



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

AUG - 6 2015

The Honorable Anthony Evers
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Superintendent Evers:

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

Our team, including my staff and other senior leaders at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), reviewed Wisconsin's request dated July 27, 2015. Pursuant to section 9401(d)(2) of the ESEA, I am pleased to renew approval of Wisconsin's ESEA flexibility request for three years, through the end of the 2017–2018 school year.

My decision to renew approval of Wisconsin's ESEA flexibility request is based on my determination that ESEA flexibility has been effective in enabling Wisconsin to carry out important reforms to improve student achievement and that this renewal is in the public interest. With this renewal, Wisconsin 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. Wisconsin's approved request will be posted on ED's website.

This letter also provides my approval of Wisconsin's proposed amendments to its ESEA flexibility request. A summary of Wisconsin's significant approved amendments is enclosed with this letter.

This renewal is subject to Wisconsin's commitment to:

- Provide additional information to ED, by December 31, 2015, on its progress in carrying out its plan to administer in school year 2015–2016 and each year thereafter high-quality statewide assessments aligned to Wisconsin's academic content standards.
- Demonstrate, during ED's monitoring and follow-up of ESEA flexibility implementation, that Wisconsin is implementing the plan set forth in its ESEA flexibility request, including timeline and milestones, that will lead to inclusion of student growth in teacher and principal evaluation and support systems based on State assessments administered no later than the 2016–2017 school year and each year thereafter.

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

Wisconsin continues to have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that it and its local educational agencies (LEAs) 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.

I am confident that Wisconsin 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. If you need any additional assistance to implement your ESEA flexibility request, please do not hesitate to contact Janine Rudder or Porscheoy Brice of my staff at: OSS.Wisconsin@ed.gov.

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

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Ann Whalen
Delegated the authority to perform the functions
and duties of Assistant Secretary for Elementary
and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Lynette Russell, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Jonas Zuckerman, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Approved Amendments to Wisconsin's ESEA Flexibility Request

The following is a summary of significant amendments that Wisconsin included as part of its request for renewal of ESEA flexibility. ED approves these amendments because Wisconsin'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/wi.html>) for Wisconsin's complete ESEA flexibility request.

- **State –Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support (Principle 2)**

Revision: Wisconsin has amended the criteria it uses to identify priority schools to exclude school rankings based on student achievement sub-scale scores. Moving forward, Wisconsin will identify priority schools based on the percent of students proficient on the State assessments. Wisconsin will also identify any high schools with a graduation rate below 60 percent as priority schools.

Revision: Wisconsin has changed the frequency with which focus schools will be identified from every two years to every three years.

- **Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (Principle 3)**

Revision: Wisconsin submitted a revised Principle 3 section in its ESEA flexibility renewal request, which included new language from the State's educator evaluation legislation regarding how the State will meet the six Principle 3 requirements of ESEA flexibility.