</li> <li>• Providing staff in high-performing school an opportunity to serve on councils of excellence is a thoughtful teacher incentive.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reward system is under development. The request contains little information on the composition of the stakeholder groups that will be involved.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure broad representation from stakeholders (parents, students, educators and their representatives, the business community, school leaders and their representatives) in the consultation process used to design the reward system.</li> </ul>

## 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)) Peer Response**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions to be implemented in its priority schools nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented. For this reason, the SEA's proposal does not ensure that the priority schools will adhere to all turnaround principles.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each of the priority schools either has a 3-year action plan (SIG schools) or will have to develop one with the participation of the community-based council (p. 57, 62). Funds will be provided to the non-SIG priority schools.</li> <li>• The SEA states that it will focus on practices in line with the turnaround principles (p. 57).</li> <li>• SIG monitoring processes will be used for all priority schools (p. 75), likely enhancing the monitoring of the school improvement efforts.</li> <li>• The SEA is developing an online data system (Indistar) that has potential to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of school improvement efforts (p. 61).</li> <li>• The SEA will have implementation specialists who will be visiting priority schools and districts and providing on-site technical assistance (p. 62).</li> <li>• The school leadership team at each priority school will establish 3-year performance targets with leading and lacking indicators that will be used to assess annual progress (p. 62).</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the SEA provides an extensive list of indicators to measure school and LEA progress toward meeting the turnaround principles, this does not ensure adherence to all of the principles. Descriptions of aggressive interventions in schools and districts commensurate to long-term leadership and governance problems and the SEA’s role and authority in bringing them about are not provided. For example, (1) the “replace principal” Federal turnaround criterion is itself replaced by a definition of criteria for assessing the principal’s performance without any commitment to removing principals who are not capable of effectively leading a turnaround; (2) the effective teachers criterion does not include any steps to remove poor-performing teachers (p. 58); (3) there is little focus on true flexibility for principals leading turnaround schools (p. 60); and (4) there are insufficient steps to establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline.</li> <li>• There is a confusing array of standards that applies to priority schools, and it is unclear how they fit together and who will use them to monitor school progress and how often monitoring will occur. There are 11 criteria and more sub-criteria at pp. 58-61, as well as the 4 criteria in the Turnaround attachment (Attachment 8b at p. 269), annual leading and achieving (lagging) goals at pp. 62-63, and a separate set of exit criteria (p. 64).</li> <li>• The SEA request states that multiple offices will support intervention implementation. This may lead to a lack of coordination among the various offices.</li> <li>• The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions to be implemented in its priority schools nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented.</li> <li>• The SEA fails to specify any consequences for schools and LEAs for failure to improve.</li> <li>• There is no recognition of students in special populations in the turnaround strategies.</li> <li>• The Indistar monitoring and support system is not yet in operation and there is no timeline for its development.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a set of criteria for selection of proven interventions that are consistent with all turnaround principles, focused on the specific needs of struggling learners, and could lead to the improvement of all students including English Learners and students with disabilities.</li> <li>• Create an implementation plan for the selected interventions.</li> <li>• Ensure proper monitoring of the implementation plan.</li> <li>• Specify consequences for schools that persist in priority status over time.</li> <li>• Benchmark the practices of States with well-established systems of intervening in priority schools (e.g., Louisiana and Kentucky).</li> </ul>

- 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)) Peer Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's request is not likely to result in dramatic, systemic change in priority schools. The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions to be implemented in its priority schools nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented. In addition, the SEA's proposal does not ensure that the priority schools will adhere to all turnaround principles.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA's online system, currently under development, has a potential for coordinating and streamlining the school improvement process (p. 61) and making available research-based resources to priority schools..</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA request states that multiple offices will support intervention implementation without providing any any assurance that such efforts will be coordinated.</li> <li>• The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions that are focused on the specific needs of all struggling learners, including English Learners and students with disabilities, to be implemented in its priority schools nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented.</li> <li>• The SEA does not specify any consequences for schools and LEAs persistently failing to improve.</li> <li>• See also weaknesses identified in 2.D.iii.a</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a set of criteria for selection of proven interventions that are consistent will all turnaround principles, focused on the specific needs of struggling learners, and could lead to the improvement of all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities.</li> <li>• Create an implementation plan for the selected interventions.</li> <li>• Ensure proper monitoring of the implementation plan.</li> <li>• See also suggestions identified in 2.D.iii.a</li> </ul>

