ESEA Flexibility

Peer Panel Notes

State Request: New Jersey

Date: 12/6-7/2011

Note: These peer comments reflect the views of the seven peers that comprised the panel that reviewed the SEA's initial submission as well as any additional materials provided by the SEA prior to and during the December 5–9, 2011 on-site peer review. Taking these comments into consideration, the U.S. Department of Education provided feedback to the SEA about aspects of the SEA's ESEA flexibility request that needed additional development or clarification. These peer notes do not reflect the peers' views on any materials, clarifications, or modifications received from the SEA following the peer review. Moreover, although the peer notes inform the Secretary's consideration of each SEA's request, the Secretary makes the final decision whether to grant an SEA's request for ESEA flexibility. For both of these reasons, these peer notes may not align with the determination made by the Secretary.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REQUESTS

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) will use a review process that will include both external peer reviewers and staff reviewers to evaluate State educational agency (SEA) requests for this flexibility. This review process will help ensure that each request for this flexibility approved by the Department is consistent with the principles, which are designed to support State efforts to improve student academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction, and is both educationally and technically sound. Reviewers will evaluate whether and how each request for this flexibility will support a comprehensive and coherent set of improvements in the areas of standards and assessments, accountability, and teacher and principal effectiveness that will lead to improved student outcomes. Each SEA will have an opportunity, if necessary, to clarify its plans for peer and staff reviewers and to answer any questions reviewers may have during the on-site review. The peer reviewers will then provide comments to the Department. Taking those comments into consideration, the Secretary will make a decision regarding each SEA's request for this flexibility. If an SEA's request for this flexibility is not granted, reviewers and the Department will provide feedback to the SEA about the components of the SEA's request that need additional development in order for the request to be approved.

This document provides guidance for peer review panels as they evaluate each request during the on-site peer review portion of the review process. The document includes the specific information that a request must include and questions to guide reviewers as they evaluate each request. **Questions that have numbers or letters represent required elements.** The italicized questions reflect inquiries that reviewers will use to fully consider all aspects of an SEA's plan for meeting each principle, but do not represent required elements.

In addition to this guidance, reviewers will also use the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, including the definitions and timelines, when reviewing each SEA's request. As used in the request form and this guidance, the following terms have the definitions set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*: (1) college- and career-ready standards, (2) focus school, (3) high-quality assessment, (4) priority school, (5) reward school, (6) standards that are common to a significant number of States, (7) State network of institutions of higher education, (8) student growth, and (9) turnaround principles.

Review Guidance

Consultation

1. Did the SEA meaningfully engage and solicit input on its request from teachers and their representatives?

    ➢ *Is the engagement likely to lead to successful implementation of the SEA's request due to the input and commitment of teachers and their representatives at the outset of the planning and implementation process?*

    ➢ *Did the SEA indicate that it modified any aspect of its request based on input from teachers and their representatives?*

CONSULTATION QUESTION 1 PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* 7 Yes, 0 No	
Rationale	• Submission indicates significant outreach efforts
Strengths	• Identification of strategic partners and proactive outreach to these groups • Modified request to incorporate comments from education community • Conducted in person meetings with teachers and representatives
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2. Did the SEA meaningfully engage and solicit input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes?

    ➢ *Is the engagement likely to lead to successful implementation of the SEA's request due to the input and commitment of relevant stakeholders at the outset of the planning and implementation process?*

    ➢ *Did the SEA indicate that it modified any aspect of its request based on stakeholder input?*

    ➢ *Does the input represent feedback from a diverse mix of stakeholders representing various perspectives and interests, including stakeholders from high-need communities?*

CONSULTATION QUESTION 2 PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Appears that only outreach was e-mail to broad range of unspecified groups with no apparent follow-up
Strengths	• Effort to engage and solicit input from groups outside education community through emails
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Broader outreach appears to be only via e-mail, not in-person consultation • Unclear that high-needs communities were sufficiently involved, including ELs
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Reach out to civic leaders, CBOs, religious leaders, minority groups to learn best ways to engage the public

Overview

Note to Peers: Staff will review Questions 1 and 3

2. Does the SEA's overview sufficiently explain the SEA's comprehensive approach to implementing the waivers and principles and describe the Sea's strategy for ensuring that this approach is coherent?

