

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY FLORIDA TO ITS ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

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

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

- Florida committed to revising its inclusion policies for students with disabilities and English Learners so that these students are fully included in all elements of Florida’s A through F grading system. As a result of this change, schools will be held accountable for ensuring that all students with disabilities and all English Learners reach college- and career-ready standards.
- Florida strengthened how it holds high schools accountable for graduation rates. Interventions are required in schools with low graduation rates even if they are A, B, or C schools. Regional teams across the State will monitor these schools to ensure that each plan addresses graduation rate. Florida also provided data to demonstrate that A and B schools generally have higher graduation rates than C, D, or F schools.
- Florida provided additional protections for subgroup performance in schools not identified as focus or priority. Any school not already receiving interventions that has one or more ESEA subgroups that miss student performance targets for two years in a row, or that has achievement gaps significantly greater than D schools, will receive direct support from the State’s regional teams through such activities as coaching, feedback on instruction, alignment of resources, and progress monitoring to ensure adequate improvement. Florida is further investing in the teachers and principals in these schools by providing training that focuses on the implementation of and support for research-based best practices.
- Florida intensified supports to schools targeted for interventions. For example, all priority schools will implement one of the four School Improvement Grant models or a “hybrid model” that is at least as rigorous as these models for at least three years, regardless of whether a school earns a higher grade. The State will also provide continued monitoring and support for schools that improve to help them sustain their progress.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

- Florida provided information on its plans to develop and implement principal evaluation and support systems. Specifically, the State will continue to strengthen its Principal Leadership Standards to ensure that principal evaluation and support systems across the State reflect current research in this area and include student performance components.

- Florida described how it will use the results of the first year of district implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems for continuous improvement. Further, the State will expand options for system components over time, including measures of student growth in non-tested grades and subjects.