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 Peer Response

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA failed to provide a timeline.
<i>Strengths</i>	None.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the indicators for monitoring struggling schools will be available through Indistar, the non-SIG priority schools could delay the implementation of the turnaround principles to the first two years of the minimally required three-year intervention period. On that ground SEA fails to ensure that LEAs will implement meaningful interventions in their priority schools.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a timeline to 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.</li> <li>Consider steps to ensure the timeline distributes 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.</li> </ul>

**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 PEER RESPONSE

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's criteria may not ensure that schools that exit priority status have made significant progress in improving student achievement.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The support to schools that exit the priority status will continue for three more years. This will likely assure the sustainability of school improvement.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exit criteria do not specify whether 2-years of substantial improvement on QDI will be required or define what constitutes sufficient improvement.</li> <li>• The exit criteria required only 6 of 9 leading interim indicators and 50% of achievement indicators be met (pp. 63-64).</li> <li>• It is unclear that priority schools will be required to fully implement the turnaround principles after exit and whether they will in all cases be subject to the turnaround principles for at least three years.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should include student growth rates from its forthcoming growth percentile model (being developed for the SEA's teacher evaluation system) as a leading indicator of improvement for use in identifying priority schools and as a criterion for priority school exit.</li> </ul>

**2.E Focus Schools**

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

- 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 Peer Response**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 1 Yes, 5 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA methodology for identifying focus schools is not educationally sound and likely to ensure that schools are accountable for the performance of subgroups of students. The proposal includes significant weaknesses that, for most peers, outweigh its strengths.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The comprehensive needs assessment to be conducted in focus schools is a sound idea.</li> <li>• Although the definition of focus schools is not based directly on the measures of the achievement gap for the traditional ESEA subgroups, using student achievement data for the lowest-performing subgroup will, in some cases, identify schools with large persistent gaps and schools with very low-performing students.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The definition of focus schools could result in the identification of schools that do not have the largest achievement gaps in the state because schools with large concentrations of poorly performing students will have minimal gaps between their top and bottom 25% of students, and yet will not fall in the category of schools with the lowest-performing bottom 20% of students.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider supplementing the proposed criteria for focus schools with criteria that base focus school designation on achievement gaps between the ESEA subgroups in each school and the statewide average performance of all students or of high-performing subgroups.</li> </ul>

**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 Peer Response**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The request does not provide sufficient detail on how the interventions will be determined, implemented and supported. The SEA has not 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. The SEA has not 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).
<i>Strengths</i>	None.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The request does not specify whether the intervention in focus schools will start in accordance with the required timeline.</li> <li>• The SEA request states that multiple offices will support intervention implementation (p. 66), but does not provide any assurance that these efforts will be coordinated.</li> <li>• No specific interventions addressing the needs of English Learners or students with disabilities are discussed.</li> <li>• There is no definition of the recommended components of the school improvement plans, including interim measures of progress.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should review the approved requests of Florida and Massachusetts for examples of well-developed plans for focus schools.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider identifying and including in its focus school strategy specific research-based interventions appropriate for closing achievement gaps and sensitive to the grade-span of the school and particular populations of students.</li> </ul>

**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 PEER RESPONSE**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's focus school exit criteria may not ensure that schools that exit focus status have made significant progress in improving student achievement, are not educationally sound (p. 67), and are not likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schools exiting focus status will continue receiving support for one additional year. This will likely help sustain the educational improvement.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exit criteria do not specify how many years of substantial improvement on QDI will be required or define what constitutes sufficient improvement and sufficient narrowing of gaps.</li> <li>• The SEA does not to specify any consequences for schools and LEAs persistently failing to improve.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish exit criteria that specify how many years of substantial improvement on QDI will be required and define what constitutes sufficient improvement and sufficient narrowing of gaps to merit exiting focus status.</li><li>• Specify consequences for schools and LEAs persistently failing to improve.</li></ul>

