



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

JAN 07 2015

The Honorable Michael L. Williams
Commissioner
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Williams:

Thank you for submitting Texas' guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, as well as the corresponding changes to Principle 3 of your ESEA flexibility request, for peer review. On October 15, 2014 and December 4, 2014, two expert peers reviewed Texas' guidelines and the corresponding changes to Principle 3 of Texas' request. Staff from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) also reviewed Texas' submission.

During that review, the expert peers provided comments in the form of Peer Panel Notes to inform my decision regarding Texas' guidelines. The Peer Panel Notes, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter, identify strengths of Texas' Principle 3 submission and revisions that may be needed to meet Principle 3. They also provide technical assistance suggestions.

Based on the review of Texas' guidelines and taking into account the feedback from the expert peers, I have determined that Texas has not yet adopted guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet all requirements of ESEA flexibility, nor does it have a process for ensuring that each district in Texas develops, adopts, pilots, and implements teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with those guidelines as required by ESEA flexibility.

The enclosed list provides details regarding concerns raised in the review of Texas' Principle 3 submission that must be addressed before I can approve Texas' guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. In addition, I encourage Texas to consider all of the peers' comments and technical assistance suggestions in making revisions. If Texas chooses to renew its ESEA flexibility request, Texas must submit to ED through the renewal process an amended request incorporating its final guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with all requirements for these systems under Principle 3 of ESEA flexibility and consistent with the renewal requirements pertaining to Principle 3 described in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Guidance for Renewal Process* (Nov. 13, 2014). Renewal request submissions are due no later than March 31, 2015.

In addition to modifying its guidelines to address the issues raised during peer review, Texas may wish to make other changes as a result of its ongoing development and piloting of its teacher and principal

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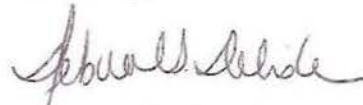
The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

evaluation and support systems. If Texas wishes to make any additional changes through the renewal process, it should ensure that those changes are consistent with Principle 3 of ESEA flexibility.

ED remains committed to working with Texas on your request for ESEA flexibility. ED staff will reach out to Texas to set up a call soon to provide clarification of the concerns on the enclosed list and technical assistance that may be useful as you revise and refine your Principal 3 submission in anticipation of renewal. I also strongly encourage Texas to schedule regular check-ins with its ED State flexibility contact, Erin Shackel, about Texas' progress in addressing the concerns raised in the enclosed list.

If you have any questions regarding the renewal process or anything else related to Texas' implementation of ESEA flexibility, please contact Erin Shackel at: erin.shackel@ed.gov. Thank you for your continued focus on enhancing education for all students in Texas.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

Enclosures

cc: Kalese Hammonds

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING TEXAS' PRINCIPLE 3 SUBMISSION

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- Please address concerns regarding the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems:
 - Provide additional information on how Texas will ensure that all districts develop and implement educator evaluation systems that adhere to Principle 3 requirements. *See 3.A.i.*
 - Provide additional information on how Texas will ensure that student growth measures are a meaningful part of the educator evaluation system in all schools. *See 3.A.ii.c(ii).*
 - Provide additional information about how the evaluation systems will be used for continual improvement of instruction for teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities, and how they will guide professional development for teachers and principals based on evaluation results. *See 3.A.ii.a.*
 - Please clarify Texas' requirements for LEAs to incorporate student growth measures in non-tested grades and subjects. *See 3.A.ii.c.*
 - Please explain Texas' value-add model to capture student growth on State assessments. If this has not been developed, please explain the schedule for when this model and its supporting resources and training will be available. *See 3.A.ii.c.*
 - Provide clarity and additional information about how Texas will ensure that all teachers and principals are evaluated on a regular basis and often enough to lead to improved instruction. *See 3.A.ii.c(iii); 3.A.ii.d*
 - Provide clarity and additional information about how Texas' guidelines promote systems that will provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development. *See 3.A.ii.e.*
 - Provide clarity and additional information about how evaluation results and feedback from the evaluation process will inform personnel decisions. *See 3.A.ii.f.*
 - Describe the measures of student growth for principals and the plan to differentiate among principals. *3.A.ii.c-f.*
- Please address concerns regarding the implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems:
 - Provide additional information on how Texas will evaluate the rigor of the SLOs and ensure they are being developed and implemented in consistent manner. *See 3.B.*

- Describe how Texas will monitor the quality and rigor of locally-developed measures across all districts. *See 3.B.*
- Provide additional information about how Texas will ensure that LEAs create and implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the principles of ESEA flexibility. *See 3.B.*
- Provide additional information about how Texas will ensure comparability among LEAs, and ensure rigor, and reliability and validity of all measures, including observations and student learning measures. *See 3.A.ii.c(i).*
- Provide additional information on why Texas has requested delaying full implementation of its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems until after the 2015-2016 school year.