OVERVIEW QUESTION 2 PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *7 Yes, 0 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey outlines a clear vision for developing a comprehensive plan
Strengths	• Comprehensive approach to implementing waivers and principles • Organizational steps taken at SEA level are important steps to realizing changes • Regional delivery for implementing waivers and principles
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Unclear that capacity or detailed plans exist to implement this vision.
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Note to Peers: Staff will review 1.A Adopt College-And Career-Ready Standards, Options A and B.

1.B   Transition to college- and career-ready standards

1.B   Is the SEA's plan to transition to and implement college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the 2013−2014 school year realistic, of high quality, and likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards?

A high-quality plan will likely include activities related to the following questions or an explanation if one or more of the activities is not included. For the activities below that the SEA selects, will the results be used to inform the intended outcome?

➢ *Does the SEA intend to analyze the extent of alignment between the State's current content standards and the college- and career-ready standards to determine similarities and differences between those two sets of standards? If so, will the results be used to inform the transition to college- and career-ready standards?*

➢ *Does the SEA intend to analyze the linguistic demands of the college- and career-ready standards to inform the development of ELP standards corresponding to the college- and career-ready standards and to ensure that English Learners will be able to access the college- and career-ready standards? If so, will the results be used to inform revision of the ELP standards and support English Learners in accessing the college- and career-ready standards?*

➢ *Does the SEA intend to analyze the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities will have the opportunity to achieve to the college- and career-ready standards? If so, will the results be used to support students with disabilities in accessing the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students?*

➢ *Does the SEA intend to conduct outreach on and dissemination of standards? If so, does the SEA's plan reach the appropriate stakeholders, including educators, administrators, families, and IHEs? Is it likely that the plan will result in all stakeholders increasing their awareness of the State's college- and career-ready standards?*

➢ *Does the SEA intend to provide professional development and other supports to prepare teachers to teach all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, to the new standards? If so, will the planned professional development and supports prepare teachers to teach to the new standards, use instructional materials aligned with those standards, and use data on multiple measures of student performance (e.g., data from formative, benchmark, and summative assessments) to inform instruction?*

➢ *Does the SEA intend to provide professional development and supports to prepare principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership based on the new standards? If so, will this plan prepare principals to do so?*

5

➢ *Does the SEA propose to develop and disseminate high-quality instructional materials aligned with the new standards? If so, are the instructional materials designed (or will they be designed) to support the teaching and learning of all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students?*

➢ *Does the SEA plan to expand access to college-level courses or their prerequisites, dual enrollment courses, or accelerated learning opportunities? If so, will this plan lead to more students having access to courses that prepare them for college and a career?*

➢ *Does the SEA intend to work with the State's IHEs and other teacher and principal preparation programs, to better prepare*

    o *incoming teachers to teach all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, to the new college- and career-ready standards; and*

    o *incoming principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership on teaching to the new standards?*

    If so, will the implementation of the plan likely improve the preparation of incoming teachers and principals?

➢ *Does the SEA plan to evaluate its current assessments and increase the rigor of those assessments and their alignment with college- and career-ready standards, in order to better prepare students and teachers for the new assessments through one or more of the following strategies:*

    o *Raising the State's academic achievement standards on its current assessments to ensure that the adjusted achievement standards reflect a level of postsecondary readiness, or are being increased over time to that level of rigor (e.g., the SEA might compare current achievement standards to a measure of postsecondary readiness by back-mapping from college entrance requirements or remediation rates, analyzing the relationship between proficient scores on the State assessments and the ACT or SAT scores accepted by most of the State's 4-year public IHEs, or conducting NAEP mapping studies)?*

    o *Augmenting or revising current State assessments by adding questions, removing questions, or varying formats in order to better align those assessments with college- and career-ready standards?*

    o *Implementing another strategy to increase the rigor of current assessments, such as using the "advanced" performance level on State assessments instead of the "proficient" performance level as the goal for individual student performance?*

    Is this activity likely to result in an increase in the rigor of the assessments and their alignment with college- and career-ready standards?