## 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 Peer Response

Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA’s request does not provide information regarding the system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for other Title I schools. It is not clear how these other schools will be identified. As a result, the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is unlikely to 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.
<i>Strengths</i>	None.
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the absence of consequences or substantial rewards attached to the SEA’s AMOs and other measures, apart from public reporting, the SEA’s accountability system exerts little influence on schools other than those few at risk of being designated as priority schools (5% of schools) or focus schools (10%). It also removes the prior NCLB incentive created for schools where subgroups were not reaching AYP. The result may be to give schools less of an incentive than exists today to improve the achievement of low-performing students, including students with disabilities, English Learners, and members of other ESEA subgroups.</li> <li>• The only intervention mentioned for schools other than priority and focus schools is a vague reference to a plan to introduce “professional learning communities” statewide (p. 74).</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider developing a meaningful and iterative annual planning process that engages all schools in a well-structured examination of evidence, root-cause analysis of performance challenges, and improvement strategies that specifically address root causes, and are resourced appropriately. Given the SEA’s intent to use student growth percentiles, consider looking at Colorado’s planning system that attempts to support statewide evidence-based collaborative professional learning. Another possible model to consider is Illinois’ proposed system of tiered incentives and support.</li> </ul>

**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 Peer Response**

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's request does not provide sufficient information regarding the system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for other Title I schools. It is not clear how these other schools will be identified and necessary support provided. As a result, the SEA's system of incentives and supports, as currently described, is not likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, or increase the quality of instruction for all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of incentives provided on p. 73 are sensible. An effort to implement the professional learning communities framework (p. 74) is promising.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions that are focused on the specific needs of all struggling learners, including English Learners and students with disabilities, to be implemented in its other Title I schools, nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented.</li> <li>• The SEA does not specify any consequences for schools that do not improve.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify specific, research-based interventions that have been effective in closing gaps in similar school settings and with similar populations of students.</li> <li>• Establish clear and aggressive consequences for schools that do not show improvement in closing achievement gaps.</li> </ul>

## 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) Peer Response***Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	As described in the request, 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, is not likely to succeed in improving such capacity.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SIG monitoring processes already implemented by the SEA are comprehensive (attachment 8b). An application of these to all priority schools will likely make the process of implementation of interventions in priority schools stronger (p. 77).</li> <li>• The online system for planning and oversight called Indistar may be promising but little detail on functionality or timeline is provided.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it not possible to determine whether the SEA's process for ensuring timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools is likely to result in successful implementation of these interventions and in progress on leading indicators and improving student outcomes in these schools.</li> <li>• Is it not possible to determine whether the SEA's process for ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools under the proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is likely to result in successful implementation of such interventions, improved student achievement, or building strong LEA capacity.</li> <li>• Multiple SEA offices will work on the implementation of school support, but it is not clear whether or how these efforts will be coordinated (p. 76).</li> <li>• The screening of external providers appears to be a school and LEA responsibility (p. 61).</li> <li>• All key aspects of the system of differentiated accountability and support are in the early stages of development. This includes measurement, design of tiered interventions and support models, and SEA organization of staff and their capacity.</li> <li>• LEA accountability seems to be a reporting requirement rather than a deep conversation about local accountability.</li> <li>• Most of the discussion in this section (pp. 75-76) focuses on steps taken in regard to schools and LEAs in the priority category rather than schools and LEAs statewide.</li> <li>• The SEA does not provide a coherent system of incentives and supports for struggling LEAs.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing a meaningful and iterative annual planning process that engages all schools in a well-structured examination of evidence, root-cause analysis of performance challenges, and improvement strategies that specifically address root causes, and are resourced appropriately. Given the SEA's intent to use student growth percentiles, consider looking at Colorado's planning system that attempts to support statewide evidence-based collaborative professional learning and includes root cause analyses into persistent achievement and growth gaps. Another possible model to consider is Illinois' proposed system of tiered incentives and support.</li> </ul>

## 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 PEER RESPONSE

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	The SEA's plan for developing and implementing a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, as presented at this early stage of development, is not likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for students. The components of the SEA's plan do not yet fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive system that supports continuous improvement.

