

Summary of State ESEA Flexibility Request

STATE: Indiana

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of key aspects of state waiver requests made under the U.S. Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility initiative. This summary recognizes that states continue to work to refine and enhance these systems which will continue to evolve and improve over time.

Introduction. This section summarizes some overarching issues important to the state's overall NCLB waiver request.

1. What is the state's **clear vision and comprehensive integrated plan** to raise the bar on college and career-readiness? [See Overview; 2A-Summary of Accountability System; full request]

Indiana's request provides a comprehensive plan for transitioning to more rigorous standards and assessments, implementing a strong new state accountability system, and continuing implementation of a robust educator evaluation system. The state has aligned all its initiatives around State Superintendent Tony Bennett's "90-25-90" goals of 90% of students passing the state's annual assessment, 25% of students passing AP/IB exams or earning college credit in high school, and 90% of students graduating with a meaningful diploma. The state has designed a rigorous new school grading system and a set of intensive supports for chronically low-performing schools. Additionally, the state is already piloting a robust new teacher and leader evaluation system that incorporates multiple measures and is anchored in student achievement. The accountability system and educator evaluation system are connected and the state plans to use data across systems to identify discrepancies and target assistance.

2. How does the state **define college and career-readiness**? [See Overview; full request]

Indiana defines college and career-readiness as earning an academic honors diploma, passing an AP/IB exam, earning college credit in high school, or passing an approved industry certification exam. The state notes that students who meet at least one of these indicators are significantly less likely to require post-secondary remediation.

3. How does the state's request articulate a commitment to **innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement**? [See Overview; 2A-Summary of Accountability System; full request]

Indiana's request notes that it will have the ability to review and increase required proficiency levels needed to achieve each letter grade in the school accountability system. Additionally the state is developing an "automatic trigger" to ensure that the proficiency bar remains high for all schools. The state will also reevaluate growth and improvement targets at least every three years to maintain a focus on continuous improvement and not allow schools to maintain their grade without ongoing improvement.

The state is also piloting its educator evaluation system to collect quantitative and qualitative data to refine the model before it is implemented statewide. The pilot includes teacher and principal surveys, focus groups, and interviews to ensure that feedback is incorporated to drive system improvement.

The state also highlights several innovation local programs in its application including a dual credit cooperative among districts, payments to students and teachers for passing AP exams, districts tracking students' post-secondary outcomes, and use of online providers for AP courses.

4. How does the state's request provide evidence to indicate the state has the **capacity to implement** its proposed policies within the given timelines? [See Overview; 2A-Summary of Accountability System; full request]

Indiana is building capacity to support its request through shifting the role of the state education agency from a compliance-based organization to one that is more supportive of schools and districts and has a greater focus on fast-paced reform and is more innovative. The state agency was reorganized in July 2011 to better align with the state's education priorities. The Office of School Improvement and Turnaround will provide extensive support in implementing the state's new accountability system and providing supports and interventions to Priority and Focus Schools. The Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership will support districts as they move to implement new evaluation systems.

Principle 1: Standards and Assessments

1. Describe the state's plan for transitioning to and implementing **college and career-ready standards and assessments**. [See Section 1B]]

Indiana is in the second phase of a comprehensive plan to implement new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and realign state assessments. The state has conducted alignment studies, developed transition guidance, and is now in the process of providing multi-stage professional development to district and school leaders.

Indiana has developed detailed plans to make CCSS accessible to English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Based on its participation in the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), Indiana is planning to revise its English Language Proficiency Standards by 2014-15 with support from a new Coordinator of English Learning and several stakeholder and advisory groups. The state is also analyzing how to ensure that students with disabilities can also access CCSS. The state is using Acuity assessments as a diagnostic and predictive measure of whether students are on target to pass standardized assessments. Schools are able to use this information to tailor instruction, while the state plans to use it to identify promising instructional practices for replication.

The state has planned three stages of professional development: transition planning, deeper understanding of content frameworks, and tools and resources. Currently, the state is providing training to give district and school administrators and curriculum directors a deep understanding of the new standards and content frameworks. The state is working collaboratively with educators in K-12 and higher education to develop guidance documents and has produced videos that detail instructional changes that CCSS will require and the associated tools and resources.

The state has also evaluated the quality and alignment of its textbooks and curricular materials and is working with a curriculum council to develop and vet instructional materials. Finally, the state has put a strong emphasis on accelerating learning opportunities by expanding access and enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and providing state college credit for students who successfully pass AP exams. The state is also increasing the number of schools that offer an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. To further incentivize accelerated learning, the state provides a \$4,000 scholarship to students who graduate from high school in 3 years and allows students to receive credit for courses by demonstrating proficiency.

The state is currently piloting interim use of ACT and SAT assessments to provide transition to CCSS expectations for high schools before PARCC assessments become

available. Indiana will use existing determinations of college-readiness defined on these tests and determine through the pilot whether to use these assessments until PARCC assessments are implemented. The state is also incorporating CCSS items into state assessments to the extent possible and will report separate subscores on CCSS assessment items where possible.

The state has also placed a major focus on teacher preparation and licensing as key levers in ensuring quality standards-aligned instruction. The state is currently developing licensure assessments to measure candidates' mastery of newly developed teacher standards that are aligned to CCSS. Additionally, the state is developing a CCSS-aligned basic skills test that will be required for admission to any teacher preparation program in the state beginning in 2013.

Principle 2: Differentiated Accountability and Supports

1. Describe the **measures and metrics** the state proposes to use to make accountability determinations (including AMOs) to drive college and career-readiness. [See 2A and B]

Indiana proposes to use an A-F grading system for all schools and districts with the goal of improving clarity and increasing stakeholder engagement in comparison to its previous system. The state has separate metrics for elementary/middle schools and high schools based on data and assessment availability. Elementary and middle schools are evaluated based on student achievement in English language arts/math and student growth. High schools are evaluated based on student achievement on End-of-Course exams in English and algebra, 4 and 5-year graduation rates, and college and career-readiness as measured by AP/IB exams, dual enrollment, and industry certification.

The state plans to calculate AMOs based on school grades with the ultimate goal of all schools and subgroups receiving an "A" or improving by two letter grades by 2020 and having all subgroups receive at least a "C" or show substantial growth. Additionally, schools must receive an "A" or improve by at least one letter grade by 2015. If the state is able to reach this goal, it will have reduced its achievement gap by 20% by 2020 and 65% of all non-proficient students will become proficient. The state notes that it selected these AMOs because they place a much larger focus on college and career-readiness than the default alternatives provided by USED.

In the state's grading system, Priority schools are defined as those that receive an "F" or a "D" or "F" for two or more consecutive years. Focus schools are those that receive a "D." The state notes that in modeling, 95% of Title I schools with the largest achievement gaps would be captured in this definition.

2. To what extent is **student growth** included in the accountability system? How is it used to advance college and career-readiness? [See 2A and B]

Indiana plans to use a growth model similar to that in use in Colorado that makes use of student growth percentiles (SGPs) to evaluate student growth from year-to-year based on peers across the state. The accountability system includes measures of student growth for elementary and middle schools with metrics for growth of students in the bottom 25% and growth of the remaining 75% of students. The state defines high growth as being above the 65th percentile and low growth as falling below the 35th percentile.

3. How is the state including and advancing **subgroup accountability and closing achievement gaps**? [See 2A, B, and E]

Indiana proposes using a super subgroup composed of the bottom 25% of students in order to target achievement gaps. The request notes that while many Indiana schools have underperforming student populations, the size of subgroups frequently falls under the threshold required for accountability.

The state presents strong data demonstrating that students in this new supergroup are historically underperforming. Indiana's modeling indicates that students in the bottom 25% pass the state assessment at a rate 50% lower than the top 75%. Additionally, students in traditional subgroups that are not included in the bottom 25% have an average pass rate of 90%. Finally, the state notes that a greater percentage of schools will have students from each NCLB subgroup population included in subgroup calculations than they would if subgroups were defined by individual NCLB groups.

