

Dear Chief State School Officer,

In an effort to acknowledge both the hard work that State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and educators have already completed to ensure implementation of high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, as well as the need of some SEAs to make targeted adjustments to the implementation of these systems, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) announced on May 9, 2014 that we were seeking input on how best to support systems and educators in this work. We pledged to work with SEAs to understand the additional support they need to help achieve our shared goal of ensuring students are prepared to succeed in college, careers, and life.

Over the past several weeks, I have had the opportunity to speak with nearly every chief State school officer about their State's progress in this area. From these conversations, we understand that while some States are on track with their implementation efforts, others need targeted flexibility for implementation steps, timeline, and sequencing to support progress implementing high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet the requirements of Principle 3 of ESEA flexibility. As you know, the requirements of Principle 3 include developing and implementing high-quality teacher and leader evaluation and support systems that are based on multiple measures, including student growth as a significant factor and other measures of professional practice, in order to better support and recognize educators.

As a result of our information gathering, I am pleased to share that the Department will implement a process that provides SEAs with support that will enable them to meet the requirements of Principle 3. In this process, the Department will work with an SEA that has a plan for implementing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet the requirements of Principle 3, and that has the necessary authority to ensure its LEAs implement those systems, but that indicates it needs additional flexibility to implement that plan.

We will also continue to support those SEAs that do not need this additional flexibility because they are on track to fully implement their teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet the requirements of Principle 3 in the 2014-2015 school year. If those SEAs remain on track, they will be eligible for consideration for a longer renewal of ESEA flexibility in the Spring of 2015. We will also work with these SEAs to determine additional opportunities to support and recognize their efforts to implement these systems.

We believe these changes will ensure that SEAs and LEAs will continue to progress with implementation of their teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, while offering flexibility where needed for targeted, State-specific adjustments to implementation steps, timelines, and sequencing. The Department is finalizing the details of this process and will provide specific guidance in the near future. Your

ESEA flexibility contact will reach out to provide those additional details and assistance in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, the Department will continue to move forward with considering one-year extension requests for Window 1 and Window 2 SEAs. For those SEAs that have indicated the need for additional flexibility to meet the requirements of Principle 3, if the Department approves the SEA's extension request, the letter will indicate that your ESEA flexibility approval is extended through the 2014-2015 school year subject to your SEA continuing to work with the Department on your proposed changes to Principle 3. The Department expects all SEAs to continue their efforts toward ensuring that LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that will meet the ESEA flexibility requirements, including those States that may need additional flexibility on Principle 3.

Your continued work on all of the ESEA flexibility principles will ensure a comprehensive, systemic approach to enhancing instruction and improving learning for all students. Our team looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you in this work.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Delisle