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA's proposed use of a status based index (QDI<sub>o</sub>) as the measure of the overall achievement and the comparison of the within-school and within-LEA gaps (QDI<sub>Δ</sub>) could be valuable components of a differentiated accountability system (pp. 42-43, Attachment 8).</li> <li>• Providing staff in high-performing schools an opportunity to serve on councils of excellence is a thoughtful teacher incentive.</li> <li>• The proposed AMOs will require the lowest-performing subgroup to improve its academic achievement at a higher rate than required for the “all students” group, thus providing an incentive to reduce achievement gaps.</li> <li>• Each of the priority schools either has a three-year action plan (SIG schools) or will have to develop one with the participation of the community-based council (p. 57, 62), and funding will be provided to the non-SIG priority schools.</li> <li>• The SEA is developing an online data system (Indistar) that has potential to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of school improvement efforts (p. 61).</li> <li>• The SEA's action plan includes a set of specific indicators for priority schools that include both leading and achievement indicators (p. 63) that will be reviewed by the SEA and that has the potential to support school improvement.</li> <li>• Examples of incentives provided on p. 73 are sensible. An effort to implement the professional learning communities framework (p. 74) is promising.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA did not propose a differentiated system and high-quality implementation plan that is likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students. The SEA proposed to use an existing State system for evaluating schools based on an achievement status index, coupled with very modest consequences that potentially apply to most schools and to subgroup achievement, along with an undeveloped system of support. The proposed system does not yet reflect high quality and coherence.</li> <li>• The SEA's proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system does not yet create meaningful incentives or provide support that is likely to be effective in closing achievement gaps for all subgroups of students.</li> <li>• The SEA did not describe an educationally sound rationale for its proposed AMOs. The SEA proposes to use achievement status and graduation rate AMOs for all students and a combined subgroup. The AMOs would be based on the SEA's Quality of Distribution Index (QDI), an index that weights basic, proficient, and advanced achievement into a 300-point index. This index would be created for all students, highest achieving students, lowest achieving students, and a gap QDI calculated by subtracting the index scores for the highest and lowest achieving groups. While several strengths were identified, the AMOs are unlikely to result in significant numbers of students being on track to college and career readiness.</li> <li>• The SEA proposes to use the QDI index to identify the top 20% or 25% of schools in the state in High Performing or High Progress (change in status) categories for the purpose of identifying Title I reward schools. The recognition system is under development and consultation with the field is under development as well. The nature of the measurement system and early stage of the recognition system does not yet make it possible to state that the recognition system is likely to be considered meaningful by the schools.</li> <li>• The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions to be implemented in its priority and focus schools nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented. In addition the SEA's proposal does not ensure that the priority schools will adhere to all turnaround principles. The SEA's request is not likely to result in dramatic, systemic change in priority schools, nor result in substantial gap closing in focus schools.</li> <li>• In the absence of consequences or substantial rewards attached to the SEA's AMOs and other measures, apart from public reporting, the SEA's accountability system exerts little influence on schools other than those few at risk of being designated as priority schools (5% of schools) or focus schools (10%). It also removes the prior NCLB incentive created by the effect on schools where subgroups were not reaching AYP. The result may be to give schools less of an incentive than exists today to improve the achievement of low-performing students, including students with disabilities, English Learners and members of other ESEA subgroups.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panel identified a variety of technical assistance suggestions in the sections above. Highlights include:</li> <li>• Through the use of the planned growth model, or through other steps (e.g., rewards or recognition of schools), consider using other ways to reward or recognize schools for helping students to attain advanced status that do not compensate for non-proficient students in the QDI.</li> <li>• Consider creating a tiered set of consequential incentives that encourage schools to move up a “ladder” of improvement by having more and more of their students, especially members of ESEA subgroups, attaining proficiency every year.</li> <li>• Subject specific AMOs should be reported in actual percentages of proficient and advanced.</li> <li>• Ensure broad representation from stakeholders in Mississippi (parents, students, educators and their representatives, the business community, school leaders and their representatives) in the consultation process used to design the reward system.</li> <li>• Create a set of criteria for selection of proven interventions that are consistent with all turnaround principles, focused on the specific needs of struggling learners, and could lead to the improvement of all students, including English Learners and students with disabilities.</li> <li>• Consider supplementing the proposed criteria for focus schools with criteria that base focus school designation on achievement gaps between members of the ESEA subgroups in each school and the statewide average performance of all students or of high performing subgroups.</li> <li>• Specify consequences for schools and LEAs persistently failing to improve.</li> <li>• Establish exit criteria for priority and focus schools that specify how many years of substantial improvement on QDI will be required and define what constitutes sufficient improvement and sufficient narrowing of gaps.</li> <li>• Consider developing a meaningful and iterative annual planning process that engages all schools in a well-structured examination of evidence, root-cause analysis of performance challenges, and improvement strategies that specifically address root causes, and are resourced appropriately. Given the SEA’s intent to use student growth percentiles, consider benchmarking Colorado’s planning system that attempts to support statewide evidence-based collaborative professional learning. Another possible model to consider is Illinois’ proposed system of tiered incentives and support.</li> </ul>