➢ *Does the SEA propose other activities in its transition plan? If so, is it likely that these activities will support the transition to and implementation of college- and career-ready standards?*

1.B PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *3 Yes, 4 No*	
Rationale	• Although a broad, comprehensive plan is provided, the plan provided does not appear to be realistic or appropriately detailed to meet the 2013-2014 deadline
Strengths	• Aggressive strategy for implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is evident, including executive responsibility (CAO), and a regional delivery structure (RACs) • Acknowledge significant revision across grades and subjects to implement CCSS • Increasing items aligned with both sets of standards; decreasing items aligned with current NJ standards • Integration of SWD and ELs into model curriculum • Vision for professional development is focused and differentiated for implementation of Common Core
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Few components of the plan are already in place, such as model curriculum plan to be developed after work with national experts, model lessons, videos, professional development, and the design and use of formative assessments; RACs do not yet exist • Professional development plans are not spelled out with timelines, deliverables, responsible parties, and evidence of success for objectives in transition plan • Timeline appears overly ambitious, for example, establishing model curriculum by Fall 2012; integration of SWD and ELs into model curriculum, parent review, and assessments by February-May 2012 • No specifics about partnerships and collaboration with IHEs (p. 81)
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Develop realistic, detailed delivery plans with specific timelines, deliverables, responsible parties, and evidence of success for objectives in transition plan

1.C   Develop and Administer Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth

1.C   Did the SEA develop, or does it have a plan to develop, annual, statewide, high-quality assessments, and corresponding academic achievement standards, that measure student growth and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards in reading/language arts and mathematics, in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school, that will be piloted no later than the 2013−2014 school year and planned for administration in all LEAs no later than the 2014−2015 school year, as demonstrated through one of the three options below? Does the plan include setting academic achievement standards?

Note to Peers: Staff will review Options A and C.

If the SEA selected Option B:
If the SEA is neither participating in a State consortium under the RTTA competition nor has developed and administered high-quality assessments, did the SEA provide a realistic, high-quality plan describing activities that are likely to lead to the development of such assessments, their piloting no later than the 2013−2014 school year, and their annual administration in all LEAs beginning no later than the 2014−2015 school year? Does the plan include setting academic achievement standards?

1.C, OPTION B PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 1.C, Option A or Option C*	

Principle 1 Overall Review

Is the SEA's plan for transitioning to and implementing college-and career-ready standards, and developing and administering annual, statewide, aligned high-quality assessments that measure student growth, comprehensive, coherent, and likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

PRINCIPLE 1 OVERALL REVIEW PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *3 Yes, 4 No*	
Rationale	• Although a broad, comprehensive plan is provided, the plan provided does not appear to be realistic or appropriately detailed to meet the 2013-2014 deadline
Strengths	• Aggressive strategy for implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is evident, including executive responsibility (CAO), and a regional delivery structure (RACs) • Acknowledge significant revision across grades and subjects to implement CCSS • Increasing items aligned with both sets of standards; decreasing items aligned with current NJ standards • Integration of SWD and ELs into model curriculum • Vision for professional development is focused and differentiated for implementation of Common Core
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Little in plan is already in place, such as model curriculum plan to be developed after work with national experts, model lessons, videos, professional development, and the design and use of formative assessments; RACs do not yet exist • Professional development plans are not spelled out with timelines, deliverables, responsible parties, and evidence of success for objectives in transition plan • Timeline appears overly ambitious, for example, establishing model curriculum by Fall 2012; integration of SWD and ELs into model curriculum, parent review, and assessments by February-May 2012 No specifics about partnerships and collaboration with IHEs (p. 81)
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

2.A   Develop and Implement a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

 2.A.i   Did the SEA propose a differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, and a high-quality plan to implement this system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, that is likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students?

