

Delaware Department of Education ESEA Flexibility Renewal Proposal

March 31, 2015

Summary

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) is requesting renewal of its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility application. The purpose of this document is to explain updates to the State's current ESEA Flexibility application based off of feedback from the public and in response to new requirements from the U.S. Department of Education (USED). The updates build on current Delaware law and are meant to support the ongoing implementation of college and career ready standards and aligned assessments; differentiated accountability, recognition and support; and educator evaluation and support systems.

This proposal is aligned to Delaware's College- and Career-Readiness (CCR) goals, draws upon lessons learned and promising practices from implementation to date, responds to federal flexibility and enables DDOE to align policy in a manner that best serves Delaware's state education goals and context.

The DDOE will submit a "redlined" or track changes renewal document to USED; however, for ease of reading, this document summarizes the critical elements updated in the State's renewal application.

DDOE encouraged all interested stakeholders to provide comments on the proposal. Comments were shared electronically at DOEAccountability@doe.k12.de.us. Additionally, DDOE met with individual stakeholder groups and offered public presentations on this proposal throughout March to gather feedback.

Principle 1 – College and Career Ready Standards and Aligned Assessments

Standards

For the past two years, the DDOE has implemented with high quality the *Common Ground for the Common Core* (CGCC) initiative, which is the State's effort to ensure greater CCSS implementation progress. The voluntary initiative engages Guiding Teams from Delaware schools in monthly professional development that is grounded in a school-specific 2-year implementation plan that went through a rigorous approval process.

The CGCC initiative began as a project to help bring Delaware educators up to speed on what the standards are, its implications for their day-to-day classroom instruction, and identify changes necessary to ensure successful implementation that will benefit all students. Through ongoing professional development, the Guiding Teams—which are made up of teachers and coaches from both ELA and Math, as well as special education and ELL educators—receive intense support from DDOE, state and national experts and their colleagues, with the goal of taking the information back to work with educators in their building. Year one focused on the CCSS instructional shifts. Year two is focusing on supporting the transition to a balanced assessment system (i.e., formative, interim, use of Professional Learning Communities to focus on evidence of student results).

Each Guiding Team receives support based on where they find themselves along the implementation continuum. The DDOE provides support and technical assistance to districts through site visits for the CGCC initiative. A protocol for support was developed in August 2014 and launched in October 2014. It focuses on four areas:

- Implementing CCSS across the curriculum;
- Identifying and supporting special populations

- Providing professional learning and support to principals and teachers; and,
- Leading and problem solving.

In the 2014-15 school year, teams from nearly 100 schools are participating in the CGCC initiative. They are engaged in evaluating the impact of their implementation plans based on Thomas Guskey's framework for professional development evaluation. Teams are charged to go beyond evaluation of the training itself to include data on the impact of the training (at both the teacher and student level). This serves as a professional development opportunity for the Guiding Teams, as schools share their best practices and lessons learned as well as provide feedback on the evidence shared by their colleagues.

Based on feedback from superintendents, the Teaching and Learning Cadre and current CGCC participants, DDOE plans to extend the initiative during the 2015-16 school year. In year three, school teams will be able to pick from one of the following areas of professional development and supports: assessment practices, with a focus on implementation of interim assessments; cross-disciplinary literacy; or, serving special populations, such as English Language Learners and special education students.

Assessments

During the 2014-2015 school year, DDOE is rolling out the full suite of assessments that were developed as part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium—the State's effort to ensure that the statewide summative assessments fully align with the Common Core State Standards. This rollout incorporates the Digital Library (inclusive of formative assessment resources) for grades K-12, the Interim assessments for grades 3-12, and the Summative assessment for grades 3-8 and 11. The summative assessment window for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics opens in March and will continue through June.

The DDOE continues to draw upon insights gained from our work with the Guiding Teams in the Common Ground for Common Core initiative and structures such as monthly meetings with Teaching and Learning Cadre (Directors of Instruction/Assessment), and Literacy and Math Cadre (instructional coaches), and Chiefs meetings to gather feedback and conduct needs analysis, as well as to disseminate information and resources that support assessment implementation efforts.

As discussed below, in response to stakeholder feedback, Delaware is requesting to reset its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) after the administration of the Smarter ELA and Mathematics assessments to more accurately reflect performance across the state.

During the public Town Halls on the ESEA Flexibility Renewal application and in other public venues, DDOE staff have received feedback about the need to provide stability with respect to the assessment system. The new assessments will be the third set of assessments in ELA and Mathematics offered in the state in the past six years. During the same time frame, the State has also made changes to assessments in other subject areas, such as removing specific end of course assessments. While these changes have enabled the State to improve its assessments to better align with the college- and career-readiness goals, it has brought about confusion to the field. Parents and school/district staff want to have a clear understanding of when students are testing, what assessments are offered in which subjects and how those assessments will count.

In response to this feedback, the DDOE is developing a 5-year assessment plan to outline any proposed changes to the Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA). For example, the State is transitioning to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and will need to update its Science assessment to better align with those standards in the near future. The 5-year plan provides detail about that transition so that parents and educators can prepare for the changes. The 5-year plan is currently being vetted with superintendents and other school and district representatives. Once the plan is finalized, DDOE will

communicate the plan to the public, so that they have a clear understanding of the assessments required by the state, versus those that are offered at the local level.

The State has also developed an assessment inventory tool to review the tests administered by the state, districts, and individual schools with the goal of decreasing the testing burden on students and teachers and increasing the time available for teaching. To support a statewide testing review, each school district will receive financial and technical support from the DDOE to take an inventory of all assessments given in each school. That includes funding to pay someone to lead the review over the next few months. The state will also provide assistance in communicating new testing plans to parents, families, and communities.

To help the public better understand the extent of state assessments, the Department has analyzed the amount of total assessment time per grade level spent on state required assessments for the 2014-15 school year. In most grades the transition to the Smarter assessments is an actual reduction in the time spent on testing. With the transition to Smarter Balanced, Delaware has removed many of the previous requirements for students to take end of course assessments in high school. While conversations are ongoing about the type and extent of assessment to be required at the state level, the DDOE believes it is critical to provide transparent information to students and families about the assessment expectations through the transition to assessments from our participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. DDOE has and will continue to share information about assessment time (and the 5-year plan upon approval) through as many communications channels as possible.

Principle 2 – Differentiated Accountability, Recognition and Support

The purpose of this section of the document is to outline the development of the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF), the measures included and how the Framework can be used to identify required categories of schools under ESEA Flexibility and the state-designated Recognition schools. The intent is to align the classification systems for all schools using the base methodology within the DSSF.

Delaware School Success Framework

Federal law requires a single statewide system of accountability and supports for all public schools and districts. Based on the current ESEA Flexibility Request, Delaware uses closely related but different criteria for identification of Priority schools, Reward schools, Focus schools, and Recognition schools, based predominantly on the elements that are part of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determination. Numerous stakeholders in Delaware over the past few years have voiced their concerns with AYP. Recognizing that AYP does not honor the full complexity of school performance, starting in the Summer of 2014, DDOE has engaged with stakeholders across the state to devise a comprehensive and authentic structure for school and district performance that incorporates multiple measures related to college and career readiness for all students.