**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 Peer Response

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

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	There is insufficient information for this panel to ascertain what the SEA’s adopted guidelines and process are likely to be in order to allow for an opinion on whether the SEA’s plan for developing and adopting guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems is likely to result in successful adoption of those guidelines by the end of the 2011–2012 school year.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of the Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council (STEC) (a council founded in June 2010 to guide evaluation exploration and implementation planning).</li> <li>• The SEA engaged the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) districts for their counsel &amp; recommendations.</li> <li>• Mississippi has made strong affiliations and partnerships in the research, design and implementation of its teacher practice observation rubric, including but not limited to the SEA’s:</li> <li>• Affiliation with American Institutes for Research (AIR).</li> <li>• Identification of 10 schools to pilot the observational rubric; pilot began in 2011-2012.</li> <li>• Evaluators and master teachers began training on the observation rubric in January 2012.</li> <li>• The SEA posted a teacher and principal observation rubric survey on its website and has published the survey results.</li> <li>• The SEA is committed to developing a single statewide evaluation system (Attachment 11b at p. 314).</li> <li>• The SEA’s request states that the new standards capturing best practice and research about effective leadership have been developed and the result is a strong observation rubric.</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The timeline for a principal evaluation process is accelerated.</li> <li>• Although the “Timeline for Performance Evaluation” (last page of attachments) includes all required categories (activities, timeline, and person responsible, resources and significant obstacles), it is unclear what is actually being implemented (see also 3B below).</li> <li>• Given the absence of a formulated growth model as of late March, and the need for public comment and approval by a licensure commission as well as the State board of education there are doubts whether comprehensive guidelines will be in place by the end of the current school year.</li> <li>• The timelines and plans are insufficiently detailed and developed to provide confidence in the SEA’s ability to implement these ambitious teacher and principal evaluation systems (p.87).</li> <li>• The SEA has not given detailed attention to important and difficult issues that will need to be addressed in</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
	developing a plan for measuring student growth in untested grades and subject areas (p. 81).
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should consider benchmarking Mississippi’s statewide teacher evaluation system against those being developed in LA, MA, and CO.</li> </ul>

- 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 Peer Response

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

**Tally of Peer Responses:** 1 Yes, 5 No

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	Although the SEA’s plan includes sufficient involvement of teachers in the development of the observational rubric and calls for similar collaboration and validation opportunities for principals, there has been no meaningful engagement of educators on the larger evaluation system, of which the observation rubric is one part, because a system has not been developed yet.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and principal association representation on STEC, a council formed by the SEA to guide evaluation exploration and implementation planning, is broad and varied.</li> <li>• The observational rubric the SEA has developed with AIR has been shared with all of the following for input: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Met with 2010 District Teachers of the Year (&amp; will meet with 2012 District Teachers of the Year).</li> <li>○ Sought specific feedback from an audience well poised to advise – TIF districts.</li> <li>○ Conducted multiple conferences and meetings with professional organizations.</li> <li>○ Conducted feedback session during meeting of the Mississippi Association of Secondary School Administrators</li> <li>○ Sought feedback from Milken Educators, State Superintendent’s Principal and Superintendent Advisory Panel</li> <li>○ Discussed during the State Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Panel meeting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of and input from teachers on any aspects of a performance evaluation system beyond the observational rubric is not indicated.</li> <li>• Guidelines for the principal evaluation do not exist yet.</li> <li>• Principal implementation (fall 2013) is accelerated one (1) year in advance of the teacher evaluation implementation (fall 2014); lack of guidelines thus far calls for more intense preparation in the next year to be ready for fall 2013 implementation.</li> <li>• There has been little involvement of teachers of students with disabilities and English Learners in the development of guidelines for both teacher and principal systems.</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State should consider the engagement strategies implemented in CO, IL, MA, and LA in developing its educator</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Suggestions</i>	evaluation systems.

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: 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. 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: 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

**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: 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

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: 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

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: 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) 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: 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) 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: 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

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: 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

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: 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

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: 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