2.A.i PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Presents an overall plan for accountability system development, but New Jersey is depending on a system that is not yet in place, a plan that is not yet fully developed, and that requires legislative action • Though NJ presented an overall plan for accountability development, details of how the implementation would take place were lacking. They did not include in this overall description Key Milestone Activities, timeline, party or parties responsible, evidence, resources, and significant obstacles as was done with the implementation of the CCSS.
Strengths	• Convening workgroup of varied stakeholders to deliberate design of system • Envisioning a comprehensive set of reports to inform multiple stakeholders and interventions
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Legislation must be passed before current accountability system can be substantially modified • Details for implementation are lacking, i.e. metrics, assessment of school performance
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Benchmark other States' multi-measure frameworks and roll-out and refinement strategies to inform development of plan • Further define the Student Growth Percentile methodology to be used, specific assessments to be used, interventions targeted to identified needs of students

a. Does the SEA's accountability system provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for all LEAs in the State and for all Title I schools in those LEAs based on (1) student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, and other subjects at the State's discretion, for all students and all subgroups of students identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II); (2) graduation rates for all students and all subgroups; and (3) school performance and progress over time, including the performance and progress of all subgroups?

2.A.i.a PANEL RESPONSE Tally of Peer Responses: *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Accountability system is at a very early stage of development without sufficient detail.
Strengths	• Articulated an intent to meet all of Department's specifications around accountability system
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Given the early stage of development, the described accountability system does constitute a system that can provide differentiated recognition, accountability, and support. For example, the key committee to decide metrics for school performance index has not yet met.
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Benchmark other State and LEA practices, particularly those States using SGPs, multi-measure frameworks, and experience with directing support to schools and LEAs using such tools.

b. Do the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system create incentives and provide support to close achievement gaps for all subgroups of students?

2.A.i.b PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Accountability system is at a very early stage of development without sufficient detail to infer incentives and support to close achievement gaps.
Strengths	• Articulated commitment to close achievement gaps for all subgroups
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• System not adequately articulated to support likelihood of success
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Benchmark other State and LEA practices, particularly those States with a strong track record of closing achievement gaps.

c. Does the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system include interventions specifically focused on improving the performance of English Learners and students with disabilities?

2.A.i.c PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Accountability system is at a very early stage of development without sufficient detail to infer interventions specifically focused on improving the performance of ELs and SWD.
Strengths	• Articulated commitment to include interventions focused on ELs and SWD
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• System not adequately articulated to support likelihood of success
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Benchmark other State and LEA practices, particularly those States with experience improving the performance of English Learners and students with disabilities.

12

d. Did the SEA provide a plan that ensures that the system will be implemented in LEAs and schools no later than the 2012☐2013 school year?

2.A.i.d PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* 0 Yes, 7 No	
Rationale	• New Jersey provided vision for plan, but incomplete details concerning areas such as definitions of metrics and specific interventions to be implemented.
Strengths	• Articulated commitment to implement system
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• System not adequately articulated to support likelihood of success
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.A.ii Option A.

ONLY FOR SEAs SELECTING OPTION B: **If the SEA elects to include student achievement on assessments other than reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system by selecting Option B, review and respond to peer review questions in section 2.A.ii. If the SEA does not include other assessments, go to section 2.A.iii.**

2.A.ii Did the SEA include student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools?

  a. Did the SEA provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each additional assessment for all grades assessed?

  b. Does the SEA's weighting of the included assessments result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve the State's college- and career-ready standards?

2.A.ii (INCLUDING QUESTIONS a AND b) PANEL RESPONSE Tally of Peer Responses: NA	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ Not applicable because the SEA selected 2.A, Option A	

2.B   Set Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives

2.B   *Note to Peers: Staff will review Options A and B.*

Did the SEA describe the method it will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics, for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups, that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts?

