



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 20, 2015

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D. *V. Keesler*
Deputy Superintendent, Accountability Services

Norma Jean Sass *NJS*
Deputy Superintendent, Education Services

SUBJECT: Renewal of Michigan's ESEA Flexibility Request

Michigan received a three-year renewal of its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request from the U.S. Department of Education on August 13, 2015. This renewal will extend the provisions of ESEA Flexibility through the 2017-2018 school year.

Michigan's approved ESEA Flexibility Request allows local school districts more freedom in how they use some federal dollars to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps; recognizes schools that are meeting or exceeding achievement goals; ensures that all students have access to effective educators; and includes an accountability scorecard to measure student achievement and growth in schools and districts. Moreover, ESEA Flexibility alleviates the consequences of the No Child Left Behind requirement that 100% of students demonstrate academic proficiency by 2014, replacing the mandate and subsequent consequences with the goal of 85% proficiency in mathematics and English language arts by 2022 and targeted supports to meet student growth and proficiency goals.

Approved changes to Michigan's ESEA Flexibility Request included in this renewal include:

- **A move from annual identification of Focus and Priority schools to a three-year identification cycle.** The next Focus and Priority schools lists will not be determined until the fall of 2017 and every third year thereafter. This allows districts, schools, and the MDE to focus capacity on intensive

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interventions and supports for one cohort of schools over a three-year period rather than adding new schools to the system of supports every year.

- **Criteria for schools to exit Priority status that ensure clarity, rigor, and an indication of sustainable improved outcomes for students.** A Priority school must implement interventions and supports for three years before it is eligible for exit from status. Upon meeting this three-year requirement, a school will exit Priority status as soon as it meets the following three criteria in the same year:
 - Achieves a top-to-bottom rank higher than 5%;
 - Meets annual measurable outcomes (AMO), or growth targets, for the All Students subgroup in both mathematics and English language arts; and
 - Meets participation rate requirements on all required state assessments.

- **Criteria for schools to exit Focus status that ensure clarity, rigor, and an indication of sustainable improved outcomes for students in the lowest-performing 30% subgroup.** A school will exit Focus status when it meets one, or a combination of, the following criteria for two consecutive years:
 - Improvement of the school's lowest-performing 30% subgroup that is greater than the improvement of the statewide lowest-performing 30% subgroup; or
 - Achievement of the school's lowest-performing 30% subgroup that is greater than the achievement of the statewide lowest-performing 30% subgroup.

- **A commitment to revisit the indicators used on accountability scorecards.** While the color indicators on the accountability scorecard have not yet changed, the MDE has committed to work with stakeholders to determine the most meaningful indicators to use starting in 2017.

- **Identification of student growth percentiles as the mechanism for calculating student growth for educator evaluations based on state assessments.** The MDE will calculate and provide student growth percentiles (SGP) to local districts for students with consecutive tests in each of the tested grades and subjects on state assessments. The MDE will also provide guidance on using the SGPs in educator evaluations and support systems to ensure that, minimally, SGPs are used by school districts as a validation point against other local growth measures.

The Priority school exit criteria described above were used to exit 27 Priority schools in the 2010 cohort from Priority status in April 2015 and 16 schools in the 2011 cohort from Priority status in August 2015. These schools and districts were notified directly regarding their exit from status.

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The Focus school exit criteria described above were used to exit 271 Focus schools in the 2012 cohort from Focus status in August 2015. These schools and districts were notified directly regarding their exit from status.

Additional information about the renewal, including the full text of Michigan's approved ESEA Flexibility Request may be accessed at http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_60094---,00.html.

Please email ESEAFlexibility@michigan.gov with questions regarding Michigan's approved ESEA Flexibility Request.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance