

Summary of State ESEA Flexibility Request

STATE: Oklahoma

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]

Oklahoma's request demonstrates a comprehensive vision for achieving the state's goal of all students being college, career, and citizen-ready by 2020. The request describes numerous recent reforms to support enhanced standards, assessments, and accountability and articulates specific plans for building state, district, and school capacity.

Oklahoma raises the bar on college and career-readiness through a proposed bold new accountability system that includes a far greater number of measures than NCLB but retains the focus on disaggregation and public reporting. The state's proposed accountability system is well aligned with the CCSSO principles and has a particularly strong set of supports and interventions targeted to the needs of schools and districts.

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

Oklahoma does not explicitly provide a definition of college, career, and citizen-readiness other than through the metrics it defines in its accountability system. The state's request also mentions the value of problem-solving, entrepreneurship, and engaged and informed citizens. The state has worked to increase rigor including through raising its high school graduation requirements as recommended by the American Diploma Project.

3. How does the state's request articulate a commitment to **innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement** toward designing and implementing college and career ready

systems of accountability and supports, as well as other relevant areas? [See Overview; 2A-Summary of Accountability System; full request]

Oklahoma has made an express commitment to transforming the way the state education agency operates in order to better support schools with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation. The state has contracted with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute to support this transition. The state is also exploring best practices from other states to develop their A-F school grading system. The state demonstrates a history of raising standards over time and has legislation that mandates a formal review and revision of standards every six years. Additionally, the state has built in an ongoing evaluation into their educator evaluation system.

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]

Oklahoma plans to utilize capacity from the newly created Regional Educators Advancing College, Career, and Citizen Readiness Higher (REAC3H) network of districts as a means of disseminating information, sharing best practices, providing training, etc. The state has also developed a Ways to Improve School Effectiveness (WISE) online planning tool that will provide assessment, planning, and monitoring tools to schools and districts. The state has convened a Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) Commission that is working to determine appropriate teacher and principal qualitative frameworks, identify specifications for a value-added model, and develop regulations for approval by the State Board. The state has already passed a significant amount of legislation that enables the use of evaluation to inform personnel decisions.

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]

Oklahoma's request includes a strong plan to transition to college and career-ready standards that is already underway. The primary focus during the initial year of adoption (2010-2011) was building awareness among key stakeholders and helping educators understand how CCSS are different from existing state standards. During the current school year, the state has focus on providing technical support to districts including alignment studies and an online portal of resources. In 2012-13, the state will utilize the REAC3H network to provide support to other districts including training and professional development. The state is also developing CCSS toolkits and using a train-

the-trainer model to support districts. Additionally, the state intends to hire 60 REAC3H coaches to provide direct assistance with CCSS implementation at the district, school, and classroom level.

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]

Oklahoma proposes to use an A-F school grading system for all schools and districts. The grading system contains the following measures: (33%) student test scores on state standardized tests in reading, math, science, social studies and writing (including end-of-course tests in high school); (17%) on learning gains in reading and math; (17%) on the improvement of the lowest quartile of students in reading and math; and (33%) on whole school improvements.

The state has a large number of whole school indicators. At the high school level, these are: completion of state's college and career preparatory curriculum; graduation rate, parent and community engagement; school culture; performance and participation in AP/IB/industry certification; postsecondary readiness (measured with SAT or ACT); graduation rate of at-risk students; and the school's performance trend. At the elementary/middle level, the whole school indicators are: attendance; parent and community engagement; school culture, drop-out rate, and accelerated coursework.

Many of these measures go beyond what is required in NCLB and several are directly tied to college and career-readiness including AP/IB/industry certification, postsecondary readiness, and accelerated coursework. While the precise weighting of the school improvement measures is yet to be determined, with such a long list, there is a danger of key measures such as high school graduation rates receiving small weight in the overall accountability system.

These measures will be aggregated into a grade for each school/district but the criteria for each grade level have not yet been established. Additionally, schools will receive a + or – on their grade based on their performance in meeting AMOs and their teacher and leader effectiveness ratings. Schools that receive a grade of F will be identified as Priority schools and those that receive a grade of D+, D, or D- will be identified as Focus schools. Those that receive grades of A+ or A will be considered Reward schools.

AMOs will be based on each subgroup (and all students) across four categories: math performance and growth, reading performance and growth, participation, and school indicator (graduation or attendance depending on school level). A school may have up

to 40 AMOs depending on the number of subgroups (with minimum n-size of 25 students).

