

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY NEW JERSEY TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Based on feedback from peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff, New Jersey made the following changes to its original request in order to meet the principles of ESEA flexibility.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- New Jersey provided additional information on professional development sessions that will occur over the coming year to help teachers transition to college- and career-ready standards, including sessions that include content focused on the needs of English Learners and students with disabilities.
- New Jersey elaborated on its plans to collaborate with institutions of higher education to review the rigor of current end-of-course high school assessments to determine the college-readiness of students who pass those assessments.
- New Jersey provided additional information about the adoption of its college- and career-ready- and Universal Design for Learning-aligned model curriculum, which will include strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English Learners, and low-achieving students.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT

- New Jersey provided additional detail about its proposed accountability system and performance reports that include clear reporting about whether schools meet performance targets.
- New Jersey clarified that all priority schools will begin implementing interventions aligned to all the turnaround principles in the 2012–2013 school year.
- New Jersey provided examples of interventions for focus schools, including those that target the needs of English Learners and students with disabilities, and clarified that all focus schools will begin implementing interventions in 2012–2013 school year.
- New Jersey will identify schools with a low-performing subgroup that is not meeting performance targets over a number of years. These schools must have an improvement plan approved by the Regional Achievement Director and would receive technical assistance to address the subgroup's needs.

- New Jersey strengthened its exit criteria for priority and focus schools to reflect improvement in overall student achievement for priority schools and improvement in subgroup achievement for focus schools.
- New Jersey provided additional detail on its Quality School Review process and the role played by the Regional Achievement Centers. These centers will support the State's capacity to provide technical assistance by targeting their efforts primarily on priority and focus schools.
- New Jersey will report graduation rates by diploma recipients and high school exit exam for each subgroup.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- New Jersey will develop guidelines for teacher and principal evaluations based on lessons learned from its current pilot and regular meetings with educators, parents, and national experts. Implementation of this system begins in the fall of 2012.