4. Describe the state's general system of **supports and interventions** for all schools and those designated as Priority, Focus or Reward schools. How does the state incorporate deeper analysis of school performance such as through diagnostic review? [See 2A, D, E, F, G]

The state will make use of Technical Assistance Teams (TAT) to conduct quality reviews of schools designated as Focus and Priority schools to make recommendations for interventions. These reviews will recommend interventions tied to The Mass Insight Readiness Model. The interventions will center on readiness to learn, readiness to teach, and readiness to act and could include changes in staffing, scheduling, or performance incentives. The LEA then implements these interventions with support and oversight from the IDOE. The state does not fully describe the system of supports and interventions offered to other schools beyond the Focus and Priority categories.

5. Describe how the state will address priority schools utilizing the USED **turnaround principles**. [See 2D]

LEAs with schools identified as Priority or Focus schools will be required to select and implement interventions from a framework developed by Mass Insight. Plans for these interventions will be submitted to the state education agency for review to ensure the selected interventions match school needs. LEAs that fail to comply will risk losing their school improvement funding. Additionally, the state will conduct monitoring visits to determine the fidelity of intervention implementation.

The state has recently implemented a process of school turnaround in which an external management team is assigned to a school to operate either part or all of a school using existing school funding. This is the most dramatic intervention used in the most chronically under-performing schools. Other Priority schools receive partners to work with leadership to implement targeted improvements. Both external management teams and partners have specific data benchmarks they must meet. The turnaround process has a particular focus on family and community engagement as key variable for generating support for turnaround and sustaining improvement.

Under Indiana's proposed accountability system, Priority schools most hold a public hearing and revise their school improvement plans during years 1-3 of identification. The local board can also request that the State Board of Education appoint an outside team to assist in development of a new plan. In years 4-5, the state appoints a technical assistance team to conduct a comprehensive review and make a recommendation for significant intervention. If a school reaches Priority status for a 6th year, the state board conducts a hearing to consider options for the school including merger, external management, or other options.

The state notes a desire to expedite the current six-year timeline for direct state intervention in Priority schools and State Superintendent Bennett is planning to ask the legislature to allow state intervention after four consecutive years as an "F" school or five consecutive years as a "D" or "F" school.

6. How will the state build **capacity of schools and districts** to improve student achievement? [See 2G]

The state plans to provide Priority and Focus schools with the Mass Insight Readiness Model turnaround framework to help drive the interventions needed in schools and improve their capacity to raise student achievement. This model can include assessment and data analysis training, revised schedules, extended learning time, etc.

The state also plans to collect and disseminate promising practices from reward schools to schools across the state.

Principle 3: Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support

1. Describe the state's plan for development of **guidelines** or, if the state is further along in development, the state's **plan and system for educator evaluation** and the extent to which it advances student achievement. [See 3 A and B]

Indiana passed legislation in 2011 requiring LEAs to develop educator evaluation systems by July 2012 and is currently piloting both a state model and district-developed models in a total of 6 districts. The state model was developed with extensive input from educators and the pilot is being overseen by an Educator Evaluation Cabinet of key stakeholders.

The state's educator evaluation guidelines require annual evaluation, use of multiple measures, feedback tied to professional development, and use to inform personnel decisions including tenure attainment and loss. The state has developed a default model that it is currently piloting and that districts will be able to adopt fully or in-part. Districts that modify the state model or propose alternate systems must meet state guidelines. The state has a statewide growth model in place for reading and math in grades 4-8 and has established working groups of teachers to identify ways to measure growth in non-tested grades and subjects. Indiana is also conducting training across the state to prepare for statewide implementation.

The state is gathering data and feedback during this pilot to inform statewide implementation in the 2012-2013 school year. Principal evaluation is still under development, but will include the school's accountability grade as a factor. Additionally, the state plans to examine any significant discrepancies between school grades and educator evaluation ratings.

Principle 4: Administrative/Reporting Burden

1. Beyond an assurance, each state is required to examine and **reduce as appropriate administrative/reporting burdens** on LEAs. While it is not clearly included in USED's waiver application, does the state's request address this issue? [See full request]

Indiana aims to increase alignment of efforts and funding through LEA reporting and approval of school intervention plans. The goal is to align federal and state efforts into a coherent strategy grounded in data to meet student needs.