If the SEA selected Option C:
Did the SEA describe another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups?

    i.   Did the SEA provide the new AMOs and the method used to set these AMOs?

    ii.   Did the SEA provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs?

    iii.   If the SEA set AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, do the AMOs require LEAs, schools, and subgroups that are further behind to make greater rates of annual progress?

    iv.   Did the SEA attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups? (Attachment 8)

➢   *Are these AMOs similarly ambitious to the AMOs that would result from using Option A or B above?*

➢   *Are these AMOs ambitious but achievable given the State's existing proficiency rates and any other relevant circumstances in the State?*

➢   *Will these AMOs result in a significant number of children being on track to be college- and career-ready?*

2.B AND 2.B, OPTION C (INCLUDING QUESTIONS i–iv) PANEL RESPONSE Tally of Peer Responses: 7 Yes, 0 No	
Rationale	• Appears closely aligned with Option A
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☐ Not applicable because the SEA selected 2.B, Option A or Option B	

2.C   Reward Schools

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.C.i and 2.C.ii.

2.C.iii Did the SEA describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools?

> ➢ *Has the SEA provided a reasonable explanation of why its proposed recognition and, where applicable, rewards are likely to be considered meaningful by schools? For example, has the SEA consulted with LEAs and schools in designing its recognition and, where applicable, rewards?*

2.C.iii PANEL RESPONSE Tally of Peer Responses: 7 Yes, 0 No	
Rationale	• SEA provided how it will publicly recognize and reward highest-performing and high-progress schools
Strengths	• Monetary rewards are significant and multiple avenues for public recognition • Incorporated community recommendation to focus rewards on high poverty and high progress, not affluent, high-performing overall schools
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Threshold for identification of high poverty schools for financial reward seems low at 35%.
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2.D   Priority Schools

Note to Peers: Staff will review 2.D.i and 2.D.ii.

2.D.iii Are the interventions that the SEA described aligned with the turnaround principles and are they likely to result in dramatic, systemic change in priority schools?

a. Do the SEA's interventions include all of the following?
   (i)   providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;

   (ii)   ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;

   (iii) redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;

   (iv)   strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;

   (v)   using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;

   (vi)   establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and

   (vii) providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement?

2.D.iii.a **(INCLUDING QUESTIONS (i)-(vii))** **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Proposed strategy is not systematic, thus not likely to result in dramatic change in priority schools
Strengths	• Plan strengths include regional implementation, Quality School Reviews, and tailored intervention for each school
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Capacity concerns – must staff 7 RACs with 10-15 staff • Work of the RACs appears over-extended(supporting CCSS implementation, turnaround, and focus schools, etc.) and focused on checklist or menu of interventions, many of which are not dramatic change interventions and are discrete, rather than comprehensive interventions • No evidence is provided of recognition of the role that district capacity and governance have in enabling or correcting persistent low performance • Proposing to sequence interventions based on capacity limitations even where assessment calls for additional immediate interventions
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Consider the qualifications of current SEA staff to serve in RAC roles, especially related to turnaround and high-quality professional development. • Develop a sound approach to assessing and building LEA capacity including related to governance, sustaining improvement, and support of strong interventions.

b. Has the SEA identified practices to be implemented that meet the turnaround principles and are likely to —

(i)   increase the quality of instruction in priority schools;

(ii) improve the effectiveness of the leadership and the teaching in these schools; and

(iii) improve student achievement and, where applicable, graduation rates for all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and the lowest-achieving students?

2.D.iii.b **(INCLUDING QUESTIONS (i)-(iii))** **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Relevant strategies attempt to get at desired outcomes but lack specificity and recognition of interconnectedness of various strategies
Strengths	• Many salient staffing and instruction issues identified
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Insufficient detail provided (see 2.D.iii.a)
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

c.   Has the SEA indicated that it will ensure that each of its priority schools implements the selected intervention for at least three years?

2.D.iii.c PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *7 Yes, 0 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey indicated that they would implement selected intervention for at least three years, as indicated in supplemental clarification 12/1
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2.D.iv Is the SEA's proposed timeline for ensuring that LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014−2015 school year reasonable and likely to result in implementation of the interventions in these schools?