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]

Oklahoma is considering how to operationalize measurement of growth in reading and math as part of its grading system. In assessing schools' progress toward AMOs, the state will award schools with one point for each student that moves up one proficiency level (in a 4-level scale), two points for each student that moves up two levels, and three points for each student who moves up three levels. This will then be averaged and converted to a standard score to make up the math and reading growth components of the AMO. This model does not appear to measure growth to standard.

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

Oklahoma has several components of its accountability system that are focused on equity and disaggregation. First, the state has a focus on the lowest performing quartile of students for all schools, which the state anticipates includes many students who are in historically low-performing subgroups. At the high school level, there is also a focus on graduation rates of at-risk students. The state has established school-level AMOs for each subgroup with a minimum n-size of 25, so schools will also be held accountable for this separately.

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]

Oklahoma has a very comprehensive set of supports and interventions for schools and districts. For Priority schools, the SEA will make a determination of the LEA's capacity implement school turnaround using the principles articulated by USED. If the state determines that the LEA will not be able to facilitate improvement, the school will be turned over to a statewide school district called C3 that may be operated by an Educational Management Organization (EMO). During the time a school is under state control, the SEA will work to enhance the capacity of the LEA to allow for future return of the school to district authority. Priority schools use the WISE online planning tool based on the state's Nine Essential Elements for school improvement. This will guide the school through a self-assessment and planning process and provide for school, LEA,

and SEA monitoring. The school can also apply to use a portion of their 21st CCLC funds (if applicable) for extended learning time activities that meet state guidance.

Focus schools will use similar tools but will place an emphasis on improving performance of the subgroup(s) that are underperforming. Additionally, LEAs with Focus schools will be required to set aside Title I funds to provide school choice (minimum of 5%). All schools will use a school improvement planning process, and all schools that are in the bottom 25% but have not been identified as Priority or Focus schools will be designated as targeted intervention schools and must implement strategies from a menu of state options. The State Board will have the authority to review the budget expenditures of LEAs with these schools to ensure funds are being spent on appropriate intervention strategies. The state has plans for monitoring of Focus, Priority, and targeted intervention schools including targeted site visits, status reports, and online monitoring. Further, the state will form student support teams to conduct diagnostic reviews in all Priority schools and selected Focus schools to provide additional analysis and support to low-performing schools. Finally, the state will use Educational Leadership Coaches to assist Priority schools with feedback, support, and coaching through site visits.

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

Oklahoma plans to apply the USED turnaround principles in priority schools through staff performance reviews and replacement, increased autonomy, ongoing professional development, redesigned schedules, instructional alignment, data reviews, family and community engagement, and safety and discipline. The state will have responsibility for appointing leadership to operate schools in the C3 either directly or in partnership with an EMO. If schools fail to make progress, the state board can choose to close the school and transfer students to higher performing schools in the LEA, another LEA that does not have any Focus/Priority schools, or the C3. A school may exit the C3 district once the LEA demonstrates capacity to support school improvement, the state board agrees to relinquish control, the LEA demonstrates improvement in other schools, and parents of students agree by a majority vote to return the school to the LEA.

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

Oklahoma has a very detailed and thoughtful plan for building capacity of schools and districts. This includes a focus on the SEA, LEAs, and schools. Specifically, the SEA is a participant in numerous multistate consortia and collaboratives including Chiefs for Change, Implementing Common Core Systems (ICCS), and the Partnership for

Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Additionally, the SEA is conducting professional development and undergoing internal reorganization to be more supportive of schools.

To build capacity in districts and schools, the state has created a tiered model of supports with general, focused, and intensive supports provided to schools based on performance. General supports will include access to the WISE tool, curricular academies, and tools for curriculum analysis. Focused supports will include access to a resource toolkit from research in the state on effective practices. Intensive support will include student support teams, educational leadership coaching, and onsite data review.

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]

Oklahoma's model of educator evaluation is still under development with many decisions yet to be made. The state has taken numerous actions to lay the foundation for design and implementation, however. The state convened a Teacher and Leader Evaluation (TLE) Commission which has defined five rating levels, and articulated a system with multiple measures of effectiveness (50% qualitative, 35% student academic growth, and 15% other academic measures). The Commission will soon determine which teacher and leader professional practice framework to adopt from among several existing models. The commission has also explored how to best measure student growth and has made preliminary recommendations for a value-added model.

The state has taken numerous steps to codify required use of the evaluation system in legislation including to inform incentive pay, career ladders, reduction in force, dismissal, and professional development. The State Board will adopt a statewide evaluation system (with limited room for district variation) by Dec. 15, 2011 with selected district piloting in 2012-2013 and full statewide implementation in 2013-14. This is a very ambitious timeline, but the state has already undertaken significant work in design of a model and definition of use.

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]

Oklahoma's plan does not explicitly address reducing burden beyond the required assurance.