Since, July 2014, a group of education stakeholders from across the state, known as the Accountability Framework Working Group (AFWG), has come together to develop and recommend a new, multiple measure accountability system, called the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF). The AFWG is made up of school and district leaders from across the state, a parent representative, a teacher representative and a representative from the State Board of Education. The development of the DSSF was aided by vast public input on what Delaware residents wanted to see in a new accountability system. Delaware is the first state in the nation to survey its residents for their perspectives on how best to measure school performance. In addition to receiving feedback through four public Town Halls, the Department of Education received over 6,000 responses on a statewide accountability survey. Responses from that survey directly influenced the recommendations of the AFWG, and will further help the State as it engages in a process to redesign its federally-required school report cards.

The Delaware School Success Framework will apply to all schools and districts in the state. This Framework raises the expectations for students, schools and districts as it is focused on college and career readiness and includes multiple measures that honor the complexity of school performance. The DSSF is an index made up four categories (Academic Achievement, Growth, On Track to Graduation and College and Career Readiness), which include nine (elementary and middle schools) to twelve (high schools) individual measures. The measures are:

Academic Achievement

1. **Proficiency in ELA adjusted for Participation rate** – Proficiency of full academic year students in grades 3-8 and 11 on Smarter ELA multiplied by the school/district participation rate on that assessment
2. **Proficiency in Mathematics adjusted for Participation rate** – Proficiency of full academic year students in grades 3-8 and 11 on Smarter Mathematics multiplied by the school/district participation rate on that assessment
3. **Proficiency in Science adjusted for Participation rate** – Proficiency of full academic year students in grades 5, 8 and 10 on DCAS Science multiplied by the school/district participation rate on that assessment
4. **Proficiency in Social Studies adjusted for Participation rate** – Proficiency of full academic year students in grades 4, 7 and in high school on DCAS Social Studies and the high school social studies assessment (per the 5-year assessment plan) multiplied by the school/district participation rate on that assessment

Schools and districts will be held accountable for closing achievement gaps through the use of an aggregate, unduplicated count “Student Gap Group” (discussed in detail below). The group will consist of students in subgroups that have historically demonstrated achievement gaps. DDOE will continue to report performance of all subgroups.

Growth

1. **Growth in ELA** – Amount of growth in ELA demonstrated at the school level from full academic year students.
2. **Growth in Mathematics** – Amount of growth in ELA demonstrated at the school level from full academic year students.

The specific growth model is discussed in more detail below.

On Track to Graduation

1. **Average Daily Attendance (ES/MS)** - Total number of days of attendance for all students divided by the total number of school days in a given year.
2. **On Track in 9th Grade (HS)** - Percent of 9th grade students that have earned at least 4 credits by July 31 in four of the following areas: ELA, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and/or Foreign Language.
 - Schools will receive a bonus in the calculation for “at risk” students that earn 4 credits by the end of 9th grade. At risk is defined as a student that scores in lowest quartile of the 8th grade statewide summative assessment in either ELA or Mathematics
 - Any student with an IEP that targets graduation in more than four years will be considered to have met the credit expectation that corresponds with their specific IEP for 9th grade. This will be determined through an appeals process window
3. **Four year Cohort Graduation Rate (HS)** - The percentage of students who graduate from a secondary school with a regular high school diploma within four years.
4. **Five year Cohort Graduation Rate (HS)** - The percentage of students who graduate from a secondary school with a regular high school diploma within five years.

5. **Six year Cohort Graduation Rate (HS)** - The percentage of students who graduate from a secondary school with a regular high school diploma within six years.

College and Career Readiness

1. **Growth to Proficiency in ELA (ES/MS)** - Percent of full academic year students on track to be proficient in ELA in less than three assessment periods or by 11th grade
2. **Growth to Proficiency in Mathematics (ES/MS)** - Percent of full academic year students on track to be proficient in Mathematics in less than three assessment periods or by 11th grade
3. **College and Career Preparation (HS)** – Percent of graduating students who have demonstrated success on one or more examples of college and career preparation in high school

Options for demonstrating success on the College and Career Preparation metric include:

- 3+ on both Smarter ELA and Mathematics
- 1550+ on SAT (or equivalent on the new SAT)
- 3+ on AP (excluding AP Seminar)
- 4+ on IB
- B or higher grade in a Department approved non-elective course in the state course transfer matrix
- B or higher grade in a Department approved articulated course
- CTE certification with a 6+ (combined) on Smarter ELA and Mathematics
- CTE certification with completion of a co-op job training opportunity

Individual student data will be aggregated at the school and district levels to generate a numeric score for each category. Each of the measures contributes to a weighted value toward the overall index rating. Schools and districts will receive ratings based on performance in each category (e.g., Academic Achievement, Growth, On Track to Graduation, and College and Career Readiness) and the overall index on an as yet to be determined scale.

Prior to finalizing the weighting, metric targets and business rules, the State feels strongly that the DSSF needs to be validated with actual data to ensure that the system is not simply correlated with poverty levels within a school or district. After the release of the Smarter Balanced assessment data, the DDOE and the AFWG will work through Fall 2015 to analyze the data and make final recommendations to the Secretary on metric weighting, targets and business rules. This process will help confirm that (1) the weighting appropriately reflects Delaware’s stated college- and career-ready goals and (2) no school will receive the highest rating category if there are significant achievement or graduation gaps that are not closing in the school.

In addition to adjusting proficiency based on participation and reporting the proficiency of tested students and the participation rate individually, the State will study whether to include a requirement that no school with a participation rate below 95 percent can receive the state’s highest rating. If the state proceeds with this rule, a specific exemption for very small schools will be put in place.

The Delaware Department of Education intends to use this single, improved system for all accountability determinations, thereby improving determinations and reducing complexity, with the goal of College and Career Readiness for all students.

Growth

Delaware is committed to measuring individual student growth and student growth to proficiency at the school level. The State recognizes that improving performance is as important as static measures of proficiency. As such, the DSSF significantly takes into account growth across grades.

To better capture individual student growth across the full performance spectrum, DDOE is proposing to move away from its previous “Value Table” approach to calculating growth for school accountability. DDOE has contracted with a well-regarded research firm (Education Analytics or EA) to support the creation of a new, valid and reliable school growth model. EA has a strong history of creating and calculating growth models for districts and states. EA has been responsible for facilitating AFWG discussions on growth to identify a model that best fits the unique needs of Delaware schools and districts. Based on recommendations from the AFWG, the new growth model for school accountability will:

- Be a retrospective analysis of growth to allow for the highest possible statistical precision in growth measures for school accountability;
- Include multiple prior assessments for an individual student to improve growth path estimation precision;
- Adjust for ELL students and special education students to reduce impacts from external influences on growth; and,
- Consider multiple growth periods for schools to reduce estimation imprecision.

Many states are considering options for measuring growth during the assessment transition years. Statistically, modeling growth between assessment suites is straightforward and supported by the academic literature. It is important to note that this is not a new issue: states change assessment suites frequently and on a technical level it is done every year with assessment form changes. There is no reason to believe that the change to the Smarter Balanced assessments will introduce technical challenges over and above other known assessment transition challenges that have been solved or can be mitigated. While EA is confident that the assessment transition will not cause significant challenges to growth modeling, EA will work with DDOE throughout 2015 to monitor growth and assessment quality metrics to ensure there are no systematic failures in the system.

