

SECRETARY SPELLINGS APPROVES 6 STATES' DIFFERENTIATED ACCOUNTABILITY PROPOSALS

JULY 2008

"The goal is to help educators act now to help schools in every stage of improvement. We must take dramatic action to improve our lowest-performing schools."

— U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

In March 2008, Secretary Spellings announced a differentiated accountability pilot to allow states to distinguish between those schools in improvement that need substantial help and those close to meeting achievement goals. After six years of NCLB implementation, the data has shown the extent of the academic achievement problems leading to a school's identification differs widely within states.

Differentiated accountability will allow states to vary the intensity and type of interventions to match the academic reasons that lead to a school's identification. In addition, some states and districts have a large percentage of their schools identified, impacting capacity to provide meaningful, intensive reforms. Differentiated accountability will assist those states by targeting resources and interventions to those schools most in need of intensive interventions and significant reform.

After a panel of outside experts reviewed applications for the pilot, Secretary Spellings approved models from **Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, and Ohio**. Illinois' approval is conditioned on the state demonstrating that the assessments administered in 2007-08 are fully compliant with NCLB. In return for this flexibility, states participating in the pilot must commit to build their capacity for school reform; take the most significant actions for the lowest-performing schools, including addressing the issue of teacher effectiveness; and use data to determine the method of differentiation and categories of intervention.

- 17 states submitted a differentiated accountability proposal: Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
- The Department submitted the proposals of all 17 states to a peer review panel of nationally recognized experts. These proposals, additional information about the pilot, and Department letters to these states may be found online at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/differentiatedaccountability/index.html>
- In June 2008, the peer teams began reviews of state proposals and met with State representatives via conference calls. On June 13-14, 2008, the peer panel met in Washington DC to review each state's differentiated accountability proposal using the Department's Peer Review Guidance, which can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/daguidance.doc>. The experts invited to participate represent a wide range of perspectives from academia to the private sector to state and local organizations. The expert review panel included **Dr. Margaret (Macke) Raymond (Chair)**, Stanford University; **Dr. Chris Cobitz**, Charlotte Mecklenburg

School District; **Sheila Evans-Tranumn**, New York Department of Education; **Dr. Pete Goldschmidt**, California State University, Northridge; **Raul Gonzalez**, National Council of La Raza; **Gary Huggins**, Aspen Institute; **Dr. Jacquelyn Jackson**, former U.S. Department of Education Director of Title I; **Jim Lanich**, California Business for Education Excellence; **Dr. Maggie McLaughlin**, University of Maryland; **Peter McWalters**, Rhode Island Commissioner of Education; **Jim Peyser**, New Schools Venture Fund; **Dianne Piché**, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights; **Rachel Quenemoen**, University of Minnesota National Center on Educational Outcomes; **John Winn**, former Florida Commissioner of Education; and **Dr. Martin West**, Brown University.

- After considering the peers' comments, the Secretary has approved six states to participate in the differentiated accountability pilot. The approved states include: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, and Ohio.
- As a condition of participation, the states must share data on how the differentiated accountability model is implemented and its effects on student achievement.

The Department will gather this data and share it with other states and the public.

A timeline of important activities in the pilot:

- **March 2008** — The Department announced the eligibility criteria for states to apply for the differentiated accountability pilot program.
- **May 2, 2008** — Deadline for states to submit differentiated accountability proposals.
- **June 2008** — Peer review of differentiated accountability proposals from Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
- **July 1, 2008** — The Department approves 6 states to participate in the differentiated accountability pilot program for 2008-09.