➢ *Does the SEA's proposed timeline distribute priority schools' implementation of meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in a balanced way, such that there is not a concentration of these schools in the later years of the timeline?*

2.D.iv PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *7 Yes, 0 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey has articulated that they are committed to implementing meaningful interventions aligned with turnaround principles in each priority school no later than 2014-2015 school year
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2.D.v Did the SEA provide criteria to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status?

    a. Do the SEA's criteria ensure that schools that exit priority status have made significant progress in improving student achievement?
   - *Is the level of progress required by the criteria to exit priority status likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools?*

2.D.v and 2.D.v.a PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• No specific metrics or targets described for exiting priority status
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• A school may exit status based on demonstrated progress in implementing interventions without improved student outcomes ('or' instead of 'and') • Exit criteria, i.e. "high growth" not defined.
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2.E   Focus Schools

2.E.i   Did the SEA describe its methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as focus schools?

2.E.i PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *7 Yes, 0 No*	
Rationale	• Multifaceted approach with specific quantifications associated with achievement, growth and graduation rates presented
Strengths	• Variety of specific methods to ensure identification of schools with the greatest need
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Requiring both 30 students and 5% of school for consideration in designation of focus school may mask certain groups
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• To ensure appropriate differentiation in identification and intervention, examine SGPs for subgroups and determine if the high growth level (65th percentile) is the appropriate criterion for identification of focus schools. For example, a low achievement status school with 60th percentile growth (well above a "year's growth in a year's time") is different than a low status school with low growth (for example 30th percentile growth) • Consider re-running simulation relaxing the 5% rule in determining the difference in schools identified to ensure not overlooking small subgroups

2.E.ii   Did the SEA include a list of its focus schools?

a. Did the SEA identify a number of focus schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools?

b. In identifying focus schools, was the SEA's methodology based on the achievement and lack of progress over a number of years of one or more subgroups of students identified under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or, at the high school level, graduation rates for one or more subgroups?

c. Did the SEA's methodology result in the identification of focus schools that have —

(i)   the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup or subgroups and the lowest-achieving subgroup or subgroups or, at the high school level, the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate; or

(ii) a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate?

2.E.ii (INCLUDING QUESTIONS a-c) **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *7 Yes, 0 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey has provided a list that meets the criteria specified above
Strengths	• Use of data from multiple years to determine designations
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Requiring both 30 students and 5% of school for consideration in designation of focus school may mask certain groups
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• See 2.E.i

2.E.iii Did the SEA describe the process and timeline it will use to ensure that each LEA identifies the needs of its focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions the SEA will require its focus schools to implement to improve the performance of students who are furthest behind?

➢ *Has the SEA demonstrated that the interventions it has identified are effective at increasing student achievement in schools with similar characteristics, needs, and challenges as the schools the SEA has identified as focus schools?*

➢ *Has the SEA identified interventions that are appropriate for different levels of schools (elementary, middle, high) and that address different types of school needs (e.g., all-students, targeted at the lowest-achieving students)?*

2.E.iii PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• While a promising diagnostic review and planning process is described, the specificity and rationale for interventions and Quality School Review criteria are insufficient.
Strengths	• QSR process could be an effective strategy for identifying areas of deficiency in focus schools • Joint planning staff between RAC staff, districts, and schools is a process strength
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Targeted interventions should not just be a list of turnaround interventions • Examples of and justifications for the interventions are not provided • Quality School Review process and protocol not provided
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2.E.iv   Did the SEA provide criteria to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status?

> a. Do the SEA's criteria ensure that schools that exit focus status have made significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps?

> ➢ *Is the level of progress required by the criteria to exit focus status likely to result in sustained improvement in these schools?*

2.E.iv and 2.E.iv.a **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• No specific metrics or targets described for exiting focus status.
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• A school may exit status based on demonstrated progress in implementing interventions without improved student outcomes ('or' instead of 'and') • Exit criteria, i.e. "sustained improvement," "significant narrowing," not defined.
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

2.F   Provide Incentives and Support for other Title I Schools

2.F   Does the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system provide incentives and supports for other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps? Are those incentives and supports likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students?