As discussed in more detail below, DDOE is requesting to take a one-year accountability ratings “pause” to support the transition to the Smarter Balanced assessments and the DSSF. Having an additional year of data will provide added stability to both the growth and growth-to-proficiency measures on the DSSF.

Addressing Achievement Gaps

The U.S. Department of Education in its ESEA Flexibility Renewal guidance has requested that each state explain how it is addressing the closing of achievement gaps in its accountability system. The DSSF will take into account achievement gaps in three areas: Proficiency in ELA, Proficiency in Mathematics and the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate. For each of those measures, schools and districts will receive points based on their ability to (1) meet overall annual performance targets and (2) reduce the gap between the *Student Gap Group* and the overall statewide average. Annual targets for both overall performance and gap reduction will be set in the Fall of 2015 after the release of Smarter Balanced assessment data from the 2014-15 school year. The DDOE will run statistical tests after receiving Smarter data to ensure that no school receives the highest school rating if significant achievement gaps persist and to ensure that the State is not creating perverse incentives for schools and districts in this transition to a Student Gap Group.

The achievement gap calculation will use the same student test and graduation targets as those that are set for the DSSF. The distance from the overall statewide average and (1) performance at Achievement Level 3 or higher on Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics assessments or (2) the 4-year cohort graduation rate of the *Student Gap Group* becomes the “achievement gap.” The Student Gap Group is an aggregate, unduplicated count of students that are in groups that have historically had achievement gaps. Student groups combined into the Student Gap Group include ethnicity/race (African American, Hispanic, Native American), Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged (Direct Certification) and English

Language Learners. To calculate the combined Student Gap Group, non-duplicated counts of students who score proficient or higher and are in the student subgroups are summed. No individual student counts more than one time, and all students belonging to included groups are counted once.

Addressing the achievement gap through this model actually fixes problems with a more traditional approach to gap groups. A major problem of using individual student subgroups to monitor the achievement gap is the count of students. Given the requirement in Delaware for an N-size of 30 for any subgroup to be included in accountability decisions, some schools with small student subgroup counts are not required to address achievement gaps through the current accountability system. The DSSF proposed model solves the problem by putting all gap groups into a single group. For example, under current rules, a school with 12 Hispanic students and 19 Economically Disadvantaged students would not have to meet specific subgroup targets for either of those groups. With a Student Gap Group, the total number of students would be above the threshold of 30, and thus the performance of each student in those subgroups would be accounted for in accountability decisions. In the end, this new approach leads to an increase in the State's ability to hold all schools accountable for closing achievement gaps.

Moreover, the DSSF provides a single achievement gap goal for schools. Under AYP, some schools had more than 10 individual student subgroup gap targets. By reducing the number of achievement gap goals, the school can target its supports in a more efficient and focused manner.

After studying the 2014-15 data in the Fall to develop the accountability system weights and targets, the State is committed to take one of the following paths to ensure that a school does not receive the State's highest accountability rating if significant achievement gaps are not closed:

- Create rule that no school can receive highest rating if gaps not closing;
- Reduce rating by one level; or
- Demonstrate through data that the highest rated schools do not have gaps.

Delaware remains committed to continue reporting the performance of all subgroups, and all subgroups will continue to have Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) as required by federal law.

Resetting Assessment Targets and Accountability Ratings "Pause"

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) through the ESEA Flexibility Renewal is allowing states to take advantage of two new opportunities for flexibility in Principle 2. To enable states to successfully transition to new assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards, USED will allow states to (1) reset their assessment targets (also known as Annual Measurable Objectives or AMOs) no later than January 31, 2016; and (2) request a one year "pause" in the implementation of accountability ratings.

Based on feedback from the field through the State's public engagement process, DDOE is requesting to take advantage of both flexibility options. As such, DDOE will not assign new ratings for all schools and districts based on assessments administered in the 2014-15 school year. Instead, schools and districts will retain their AYP determination based off of assessments given in the 2013-14 school year (i.e., AYP status for the 2014-15 school year). Delaware will fully implement the first year DSSF ratings for accountability using data from the 2015-16 school year. Regardless of the accountability ratings "pause," the federal requirement to identify Priority, Focus and Reward schools remains (the process for doing so is described below). The DDOE also intends to use the DSSF for distinguishing levels of district support through its performance routine process.

Taking advantage of the one-year accountability ratings pause will allow the State to beta test the system, ensuring that the State has the appropriate business rules, weighting and targets in place. The AFWG, with support from DDOE, will work through Fall 2015 to conduct target setting for each measure included in the Delaware School Success Framework, including establishing new Annual Measurable

Objectives for performance on the Smarter Balanced assessments. It is important that the State have operational Smarter Balanced assessment results prior to setting any overall or individual subgroup annual targets. The DDOE will use the additional time provided by the U.S. Department of Education to review progress and determine challenging, yet achievable, AMOs for all individual subgroups and Annual Measurement Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for English Language Learners.

Performance in meeting the individual DSSF measure targets will result in the provision of a single school and district classification. Once the targets are agreed upon, DDOE will share with schools and districts (for reporting purposes only) their respective classifications based off of the 2014-15 data. This “historical” report will serve as a baseline for schools and districts to improve upon in the future. DDOE will provide training to school and district leaders prior to the release of these reports to ensure that the new accountability system is understood.

Please see Appendix A for a visual representation of the calendar for transition to the Delaware School Success Framework.

Accountability for Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students (LEP)

Under the No Child Left behind Act of 2001, all students are required to participate in statewide summative assessments. The U.S. Department of Education issued Non-Regulatory Guidance on the Assessment and Accountability for Recently Arrived and Former Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students, which provides flexibility for states in assessing this population of students. Specifically, a state may exempt a recent arrival to the United States (i.e., during his/her first 12 months attending schools in the U.S.) student from one administration of the State’s reading/language arts assessment and may exclude the scores of recently arrived LEP students on State mathematics and reading/language arts assessments from one cycle of accountability determinations.

The State is requesting that all “recently arrived” English language learners be exempt from inclusion in accountability determinations for three years. In year one, the students would not participate in the Smarter ELA and Mathematics assessments or the Science assessment if the student arrives in that tested grade. In year two in the country (the first **full** academic year of attendance), the student would participate in assessments, but their scores would only serve as a baseline for calculating growth in year 3. In year 3 in the country, the student would participate in all assessments and their growth would be taken into account in accountability determinations. In year 4 in the country, the student would participate in all assessments and their performance and growth would be taken into account in accountability determinations. The State would continue to report the performance of ELs, including the recently arrived ELs who have been in the U.S. for more than two years, and incorporate those scores in the State’s AMOs and AMAOs.

Delaware’s student diversity has increased annually due to a rise in the enrollment of immigrant, refugee, and English learner students. Within the borders of the small state of Delaware, nearly 100 world languages are spoken. Students with limited or interrupted formal education with accompanying low or non-existent literacy skills are limited in their ability to access the academic content measured in state achievement assessments. Although local education agencies provide services to enable this subgroup to meet the same challenging academic standards expected of all students, it is unrealistic that these students will demonstrate proficiency on Common Core-aligned assessments within two years. Counting recently arrived English learners test scores in school and district ratings and including them in the State’s accountability system would unjustly penalize the schools, districts and the State, fail to adequately demonstrate the progress of the students while they are still acquiring the language of instruction, and may adversely affect educator evaluations.

