



## ARIZONA ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST RENEWAL

Arizona's Flexibility Request was granted approval through the 2014-2015 school year. In order to continue Arizona is applying for three additional years of flexibility, through the 2017-18 school year.

### What are the requirements for approval?

- Continue to implement the plans as outlined in our previously approved Flexibility Request or submit an updated Request for implementing the Principles as outlined.
- Resolve outstanding issues relating to implementation of ESEA flexibility.
  - ✓ In the most recent approval of Arizona's Extension Request (October 9, 2014) the US Department of Education approved several amendments, lifted the "high-risk" determination and considered that all previous conditions had been met, except one. Arizona must further address the requirement for final guidelines for its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that align with ESEA Principle 3 Flexibility. An amendment concerning the implementation of turnaround principles in online (AOI) schools was tabled.

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

- ADE is updating its supports to teachers, schools and LEAs for the implementation of Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. Updates to the assessment section include the selection and implementation of AzMERIT. A description of the proposed continuous improvement process for Arizona's Academic Standards is also included.

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

- ADE is submitting further refinements to the state system of support for its lowest performing schools. The State Board of Education has determined that a 2-year hiatus of the state's A-F Accountability system should be enacted in order to both evaluate the criteria used to determine a school's status and to allow two years of data from the new AzMERIT assessment to become available.
- This poses two challenges:
  - ✓ Criteria for determining Priority and Focus Schools as outlined in our current Flexibility Request are no longer viable, as the results from a school's A-F Letter Grade figure prominently
  - ✓ Even though A-F letter grades would not be determined, a method of identifying the lowest performing schools in the state may still be required.
- Arizona's Flexibility Request proposes to use redefined Priority and Focus criteria to evaluate all schools in Arizona to determine both those Title I schools that will be designated and Priority and Focus for purposes of ESEA Flexibility and non-Title I schools that are among the lowest performing schools in the state.
- ADE is submitting the current Priority and Focus List to continue implementation for the 2014-2015 school year. The exit criteria in the currently approved Flexibility Request will be run on the current list using 2013-2014 data.
- ADE is requesting an additional waiver that would allow ADE, when it has remaining section 1003(a) funds after ensuring that all priority and focus schools have sufficient funds to carry out interventions, to allocate section 1003(a) funds to LEAs to provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in other Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

### **Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership**

- Amend educator evaluation framework to meet ESEA flexibility requirements.

- ✓ The Framework has been amended to ensure that it meets the requirements of the use of student growth as a significant factor in determining a teacher or principal's summative evaluation rating.
  - Districts and charters shall apply the Group A framework to all teachers with available classroom-level student achievement data that are valid and reliable, aligned to Arizona's academic standards, and appropriate to individual teachers' content areas. The Group B framework shall be applied to all teachers with limited or no available classroom-level student achievement data that are valid and reliable, aligned to Arizona's academic standards, and appropriate to individual teachers' content areas. Classroom-level data elements shall account for at least 33% of the total evaluation outcomes. Districts and charters may increase the weight of these elements as they deem appropriate. Beginning with SY 2016-17 state assessment data must be a significant factor in the Academic Growth calculation.
- ✓ Submit data demonstrating the significant use of growth and that sufficient weighting is used to differentiate among teachers and principals. Also data comparing summative ratings and the different component of the Framework.
  - MCESA and ASU TIF programs submitted reports indicating the use of growth formulas in their evaluation systems and that the formulas are weighted to differentiate the effectiveness levels among teachers. Both programs have data utilizing a value added model utilizing classroom observation scores as well as statewide (AIMS/SAT-10) and district selected (Galileo) assessments.
- ✓ Ensure that the use of grade or school-level growth data does not mask high or low performance of individual teachers.
  - With respect to issues of shared attribution, the use of grade or school-level growth data is based on the clear distinction between educators who have student-level data and those who do not (Group A vs Group B). With the implementation a new state assessment system, the refinement of our state model, and the data provided by the TIF grantees, we will continue to explore this issue in 2015-2016 and make adjustments to the State Framework if necessary.
- ✓ Ensure that LEAs will include Arizona's final method for including student growth as a significant factor in time for implementation in 2014-2015.
  - With the implementation of a new statewide assessment, schools are responding well to the A-F accountability recommendations for student assessments in 2014-15 and 2015-16. ADE continues to evaluate technology-based tools used in other states to collect information from LEAs to ascertain the alignment of local evaluation instruments with state and federal requirements. ADE also launched the Arizona Education Learning and Accountability System (AELAS) as a one-stop portal for teachers and administrators to upload data as well as connect with professional learning opportunities.

#### **WHAT ADVANTAGES ARE THERE TO CONTINUING ESEA FLEXIBILITY?**

- To continue to develop a comprehensive accountability system that provides transparent measures of performance
- To redefine proficiency targets; an opportunity to amend the current 100% proficiency through 2020 will occur after the results from the first administration of AzMERIT.
- To continue to craft improvements to Title I schools.
  - The approved request allows for concentrated school improvement resources on Priority Schools (those with lowest achievement) and Focus Schools (those with greatest achievement gap).
  - The requirement to revert to determining Adequate Yearly Progress will not be needed. Annual Measurable Objectives must still be met; but the process for school improvement designations has changed.
- Continued flexibility in use of federal funds.
  - Stakeholder comment and feedback is still being sought. Please send comments to [eseawaiver@azed.gov](mailto:eseawaiver@azed.gov).
  - For more information please visit, [www.azed.gov/eseawaiver](http://www.azed.gov/eseawaiver).