



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MAR 3 1 2015

The Honorable Brenda Cassellius
Commissioner of Education
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113

Dear Commissioner Cassellius:

I am writing in response to Minnesota's request for renewal of flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), so that Minnesota may continue to implement ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2018–2019 school year.

Our ESEA flexibility team, including other senior leaders at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), reviewed Minnesota's request dated March 13, 2015. Pursuant to section 9401(d)(2) of the ESEA, I am pleased to approve the renewal of Minnesota's ESEA flexibility request for four years, through the end of the 2018–2019 school year.

My decision to approve the renewal of Minnesota's ESEA flexibility request is based on my determination that ESEA flexibility has been effective in enabling Minnesota to carry out important reforms to improve student achievement and that this renewal is in the public interest. With this renewal, Minnesota 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. I have also determined that Minnesota's guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems meet the requirements for Principle 3 articulated in ED's June 7, 2012 document titled *ESEA Flexibility*. Minnesota's approved request will be posted on the ED website.

Minnesota continues to have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that it and its local educational agencies are in compliance with Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. 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.

I am confident that Minnesota will continue to implement the reforms described in its approved ESEA flexibility request and advance its efforts to hold schools and LEAs accountable for the achievement of all students. Minnesota continues to have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that it and its LEAs are in compliance with all requirements not waived under ESEA.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

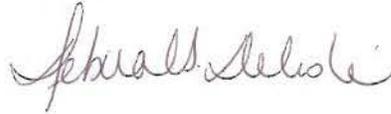
The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

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If you need any additional assistance to implement your ESEA flexibility request, please do not hesitate to contact me or have your flexibility team contact Tahira Rashid or Liz Bailey at:
OSS.Minnesota@ed.gov.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah S. Delisle".

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

cc: Stephanie Graff, Federal Education Policy Specialist, Office of Commissioner