Classification of Schools and Districts

The U.S. Department of Education requires Title I schools to be classified into three categories: Reward, Focus and Priority. Delaware has created a fourth category for Title I and non-Title I schools called Recognition. Moving forward, DDOE intends to use the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) to classify its schools within these categories.¹ The U.S. Department of Education has indicated that using a state’s rating system is permissible so long as the state demonstrates that it has identified the required number of schools that meet the ESEA Flexibility definitions.

For each ESEA Criterion there is a proposed way in which the DSSF will be used to identify schools.² By the end of 2015, this methodology will be used for the identification of a new cohort of 10 Focus schools (with 2015-16 school year as a planning year),³ at least two Reward schools, and up to 15 Recognition schools for 2015-16. A new cohort of Priority schools **will not** be identified for the 2015-16 school year, but the proposed new methodology is included to indicate how future cohorts may be identified.

Reward

USED currently requires states to identify two categories of Reward schools, “highest-performing” and “high-progress” annually. Delaware names one school in each category annually.

The DDOE proposes to name a “highest-performing” Title I school based on overall performance on the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) based on the 2014-15 school year data, given what is available. The DDOE proposes to name a “high-progress” Title I school based on year to year improvement of overall performance on the DSSF in the most recent two years. Additional criteria may be used to narrow the set of schools to name a Reward school in a given year, as described below.

To accommodate the transition to the Smarter Balanced assessments and the DSSF, schools will be named to Reward status for the 2015-16 school year in Fall 2015 using a modified calculation. Reward schools for 2015-16 school year will be named based on the DSSF overall score using data from the 2014-15 school year and the percent proficient of all students and individual student subgroups from data for the 2013-14 school year.

“Highest Performing” Reward School Criteria

Proposal for Meeting Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title I Status of School• Among the top 10% in performance based on overall DSSF score in the most recent two years
<i>Additional Criteria (as necessary)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Among the top 15% in the Academic Achievement category on the DSSF in the most recent year• Among the top 15% in the On-Track to Graduate category on the DSSF in the most recent year• A school is not eligible if its DSSF rating is reduced as a result of not meeting its closing the achievement gap goal or its participation rate requirement• The school is not currently a Focus or Priority school

¹ Note: A school may not fall into any of the classifications if it does not meet the specific performance and school type criteria.

² For the sections in Principle 2 on Reward, Recognition, Priority and Focus Schools, unless otherwise noted, LEA references district public schools.

³ Four current Focus schools will not exit from that status at the end of the 2014-15 school year, for a total of 14 Focus schools.

- Must meet all criteria above for the most recent and preceding year. (Note: for 2015-16 school year only, the preceding year calculation will be based only on the percent proficient of all students and individual student subgroups from data for the 2013-14 school year)
- The school is not reconfigured as a new school for accountability during the most recent two years

“High Progress” Reward School Criteria

Proposal for Meeting Criteria⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I Status of School • Among the top 10% in academic gains based on the overall DSSF score in the most recent year compared to the previous year (Note: for 2015-16 school year only, the preceding year calculation will be based only on the percent proficient of all students and individual student subgroups from data for the 2013-14 school year)
<p><i>Additional Criteria (as necessary)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I eligibility status of school • Among the top 15% in gains in the Academic Achievement category on the DSSF in the most recent year compared to previous year • Among the top 15% in gains in the On-Track to Graduation Category from the DSSF in the most recent year compared to previous year • A school is not eligible if its DSSF rating is reduced as a result of not meeting its closing the achievement gap goal or its participation rate requirement • The school is not currently a Focus or Priority school • The school is not reconfigured as a new school for accountability during the most recent two years

Recognition

The following is a proposal for Delaware’s category of Recognition. This is not a requirement of USED, but added in the state’s ESEA Flexibility Request. The DDOE believes that it is better to have a separate way of using the DSSF for this category because it allows for the inclusion of non-Title I schools. Title I Distinguished schools would also be selected from this group of schools.

The DDOE proposes to name up to 15 Recognition schools total across two categories: “Exceptional Performance” and “Closing the Achievement Gap.” Determinations will be based on overall performance on the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) in the most recent year and year to year improvement of overall performance on the DSSF in the most recent two years, respectively. Additional criteria may be used to narrow the set of schools to name a Recognition school, as described below.

To accommodate the transition to the Smarter Balanced assessments and the DSSF, schools will be named to Recognition status for the 2015-16 school year in Fall 2015 off of a modified calculation. Recognition schools for the 2015-16 school year will be named based on the DSSF overall rating using

⁴ Schools meeting the criteria will be ranked based on a weighted score of gain in overall DSSF score in the most recent year compared to previous year (80%) and Percent of Population in *Student Gap Group* (students in one or more of the groups African American, Hispanic, Native American, Students with Disabilities, ELLs and Low Income) in the most recent year (20%). For example, a school with an overall DSSF score of 90 and 84% of its population in the Student Gap Group, would have a weighted score of $(90 \times 0.80) + (84 \times 0.20) = 88.8$. This ranking will be used for prioritizing schools for Reward Status. A school may not be recognized as a Reward school more than one time in any four-year period, in order to recognize multiple schools achieving strong results for students.

data from the 2014-15 school year and the percent proficient of all students and individual student subgroups from data for the 2013-14 school year

Public charter schools are eligible to be identified as a Recognition school. The DDOE will name one public charter school as a Recognition school annually should a school meet the specific qualifications detailed below. Schools with selective admissions policies will not be considered for designation as a Recognition school.

“Exceptional Performance” Recognition School Criteria

Proposal for Meeting Criteria (Exceptional Performance)⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among the top 20% performance based on overall DSSF score in the most recent year
<i>Additional Criteria (as necessary)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among the top 20% performance based on overall DSSF score in the preceding year (Note: for 2015-16 school year only, the preceding year calculation will be based only on the percent proficient of all students and individual student subgroups from data for the 2013-14 school year) • The school is not reconfigured as a new school for accountability during the most recent two years

“Closing the Gap” Recognition School Criteria

Proposal for Meeting Criteria (Closing the Gap)⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among the top 20% in improvements based on overall DSSF score in the most recent year compared to the previous year. (For 2015-16 school year only, the preceding year calculation will be based only on the percent proficient of all students and student subgroups from the 2013-14 school year)
<i>Additional Criteria (as necessary) in Descending Order</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among the top 20% in improvements based on the Academic Achievement category of the DSSF in the most recent year compared to the previous year. • A school is not eligible if its DSSF rating is reduced as a result of not meeting its closing the achievement gap goal • The school is not reconfigured as a new school for accountability during the most recent two years

Focus

USED requires states to identify 10% of its Title I schools as “Focus schools” as part of ESEA Flexibility. This translates to approximately 14 schools for Delaware. Delaware currently has four Focus schools that have not met the criteria for exiting that status, and thus will remain Focus schools for the 2015-16 school year. DDOE will name a new cohort of 10 Focus schools by the start of the 2015-16 school year, using data from the DCAS assessments in school years 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14.