**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 Peer Response**

Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No

Response Component	Peer Panel Response
<i>Rationale</i>	Although the intent of the STEC, as stated in its guiding principles, is promising, there is insufficient evidence of the components, responsibilities, expectations, frequency in activity and consequences that comprise a system of evaluation on which to base any judgment. There is insufficient information for this panel to either discern what the SEA’s adopted guidelines and process are likely to be or to ascertain how it will ensure that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements evaluation and support systems consistent with SEA guidelines to lead to high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA has stated its intention for a statewide system of teacher evaluation.</li> <li>• The teacher practice and observation rubric was developed in association with AIR</li> <li>• The rubric evaluates 20 teaching standards that are nested across five domains</li> <li>• The rubric rates across four performance levels: distinguished, effective, emerging and unsatisfactory (p. 80)</li> <li>• The domains include a focus on the role of teacher as a diagnostician and setting clear student goals and enacting them.</li> <li>• PARCC affiliation is a strength.</li> <li>• The SEA will rely, in part, on lessons learned in TIF sites through the collaboration of tested and non-tested area teachers for its selection of artifacts for evaluation in non-tested areas (pp. 81, 86).</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<p><i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growth model is absent: MDE is still “developing a protocol to measure student growth that can be linked to student performance” (p. 81).</li> <li>• Student growth as a significant factor is not indicated: The panel was unable to determine whether student growth is/will be a significant factor in the evaluation of teachers because it is not named and no conceptual framework for how the State is tackling this with community stakeholders or what their recommendation will be is included</li> <li>• The SEA refers to the observational rubric developed with AIR alternatively as its “Teacher Appraisal guidelines” (p. 78), “teacher appraisal framework” (p. 80) and “Teacher Appraisal System” (p. 87). The SEA also refers to the rubric as its “draft guidelines”: “. . . the State Board of Education adopted the draft guidelines (Attachment 10) at the November 2011 Board meeting.” (p. 78). The SEA’s reference in each of these instances is to a stand-alone rubric without any description of either how it will be operationalized or how it interrelates with the greater evaluation system.</li> <li>• There is no description of a comprehensive set of components the SEA is contemplating to constitute the new evaluation system guidelines. There is:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No articulation of responsibilities:</li> <li>○ No specification of performance expectations for teachers:</li> <li>○ No mention of the frequency in activity (observation activity or otherwise):</li> <li>○ No consequences for a bad rating:</li> <li>○ No mention of steps necessary, or the logical sequencing and spacing of the key steps necessary to implement evaluation and support systems;</li> <li>○ No mention of the feedback, support and continuous improvement cycle the evaluation should sit within.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No high schools were involved in the pilot of the observation rubric.</li> <li>• There is no mention of how the observation rubric and the growth model, based on State assessments, will interact with each other in the calculation of the teachers rating.</li> <li>• While in two years the SEA will transition to the PARCC assessments, and will have an opportunity to learn from and possibly adapt a growth model another state in the consortium develops, for the next two years the SEA is essentially in a holding pattern.</li> <li>• Pilot and field testing phases do not explicitly describe the inclusion of teachers of students with disabilities and English Learners.</li> <li>• The growth model is still being developed and the training, implementation, and piloting plan makes no reference to support for evaluators in the use of that model within the evaluation system.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider increasing the cut score on State assessments, in anticipation of the increased rigor on the PARCC assessments, to begin to prepare teachers for the practice and instruction in which they will need to engage in order for students to meet the new standards</li> <li>• Ensure that the attention to quality in the development of the principal evaluation system is comparable to the quality control used in developing the teacher observation rubric.</li> </ul>

### 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 Peer Response

*Tally of Peer Responses: 0 Yes, 6 No*

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Rationale</i>	Although the intent of the STEC, as stated in the guiding principles, is promising, there is insufficient evidence of the components, responsibilities, expectations, frequency in activity and consequences that comprise a system of evaluation on which to base any judgments. There is insufficient information for this panel to either discern what the SEA's adopted guidelines and process are likely to be or to ascertain how it will ensure that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements evaluation and support systems consistent with SEA guidelines to lead to high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.
<i>Strengths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA has stated its intention for a statewide system of teacher evaluation.</li> <li>• The SEA has engaged in a substantive, collaborative and thorough process to develop the content of its teacher observation rubric.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A growth model is absent: The SEA is still “developing a protocol to measure student growth that can be linked to student performance (p. 81).”</li> <li>• Student growth as a significant factor is not indicated: The Panel is unable to determine whether student growth is/will be a significant factor in the evaluation of teachers because it is not named and no conceptual framework for how they are tackling this with community stakeholders or what their recommendation will be is included</li> <li>• There is no description of a comprehensive set of integrated components the SEA is contemplating to constitute the new evaluation system guideline, e.g. how the observation rubric is operationalized, how the observation rubric and the student growth measure will interact, when and how consequences attach, how evaluation will be used to drive continuous improvement.</li> <li>• The SEA has not given detailed attention to important and difficult issues that will need to be addressed in developing a plan for measuring student growth in untested grades and subject areas (p. 81).</li> </ul>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should review the plans and implementation lessons of LA, MA, and CO in order to create a blueprint for the design and implementation of a comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system that includes all essential elements and action steps required for a meaningful and successful system.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider increasing the cut score on State assessments, in anticipation of the increased rigor on the PARCC assessments, to begin to prepare teachers for the practice and instruction they will need to engage in, in order for students to meet the new standard.</li> <li>• The SEA should ensure that the attention to quality in the development of the principal evaluation system is comparable to the quality control used in developing the teacher observation rubric.</li> </ul>

