



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

June 23, 2015

The Honorable Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Superintendent
Hawaii State Department of Education
1390 Miller Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Superintendent Matayoshi:

I am writing in response to Hawaii's request for renewal of flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), so that Hawaii may continue to implement ESEA flexibility.

Our team, including my staff and other senior leaders at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), reviewed Hawaii's request dated June 12, 2015. Pursuant to section 9401(d)(2) of the ESEA, I am pleased to approve the renewal of Hawaii's ESEA flexibility request for three years, through the end of the 2017–2018 school year.

My decision to approve the renewal of Hawaii's ESEA flexibility request is based on my determination that ESEA flexibility has been effective in enabling Hawaii to carry out important reforms to improve student achievement and that this renewal is in the public interest. With this renewal, Hawaii will be able to continue implementing its plans to promote innovative, locally tailored strategies to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. Hawaii's approved request will be posted on ED's website.

This letter also provides my approval of Hawaii's amendments to Principles 2 and 3 of its ESEA flexibility request. A summary of significant approved amendments is enclosed with this letter.

Hawaii continues to have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that it and its schools are in compliance with Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age in their implementation of ESEA flexibility. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

I am confident that Hawaii will continue to implement the reforms described in its approved ESEA flexibility request and advance its efforts to hold schools accountable for the achievement of all students. If you need any additional assistance to implement your ESEA flexibility request, please do not hesitate to contact Robert Salley or Tawanda Avery of my staff at: OSS.Hawaii@ed.gov.

Thank you for your commitment and continued focus on enhancing education for all of Hawaii's students.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Heather Rieman.

Heather Rieman
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Stephen Schatz, Stephanie Shipton

Approved Amendments to Hawaii's ESEA Flexibility Request

The following is a summary of significant approved amendments that Hawaii included as part of its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility. ED approves these amendments because Hawaii's ESEA flexibility request, as amended, continues to be aligned with the principles of ESEA flexibility. Please refer to ED's website (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/hi.html>) for Hawaii's complete ESEA flexibility request.

Principle 2A: Hawaii will implement the following changes to its "Strive HI" accountability index:

- Weighting elementary and middle school indicators more heavily towards achievement and growth and high school readiness in the index calculation.
- Splitting the gap reduction measure into math and English/language arts (ELA) rather than a combined measure for each grade span.
- Using chronic absenteeism as the measure for readiness for elementary schools.
- Adding additional readiness measures for high schools to include, out of a total of 100 points, a five-year graduation rate with a weight of 10 and the percentage of students meeting the readiness benchmark on the 11th grade college- and career-ready assessment (CCRA) with a weight of 80. These measures are in addition to the college-going rate, which is weighed at 10.
- Valuing achievement and growth equally in ELA and math.
- Using the result of performance on the 8th grade CCRA as the readiness indicator for middle/intermediate schools.
- Awarding schools bonus points for positive student outcomes outside of test scores such as five-year graduation rates, students earning advanced credits, and low chronic absenteeism rates.
- Dividing the *Continuous Improvement* category into two subsections: "Achieving" and "Progressing"; this will classify schools into one of six classifications instead of the previous five.
- Eliminating the 5 percent cap on Recognition Schools to ensure that schools are recognized appropriately for their achievements.

Principle 2E: Hawaii will not use 2014–2015 assessment results to identify new Priority and Focus schools for the 2015–2016 school year; however, 2014–2015 assessment results will be used to allow Focus schools to exit status.

Principle 3A: Hawaii will move the Tripod Student Survey from a separate component to an informational data point under the core professionalism component of the educator evaluation and support system.

Principle 3B: Hawaii will require the use of student growth for principal evaluations based on State assessments administered in the 2015–2016 school year to inform personnel decisions no later than the 2016–2017 school year.