⁵ Schools meeting the criteria will be ranked based on a weighted score of gain in overall DSSF score in the most recent year compared to previous year (80%) and Percent of Population in *Student Gap Group* (students in one or more of the groups African American, Hispanic, Native American, Students with Disabilities, ELLs and Low Income) in the most recent year (20%). See footnote 3 for an example of the calculation of the weighted score. A school may not be recognized a Recognition school in consecutive years. A school that was a Recognition school in the previous year will be designated as a “Schools of Continuing Excellence” if it makes the list in the current year.

⁶ Schools meeting the criteria will be ranked based on a weighted score of gain in overall DSSF score in the most recent year compared to previous year (80%) and Percent of Population in *Student Gap Group* (students in one or more of the groups African American, Hispanic, Native American, Students with Disabilities, ELLs and Low Income) in the most recent year (20%). See footnote 3 for an example of the calculation of the weighted score. A school may not be recognized a Recognition school in consecutive years. A school that was Recognition schools in the previous year will be designated as a “Schools of Continuing Excellence” if it makes the list in the current year.

Thereafter, focus school determinations will be based on performance in the Academic Achievement category on the Delaware School Success Framework in the most recent two years. Additional criteria may be used to narrow the set of schools to name a Focus school in a given year, as described below.

For 2015-16 school year **only** to accommodate the transition to the Smarter Balanced assessments and the DSSF, Focus schools will be named using DCAS data. The Secretary of Education will name Focus schools based on a list of the 10% of Title I schools with the:

1. Largest combined ELA and Math achievement gap between Student Gap Group students and all others within the school in school years 2013-14 (50% weight), 2012-13 (25%) and 2011-12 (25%); and,
2. Lowest combined ELA and Math percent proficient in school years 2013-14 (50% weight), 2012-13 (25%) and 2011-12 (25%) for each of the following subgroups: Low Income, African American, Hispanic, English Learner, and Student with Disabilities.

Any school with greater than 90% of its students accounted for in the Student Gap Group will only be identified through the second calculation (i.e., percent proficiency of individual subgroups).

Additionally, the DDOE will pursue a regulation change such that any public charter school that qualifies as a Focus School under the specifications detailed below would automatically be placed into formal review.

Focus School Criteria (for school year 2016-17 and beyond)

Proposal for Meeting Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I Status of School • Among the bottom 15% in improvements based on the Academic Achievement category on the DSSF in the most recent school year compared to the previous year. (Note: for 2015-16 school year only, the calculation will be based only on achievement gaps from DCAS data for the 2013-14, 2012-13 and 2011-12 school years)
<p><i>Additional Criteria (as necessary) in Descending Order</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement gap in school is greater than the statewide gap • Achievement gap in school either grew or stayed the same for 2 or more years • Schools will not be considered to have “closed” the achievement gap if the Student Gap Group performance declines • Schools will not be considered to have “closed” the achievement gap if the overall student performance declines significantly

Schools are required to stay in Focus status for three full years, plus the planning year. Schools may be eligible to exit Focus status after the end of the second year if the school meets exit targets early and shows substantial progress in the other leading indicators of their School Plans. Both the DDOE and the School must agree for the School to exit Focus status. The targets for exiting Focus status will be determined after AMOs are set and Smarter Balanced data is available. Exit targets will be provided to schools within 30 days of being named as a Focus school in the 2015-16 school year.

Priority

USED requires states to identify 5% of its Title I schools as “Priority schools” as part of ESEA Flexibility. This translates to approximately 7 schools in Delaware. Delaware currently has 1 school that has not met the criteria for exiting that status and named an additional 6 schools in Fall 2014. DDOE **will not** identify a new cohort of Priority schools for the 2015-16 school year, but the proposed new methodology is included to indicate how future cohorts may be identified.

The U.S. Department of Education requires that the identification of Priority schools take into account, at least, proficiency and/or graduation rates over a number of years. The DDOE proposes to use overall performance on the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) in the previous two years or significantly low graduation rate over multiple years for future identification of Priority schools.

Additionally, the DDOE will pursue a regulation change such that any public charter school that qualifies as a Priority School under the specifications detailed below would automatically be placed into formal review.

Priority School Criteria

DDOE Proposal for Meeting Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I Status of School • Lowest 5% performance based on the average overall DSSF score of the most recent year and the preceding year OR • Graduation rate below 60% for two of the past three years (if a Title I eligible but not participating high school)

Schools are required to stay in Priority status for three full years, plus the planning year. The targets for exiting Priority status will be determined after AMOs are set and Smarter Balanced data is available in August. Exit targets will be provided to schools shortly after Smarter Balanced data is publicly available and will be reflected as amendments in the School Plans. All exit criteria will be based on the school’s performance on the DSSF.

Any school that did not exit Priority status and is entering a second term as a Priority School, will begin conversations and engagement around the process as early as the Spring 2015, with a planning year to continue through the 2015-16 school year.

Each Priority School has a different approved School Plan and/or option that has been selected. As stated above, six schools have already been named and one school will continue in Priority status (because the school did not exit). In accordance with ESEA guidelines and the decisions of local school districts, three schools will use 2014-15 as a planning year and begin implementation in the 2015-16 school year; three schools will engage in a two-year planning process that encompasses 2014-15 and 2015-16, with implementation beginning in 2016-17, as a result of the model selected; the final school will engage in a planning year in 2015-16 and will begin implementation in 2016-17.

Please see Appendix A for a visual representation of the calendar for transition to the Delaware School Success Framework.

Statewide System of Supports

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, DDOE proposes to begin a statewide system of supports for schools. This program includes a variety of categories and supports: federally required “Action List” school plans (inclusive of monitoring and support), the School Improvement Grants, 21st Century Learning Grants, and the Delaware School Success Network.

Action List Schools

Each year, Title I schools that present significant academic achievement gaps in their subgroups, or overall low student achievement, are placed onto an Action List as part of the requirement for Title I. The schools are required to submit action plans that discuss how they will address some of these key concerns throughout the subsequent two years. DDOE will review and provide feedback to the plans, as well as conduct mandatory monitoring of how the plans are being implemented. Districts and schools are

expected to utilize a portion of their Title I dollars in support of these plans. DDOE will provide technical assistance, as needed.

School Improvement Grants and 21st Century Learning

The DDOE applies for and monitors these two federally funded grants, intended to support school improvement and additional programs at our Title I schools. The DDOE will continue to apply for and distribute these grants in accordance with federal guidelines and the priorities and needs of Delaware schools.

Delaware School Success Network

In order to provide balanced supports for Action List schools, the DDOE may begin the Delaware School Success Network. This Network would include Focus Schools, but would also be open to any Action List School who chooses to participate. The Network will provide professional development and resources (financial and programmatic) to its schools. The schools will also have the opportunity to network with partner schools across the state, collaborating on challenges, successes, and initiatives that each is taking in support of its students. The program will provide these tangible benefits to its participants, and participation will also be taken into consideration should new Priority or Focus schools be named in the future. Participation is optional for Action List Schools, and must be a mutual commitment by both the district/school as well as the DDOE. This Network will provide all participating schools with multiple opportunities to support their students, with significant funding provided by the DDOE.

School Reviews

There is a strong recognition of and appreciation for the use of external review and evaluation of schools, both for monitoring as well as for support. The DDOE is working with external vendors and institutions to develop a series of school review tools that can be conducted by external providers, as well as tools that can be used as interim measures for Principals and district officials. DDOE will be reviewing potential reviewers, tools and providers throughout the 2014-15 school year.