### 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 Peer Response

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
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<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
Rationale	<p>Despite many promising features, the SEA's flexibility request did not provide a comprehensive and coherent strategy for implementation of ESEA flexibility waivers. Panel members were left with substantial doubts about whether the SEA's approach as submitted is likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement. Important issues to be addressed, among others raised throughout the peer panel notes are:</p> <p>Principle #1 Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA's proposed plan of implementation of the new standards complies with the required timeline.</li> <li>• However, as submitted, the SEA's proposed plan is not likely to lead to all students being provided with access to the high-quality learning content aligned with the new standards.</li> </ul> <p>Principle #2 Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA's plan for developing and implementing a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, as presented at this early stage of development, is not likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for students.</li> <li>• The components of the SEA's request do not yet fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive system that supports continuous improvement.</li> </ul> <p>Principle #3 Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the intent of the Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council (STEC), as stated in the SEA's guiding principles, is promising, there is insufficient evidence of the components, responsibilities, expectations, frequency in activity and consequences that comprise a system of evaluation on which to base any judgment..</li> <li>• There is insufficient information to either discern what the SEA's adopted guidelines and process are likely to be or to ascertain how it will ensure that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements evaluation and support systems consistent with SEA guidelines to lead to high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Strengths</i>	<p>The SEA's proposed plan has several areas of strength which were recognized by the review panel.</p> <p><u>Principle #1 Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The timeline for the implementation of the CCSS is well-considered and realistic (p. 17).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted a thorough outreach and information dissemination campaign to inform and engage various stakeholders, including the Mississippi Special Education Parent Advisory Council, with information on adoption of the CCSS (p. 24).</li> <li>• The SEA's Education Achievement Council, which includes the SEA and IHEs offers a strong connection between K-12 and college. The SEA conducted training for 200 higher education faculty on CCSS (p. 25).</li> </ul> <p><u>Principle #2 Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed AMOs will require the lowest performing subgroup to improve its academic achievement at a higher rate than required for the “all students” group, thus providing an incentive to reduce achievement gaps.</li> <li>• Examples of incentives provided are sensible (p.73). An effort to implement the professional learning communities framework is promising (p. 74).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted an alignment study of the current standards with the common core standards. As a result, it was found that the alignment in mathematics was the weakest, so more time was allocated for the implementation of the common core standards in mathematics (p. 18). SEDL has developed videos for each grade level on the CCSS in mathematics.</li> <li>• The SEA in cooperation with WIDA will analyze the linguistic demands of the common core standards to inform the development of the corresponding ELP standards (p. 19).</li> <li>• The SEA analyzed the accommodation necessary for the students with disabilities to achieve to the new standards (p. 20).</li> <li>• The SEA conducted both in-person and online sessions providing an overview of the CCSS as well as the two-day training seminars to school administrators to prepare them for providing leadership for a successful implementation of the CCSS.</li> <li>• The SEA will be increasing the rigor of its assessment system with the full implementation of the PARCC scheduled for the 2015-16 (pp. 17 and 36).</li> </ul> <p><u>Principle #3 Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA has stated its intention for a statewide system of teacher evaluation.</li> <li>• The SEA has engaged in a substantive, collaborative and thorough process to develop the content of its teacher observation rubric.</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<p>Throughout its peer review notes, the panel has identified areas where there is a need for increased clarity, more specificity, and/or stronger proposed actions.</p> <p><u>Principle #1 Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for English Learners and students with disabilities in the CCSS transition focuses mainly on developing new standards (ELP) and assessments (ELP and alternate), but includes no discussion of curriculum and instructional supports for teachers with English Learners and students with disabilities in their classrooms (pp. 19-23, 26-27, 29). The timeline for the implementation of the ELP standards and assessments is not provided. In addition, the ELP training appeared to focus on teachers, but did not mention parallel principal training on scaffolding of academic language instruction.</li> <li>• There were no steps identified to realign teacher preparation programs in the State to conform to the CCSS.</li> <li>• The SEA did not provide sufficient information about the instructional materials development aligned to CCSS to determine whether they are meant to be used for all students.</li> <li>• Apart from AP, the college and career programs described by the SEA provide no indication on how many students are getting the benefit of the programs; some information on AP participation is provided, but no information on AP success is furnished; and there appears to be no coherent statewide strategy for maximizing access for students to these programs (p. 31-35).</li> </ul> <p><u>Principle #2 Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA did not propose a differentiated system and high-quality implementation plan that is likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students. The SEA proposed to use an existing SEA system for evaluating schools based on an achievement status index coupled with very modest consequences that potentially apply to most schools and to subgroup achievement and an undeveloped system of support. The proposed system does not yet reflect high quality and coherence.</li> <li>• The SEA's proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system does not yet create meaningful incentives or provide support that is likely to be effective in closing achievement gaps for all subgroups of students.</li> <li>• The SEA did not describe an educationally sound rationale for the AMOs.</li> <li>• The recognition system is under development, and consultation with the field is under development as well. The nature of the measurement system and early stage of the recognition system does not yet make it possible to state that the recognition system is likely to be considered meaningful by the schools.</li> <li>• The SEA proposed neither any specific interventions to be implemented in its priority and focus schools nor a mechanism for how these will be selected and implemented. In addition the SEA's request does not ensure that the priority schools will adhere to all turnaround principles.</li> <li>• In the absence of consequences or substantial rewards attached to the SEA's AMOs and other measures, apart from public reporting, the SEA's accountability system exerts little influence on schools other than those few at risk of being designated as priority schools (5% of schools) or focus schools (10%).</li> </ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity</i>	<p><u>Principle #3 Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student growth as a significant factor in teacher/principal evaluation is not indicated.</li><li>• There is no description of a comprehensive set of integrated components the SEA is contemplating to constitute the new evaluation system guideline, e.g. how the observation rubric is operationalized, how the observation rubric and the student growth measure will interact, when and how consequences attach, how evaluation will be used to drive continuous improvement.</li></ul>