Schools identified as Priority, Focus, or Action List must use a tool to comprehensively review the performance, culture, and operations of the school. This review must be conducted from an outside organization or institution approved by DDOE. Such tools may be used as one component of informing the development of school plans.

Escalation of School Who Did Not Exit Focus School Status

Four of the twelve named Focus Schools listed in the previous ESEA Waiver Renewal application did not exit Focus School status (did not meet targets for two consecutive years). As a result, and consistent with the guidelines for the ESEA Flexibility Renewal, these schools will have an escalation in accountability to support stronger gains for their identified students. To differentiate these schools from newly named Focus Schools, the Department will refer to them as “Focus Plus” Schools. Below are the requirements and guidelines for this group of schools repeating Focus School status, at minimum:

Planning Year Requirements

- Each of the four Focus Plus Schools will be notified of continuation in Focus status no later than April 30, 2015.
- Each Focus Plus School will be required to participate in a needs assessment before the end of the 2014-15 school year.
- Each Focus Plus School will be given a “planning year” during the 2015-16 school year. The planning year will serve several purposes: (a) to allow the school community to evaluate the prior years of data and make substantive changes based on that data as well as the needs assessment in order to better serve the identified student subgroups; (b) as a result of transitioning to a new

assessment (Smarter Balanced), targets will not be set until Fall 2015 – schools will need those targets to be able to determine what will meet exit criteria. By having a planning year, schools will have a clear understanding of what the requirements are; (c) the planning year will provide each school with the opportunity to evaluate the needs of their identified student subgroups given the new testing information and create plans accordingly.

- Each Focus School will be required to participate in Performance Management training. This training will serve to support school-level leadership with the tools necessary to effectively manage the school's progress to goals, support and provide effective training, development, and coaching opportunities to instructional staff, and ensure a clear focus on results.
- Each Focus School will be required, as part of the planning year, to submit a formal plan that carries significantly more detail and information than the original plans. These plans will go through a review and modification process and must be approved no later than March 31, 2016.

Accountability Requirements

- Each Focus Plus School, beginning in the planning year, will be required to participate in bi-monthly performance management routines that must include the school principal, school-level leadership, and senior district official (at minimum). This is a significant increase in the monitoring of performance for these schools, compared to Focus School support.
- Each Focus Plus School will have at least monthly (potentially more) monitoring visits geared towards supporting school leadership in effectively meeting stated goals and progress indicators. This is an increase in support and technical assistance visits compared to Focus School support.
- Funding will be provided to these schools in order to execute plans.
- Schools are expected to submit monthly reports, as outlined in advance.
- Schools will be required to participate in the School Success network to continue with professional development and support opportunities for school staff.
- Should the school not progress on leading indicator targets during planning or implementation, then the schools will receive significantly more on-site support, an increase in performance management routines, and more required support and intervention training participation.

Schools who elect not to participate and/or meet the requirements of Focus Plus may be named as Priority Schools in order to ensure that appropriate services are provided to all students.

Exit Criteria Requirements

As stated, the schools must meet exit targets for two consecutive years.

District Accountability

District Monitoring & Support

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, DDOE revised its statewide system of support to provide differentiated monitoring and support to its districts through a system of progress reviews, performance evaluations, technical assistance and resources based on each LEA's specific needs and performance—also called the performance routines. The purpose of the routines is to monitor district progress and performance, build district capacity to better support their schools and increase access to DDOE supports. In the 2013-2014 school year, DDOE amended its approved ESEA Flexibility application to improve the performance routines based on feedback from internal and district staff; upgrades included migration to a more comprehensive and cross-functional liaison team, moving from four tiers of district support to three, etc.

Data collection and transparency remains essential to DDOE's system of support, and DDOE continues to use a collection of district performance data sets to monitor student outcomes, identify strengths and

challenges, and ensure district responsiveness to evolving student populations and subgroups. An improvement in the 2014-2015 school year was the inclusion of district Consolidated Grant Application data into the performance routines. As required by Delaware's approved Consolidated State Application, DDOE must also perform various grant management activities to meet federal expectations, including, for example, ensuring districts' proper expenditure of federal funds, per their DDOE-approved Consolidated Grant Applications. Moving forward, DDOE will continue integrating the performance routines with grant management activities to ensure that technical assistance and supports provided to districts are based on the most robust and holistic data sets available, namely: performance, financial and demographic.

Principle 3 – Supporting Effective Teachers and Leaders

In response to the ESEA Flexibility Renewal application and the state's transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) assessment (testing window opened March 2015), DDOE, in collaboration with several important stakeholders groups, is requesting a modification to its implementation of the Student Improvement Component of the state's educator evaluation system(s).

DDOE previously requested flexibility to not include student growth results from the state assessment in educator evaluations in the first year of implementation of the new state assessment in English Language Arts/Math (SBA, 2014-2015). Based on overwhelming feedback from several education associations, state legislative leaders, and other groups of key stakeholders, DDOE is now requesting an additional year extension beyond 2014-2015. SBA results would continue to be utilized as an "informational measure" within Delaware's Student Improvement Component in 2015-2016.

The 2015-2016 school year will be the fourth year of full implementation of statewide educator evaluation with student growth incorporated in Delaware. As proposed herein, rewards/consequences would continue as a byproduct of ongoing comprehensive educator performance appraisals (using state-approved multiple measures of student growth, but not including the state assessment). *Note: The vast majority of the state utilizes DPAS-II, but DDOE refers to educator evaluation systems herein to denote that four charter schools utilize a different state-approved system that includes an identical Student Improvement Component. DDOE will continue to update USED should other LEAs submit and receive approval to utilize alternative educator evaluation systems.*

For the Student Improvement Component in 2015-2016, DDOE is proposing that Individual educator reports be provided to the approximately 25% of educators who will teach ELA/Math in tested grade/subject areas. Results would again be publically reported in the aggregate. **Then, in 2016-2017, results on the SBA assessment will be fully incorporated as one of the multiple measures of student growth within the Student Improvement Component.** As noted previously, the Student Improvement Component will continue to be comprised of multiple measures of student growth and student development for all educators (teachers, specialists, administrators). Educator evaluation systems would continue to be used to inform "personnel decisions" and to establish a "pattern of ineffective teaching" under state regulation.

In making this request for additional flexibility, DDOE has considered its original plans for implementation of the educator evaluation system, previous ESEA submissions, feedback and expectations from across multiple offices within USED, and the significant amount of feedback received from a core set of Delaware stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement is an important element of any state's ESEA Flexibility Renewal. Delaware stakeholders and their advocates voiced significant concerns about incorporation of the new state assessment into educator evaluation in 2015-2016. DDOE believes that the ongoing engagement of stakeholders and integration of their feedback is necessary in designing and maintaining a robust, transparent and actionable educator evaluation system that is used with fidelity in the field to improve teaching and leading and make important human resource decisions.