<i>Response Component</i>	<i>Peer Panel Response</i>
<i>Technical Assistance Suggestions</i>	<p>The panel offered a variety of technical assistance suggestions, including specific references to well-defined request aspects in other States.</p> <p><u>Principle #1 Technical Assistance Suggestions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should consider increasing the rigor of at least the State math assessments or increasing the cut score to more closely approximate college and career readiness in advance of PARCC.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider articulating a coherent plan with integrated components that LEAs and schools could follow in implementing CCSS. Examples to consider are the plans of KY, LA, and IL.</li> </ul> <p><u>Principle #2 Technical Assistance Suggestions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the use of the planned growth model, or through other steps (e.g., rewards or recognition of schools), The SEA should consider using other ways to reward or recognize schools for helping students to attain “advanced” status without using it to compensate for students in a school who are not proficient.</li> <li>• The SEA should report subject specific AMOs in actual percentages of proficient and advanced.</li> <li>• The SEA should ensure broad representation from stakeholders in Mississippi (parents, students, educators and their representatives, the business community, school leaders and their representatives) in the consultation process used to design the reward system.</li> <li>• The SEA should create a set of criteria for selection of proven interventions that are consistent with all turnaround principles, focused on the specific needs of struggling learners, and that could lead to the improvement of all students including English Learners and students with disabilities.</li> <li>• The SEA should specify consequences for schools and LEAs persistently failing to improve.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider developing a meaningful and iterative annual planning process that engages all schools in a well-structured examination of evidence, root-cause analysis of performance challenges, and improvement strategies that specifically address root causes, and are resourced appropriately.</li> </ul> <p><u>Principle #3 Technical Assistance Suggestions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEA should review the plans and implementation lessons of LA, MA, and CO in order to create a blueprint for the design and implementation of a comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system that includes all essential elements and action steps required for a meaningful and successful system.</li> <li>• The SEA should consider increasing the cut score on state assessments, in anticipation of the increased rigor on the PARCC assessments, to begin to prepare teachers for the practice and instruction they will need to engage in in order for students to meet the new standard.</li> <li>• Ensure that the attention to quality in the development of the principal evaluation system is comparable to the quality control used in developing the teacher observation rubrics.</li> </ul>