As it pertains to this particular request (Principle 3), the following stakeholder engagement meetings occurred in February/March 2015 prior to the State Board of Education's approval of the state's proposed request:

- **2/20/2015:** DDOE meets with stakeholders regarding SBA Pilot Results—the majority of the conversation focuses on educator evaluation and implications for student growth.
- **2/25/2015:** DDOE schedules an additional meeting with stakeholder groups based upon the 2/20/2015 discussion. The Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU) leads this conversation.
- **3/6/2015:** DDOE requests conference call with USED following the 2/25/2015 discussion, in part based upon stakeholder request to hear directly from USED re: parameters of RTTT/ESEA and educator evaluation.
- **3/10/2015:** House Education Committee meeting on ESEA Flexibility Renewal. Chair of the House Education committee requests that DDOE respond to the letter signed by all House/Senate Education Committee members calling for additional action on Principle 3.
- **3/11/2015:** DDOE hosts regular meeting with DESS Advisory Committee, the main cross-stakeholder group for reviewing and providing feedback on Delaware's ESEA Flexibility Renewal request. Legislators (attending as guests) call for a vote on Principle 3. While no rule exists for such action, DDOE takes note of the unanimity amongst those in attendance.
- **3/12/2015:** Regular DPAS-II Advisory Committee meeting is convened by the Chair/Co-Chair. Committee has specific responsibilities to review any amendments regarding educator evaluation to ESEA (<http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c012/sc07/index.shtml>). Another vote is taken in support of Delaware requesting an additional year of flexibility under Principle 3.

The stakeholders that participated in the meetings above include the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA), the Delaware School Boards Association (DSBA), the Delaware Parent/Teacher Association (DPTA), the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC), the Delaware Association of School Administrators (DASA), State Representatives Sean Lynn, Kim Williams, Sean Matthews and Senator Bryan Townsend. All of these stakeholders supported the inclusion of additional Principle 3 flexibility as an amendment to Delaware's previous two ESEA submissions and RTTT grant.

In the meetings noted above, Department leaders cited Delaware's proposed rationale for moving forward with the use of state assessment results in educator evaluation, per the previous ESEA flexibility waiver application. This rationale was based on the one-year request already approved, the ability to incorporate such student growth results smoothly into educator evaluation, the limited impact that any single measure has within the current DPAS-II structure, and the fact that several neighboring/peer states have not requested such flexibility. While some stakeholders acknowledged the Department's rationale, stakeholders felt strongly that additional time was warranted, noting throughout the dialogue that there was precedent given USED's approval of other states' request for such flexibility.

The rationale for this additional request, developed in consultation with our stakeholders, is detailed below for consideration of the US Department of Education. It outlines four major themes, and details each below:

- *The leadership that Delaware has shown in this area and its desire to be more deliberate*
- *The public’s confidence in the technical challenges of implementing a new assessment (including moving from a fall-to-spring to a spring-to-spring assessment), and the impact of these anticipated challenges*
- *The historic availability of relevant instructional supports and trainings for educators*
- *The availability of assessment data to inform student growth model design*

1. *The leadership that Delaware has shown in this area and its desire to be more deliberate*

On pgs. 149-152 of the state’s ESEA Waiver application, the Department previously noted, “Delaware has been ahead of many states by having a multi-faceted annual statewide evaluation system for teachers, specialists, and administrators since 1987.”

This continues to be the case. Delaware meets the majority of Principle 3 requirements around supporting teachers and leaders, and although we are proposing another year before Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) student growth results are incorporated into educator evaluations, important decisions about educators’ development, ratings, professional status, and assignment/promotion/retention/ dismissal “(human resource decisions”) will continue to be made on the basis of educator evaluation results (which will continue to include multiple measures of student growth within each educators’ Student Improvement Component).

The following chart details Delaware’s commitments within the realm of Principle 3:

Requirement	Delaware’s Evaluation System
Inform continual improvement of instruction	<p>Delaware’s remaining multiple measures continue to inform instructional improvement.</p> <p>Group 1 educators utilize two state approved “B” measures (internally or externally developed assessments).</p> <p>Group 2/Group 3 educators continue to use the state-approved “B” measures and “C” student growth/improvement goals.</p>
Meaningfully differentiates performance using at least three performance levels	Delaware’s system for 2014-15 meets this requirement and would not change with the request for an additional year.
Use multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including as a significant factor, data on student growth for all students and	Delaware’s system for 2014-15 meets this requirement and would not change with the request for an additional year.

other measures of professional practice	
Evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis	Delaware’s system for 2014-15 meets this requirement and would not change with the request for an additional year.
Provides clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development	Delaware’s system for 2014-15 meets this requirement and would not change with the request for an additional year. Delaware DOE will provide Smarter Assessment data to teachers and principals for 2014-15 to inform them of student progress. With a request for an additional year, the data for 2015-16 can also be shared with teachers and principals to inform them of student progress.
Informs personnel decisions	Delaware’s system for 2014-15 meets this requirement and would not change with the request for an additional year. Even though educators are rated based upon “B” and “C” measures, the ratings from these measures significantly factor into the educator/principal summative ratings and factor into personnel decisions.

2. *The public’s confidence in the technical challenges of implementing a new assessment, and the impact of these anticipated challenges*

While Delaware announced its transition to more rigorous standards in 2010, many Delaware stakeholders have expressed that our students need more time to become familiar with the new state assessment (Smarter), which is being rolled out in 2014-2015. Prior to this school year, only 20% of Delaware’s tested student population experienced one content area of the new state test as part of the Smarter Balanced Field Test last spring. One of the themes from the Smarter Field Test that SBAC noted was “students should have an opportunity to try out the test so that the final results describe students’ knowledge and skill rather than their familiarity with the test format.”(http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/SmarterBalanced_FieldTest_Report.pdf, P. 15).

As of the beginning of March, only an estimated 18,000 of the eligible 70,000 students scheduled to take the SBA had the opportunity to experience the test either through the Smarter Interim Block assessments or the Smarter Interim Comprehensive assessment. This was due in part to SBAC’s late roll out of their

interim assessments which were only available for LEA use starting in January. Required trainings for educators to gain access to the assessment were not immediately available, thereby limiting available time and training to gain access to these interim assessments.

Past experience has shown us that when Delaware moved from DSTP to DCAS, there was a notable drop in test scores due, in part, to student lack of familiarity with the new test. This feedback was heard in relation to this request under Principle 3. Stakeholders believe that more accurate student expectations can be set when based upon two years of data from the same state test (as was decided by the DDOE in previous assessment transitions) rather than on only one year of data. The Department has and continues to explore multiple approaches. Regardless of what is statistically possible, communication around such approach using only one year of data would need to be robust—which it has not been to-date.

3. The historic availability of relevant instructional supports and trainings for educators

Stakeholders also noted that some educators may need more time to achieve meaningful implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Some implementation challenges have been referenced in the Delaware RTTT Year 1-3 Reports. These comments were not created to attribute blame to any particular party or agency, but rather point out the difficult and time consuming process attached to making such a sizeable change within a large system. The Year 2 Report, for example, noted delays in roll-out and implementation while also noting that “although the State trained 9,000 educators in the State (94 percent of all teachers) on the CCSS in Years 1 and 2 (of RTTT)...feedback loops indicated that some educators felt they could benefit from additional training and support.” In an effort to identify and respond to potential areas for improvement, the State launched *Common Ground for the Common Core* in 2013, including monitoring site visits in 2014-2015, which responded to district and teacher feedback about the need for more support around Common Core resources and alignment.

In 2013-14, DSEA commissioned the research firm of Greenberg Quinlan and Rosner to conduct a poll to assess member support for the Common Core Standards. Poll results indicated that over 77% of those teachers polled supported the Common Core and felt the standards gave students the critical thinking and problem solving capability to succeed in the 21st century. Despite educator support for the standards, those polled also indicated that many schools were falling short when it comes to implementation with 45% giving their schools a failing grade and only 18% giving their schools high marks. While the Department has received updated data indicating much more positive responses from educators around engagement in Common Core via Common Ground for Common Core surveys, it remains a clear concern for many stakeholders in relation to Principle 3.

4. The availability of assessment data to inform student growth model design (and the perceived timeliness of such student growth model design and requisite communication to the field)

At this point in time there are many “moving parts” and conflicting research/information as it pertains to determining an effective student growth model to establish student expectations. Delaware had great success in this arena during the previous two academic years, but the transition to Smarter requires a change in model, mindset, and approach as it pertains to “Measure A/Part A” of the Student Improvement Component of the educator evaluation system.

First, there will be a major change for students, educators and parents as Delaware moves from DCAS, an assessment system that measured student improvement using *fall to spring* instructional scores to the Smarter Balanced assessment system that will use spring to spring scores.

Second, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium has indicated that the Smarter Balanced Assessment will be statistically “normed and validated” no sooner than the summer of 2015. This has left Delaware on a more protracted timeline in establishing educator and student expectations than was the case in previous years.

Third, the Department is currently working with an outside partner with expertise in this arena but has yet to publish a proposed teacher-level growth model for use with the Smarter Balanced Assessment. It may take additional time to develop such a model and more time to actively share the model with educators and the general public.

In conclusion, Delaware’s consideration of many factors, as well as it’s expressed belief in the need for stakeholder engagement to ensure success in its educator evaluation system, together substantiate this request for another year before Smarter Balanced Assessment student results attach to educator evaluations in 2016-2017.

Community Engagement/Consultation

The Delaware Department of Education engaged with multiple stakeholders across the state in the development of the ESEA Flexibility Renewal proposal. It is critical that parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, civil rights and business groups and political leaders all have an opportunity to share their opinions about what has worked over the past 3 years of ESEA Flexibility and where the State should head over the next three years. Consultation with stakeholders occurred in two phases.

Phase 1 (November 2014 – January 2015) focused on making our stakeholders aware of the ESEA Flexibility Renewal opportunity and gathering initial feedback on lessons learned and suggestions for improvement. Through that process (events highlighted below), staff from DDOE engaged more than 300 individuals in person and more than 6,000 individuals through our online accountability survey. The State’s request for a one year “pause” on accountability ratings, development of a five year assessment plan, continuation of the *Common Ground for Common Core*, and components of the Delaware School Success Framework, among others, all are a direct result of that engagement.

Drawing on the feedback gathered through the first phase of consultation, Phase 2 (February – March 2015) included the development and rollout of DDOE’s ESEA Flexibility Renewal proposal (e.g., this document). The proposal was shared broadly, with multiple opportunities for stakeholders to engage and offer additional feedback. All documents related to the ESEA Flexibility Renewal have been placed online (<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/1942>), including recordings of the online town halls, and a separate email account (DOEAccountability@doe.k2.de.us) was established for gathering public comments outside of the meetings listed below.

The following is a list of the engagement opportunities hosted during the development of DDOE’s ESEA Flexibility Renewal application.

Group/Meeting	Date	Location
Town Hall (accountability)	11/5/14	Wilmington
Town Hall (accountability)	11/12/14	Dover
Town Hall (accountability)	11/13/14	Middletown
Town Hall (accountability)	11/19/14	Georgetown
Delaware Education Support System (DESS) Advisory	12/9/14	Dover

State Board of Education workshop held jointly with the Delaware School Boards Association	1/6/15	Dover
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens	1/7/15	Dover
Town Hall (ESEA Flexibility)	1/9/15	Online
P-20 Council	1/12/15	New Castle
Town Hall (ESEA Flexibility)	1/14/15	Wilmington
State Board of Education	1/15/15	Dover
Town Hall (ESEA Flexibility)	1/15/15	Dover
House Education Committee	1/21/15	Dover
Town Hall (ESEA Flexibility)	1/21/15	Online
Legislative Information Session	1/22/15	Dover
Town Hall (ESEA Flexibility)	1/22/15	Greenwood
Professional Standards Board	2/5/15	Dover
Legislative Information Session	2/9/15	Dover
State Board of Education	2/19/15	Dover
Stakeholder meeting on Principle 3	2/20/15	Dover
Stakeholder meeting on Principle 3	2/25/15	Dover
Chiefs meeting (cancelled because of snow)	2/26/15	Dover
Stakeholder conference call with USED	3/6/15	Phone
House Education Committee	3/10/15	Dover
DESS Advisory	3/11/15	Dover
Delaware Performance Appraisal System Advisory meeting	3/12/15	Dover
Chiefs Meeting	3/16/15	Dover
Teaching and Learning Cadre	3/18/15	Dover
State Board of Education	3/19/15	Dover
Chiefs Meeting	3/26/15	Dover

From these meetings, stakeholders proposed a number of changes to the State's approved ESEA Flexibility extension, including:

- Extension of the DDOE's support for a third year of the Common Ground for Common Core initiative (see Principle 1);
- Development of a five year assessment plan (see Principle 1);
- Creation of a multiple measure framework for school, district and state accountability (see Principle 2);
- Use of an aggregate, unduplicated Student Gap Group for accountability (see Principle 2);
- Extending the number of years that recently arrived English Learners are exempt from inclusion in accountability determinations (see Principle 2); and,
- Extending for one additional year the use of Smarter assessment results for information purposes only in teacher and administrator evaluations (see Principle 3).

Appendix A. Timeline of Transition to the Delaware School Success Framework

	SY 2014-15 designation* (based on 2013-14 data)	SY 2015-16 designation (based on 2014-15 data)	SY 2016-17 designation (based on 2015-16 data)	SY 2017-18 designation (based on 2016-17 data)
All schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) met or did not meet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability ratings “pause” • Replicate AYP status from 2014-15 designation • Targets set and “historical” rating shared in Fall 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF
Reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Title I schools • Use assessments and graduation rates for Performance and Closing Gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF to name 2 new Title I schools in Fall 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF to name 2 new Title I schools in Summer 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF to name 2 new Title I schools in Summer 2017
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 schools • Use assessments for Performance and Closing Gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF to name up to 15 new schools in Fall 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF to name up to 15 new schools in Summer 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DSSF to name up to 15 new schools in Summer 2017
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% of Title I schools • Previously identified – no new schools identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use DCAS data from prior 3 years to name 10 new (with 4 non-exited) Title I schools in Summer 2015 • Planning year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new schools named • Implementation year for 14 schools • Use DSSF for exit criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation year for 14 schools • Use DSSF for exit criteria
Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% of Title I schools • Use assessments and graduation rates • Planning year for 6 schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new schools named • Implementation year for 3 schools • Planning year for 4 schools (1 non-exited school and 3 named schools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new schools named • Implementation year for 7 schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new schools named • Implementation year for 7 schools • Use DSSF for exit criteria

*The accountability designation year uses data from the prior school year. For instance, the school year 2014-15 designation is based off of data from the 2013-14 school year.