2.F PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• Incentives to provide support for other Title I schools was weak in that they relied almost entirely on transparency of reporting and no specific plans were included that indicated the state would provide or require interventions
Strengths	• School Performance report cards • Offering resources to all schools, universal access to resources • Regional delivery method
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Lacks description of clear expectations regarding specific support system, consistent planning process, and selection of interventions in other Title I schools • Overextended responsibilities for RACs may affect timely provision of service to other Title I schools
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Develop continuous improvement process for other Title I schools as suggested by the feedback referenced on p. 11 of waiver request • Link school performance report card data to specific areas of need, including other online resources and suggested interventions

2.G   Build SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning

2.G   Is the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, likely to succeed in improving such capacity?

>   i.   Is the SEA's process for ensuring timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools likely to result in successful implementation of these interventions and in progress on leading indicators and student outcomes in these schools?

>   ➢   *Did the SEA describe a process for the rigorous review and approval of any external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support the implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools that is likely to result in the identification of high-quality partners with experience and expertise applicable to the needs of the school, including specific subgroup needs?*

2.G.i PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey was not specific in how LEAs would be held accountable and their capacity developed.
Strengths	• Diagnostic reviews could benefit LEA and school capacity
	• Four strategies for TA and monitoring: increase information, reorganization of Department, removal of unnecessary burden, creation of 7 RACs
	• Delivery unit at the Department could help monitor progress against goals
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• State describes school support and interventions directly from SEA to school; lacks sustainability strategy for building capacity in LEAs to support their schools
	• No description of process for the rigorous review and approval of any external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support the implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Develop strategy to transfer State capacity for support to LEAs, such as in Kentucky and Florida.
	• Ensure Delivery Unit is focused on building LEA capacity to monitor goals and efficacy of interventions

ii.   Is the SEA's process for holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools, likely to improve LEA capacity to support school improvement?

2.G.ii PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey was not specific in how LEAs would be held accountable and their capacity developed
Strengths	See 2.G.i
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	See 2.G.i
Technical Assistance Suggestions	See 2.G.i

iii.   Is the SEA's process for ensuring sufficient support for implementation in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources) likely to result in successful implementation of such interventions and improved student achievement?

2.G.iii PANEL RESPONSE Tally of Peer Responses: 2 Yes, 5 No	
Rationale	• While funding strategy and regional support structure are promising, process described is not sufficient to result in successful implementation and improved student achievement
Strengths	• The outlined strategies for support, intervention, regional structure, State delivery focus, diagnostic reviews, use of funds described, are all reasonable parts of a successful implementation system • Authority of RACs to redirect Title I funding is a potential strength • Applied for Race to the Top 3 and proposed to dedicate funds to staffing RACs
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Concerns with specificity of QSR discussed above (2.E.iii) • Concerns with regard to appropriateness and quality of interventions in priority and focus schools discussed above
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

Principle 2 Overall Review

Is the SEA's plan for developing and implementing a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for students? Do the components of the SEA's plan fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive system that supports continuous improvement and is tailored to the needs of the State, its LEAs, its schools, and its students? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

PRINCIPLE 2 OVERALL REVIEW PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *0 Yes, 7 No*	
Rationale	• The components of the SEA's plan as described lack sufficient detail to demonstrate that the components fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive system that will support continuous improvement or dramatically improve performance in priority and focus schools
Strengths	• The proposed accountability system includes a practical set of components: Initial AMO strategy, metrics for identifying priority, focus, and reward schools, and a proposed multi-measure performance report. • The SEA reorganization, including its Delivery Unit, together with RACs, represents important foundations for potential success. In addition, QSRs have potential to inform richer diagnostics and intervention selection
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• The waiver application primarily presents proposed concepts with initial design work. The performance report example is incomplete, for example it lacks the key metric of growth • The list of interventions for priority schools is generically listed, but lacks sufficient, detailed description. The basic parts of a coherent system are present but not adequately articulated and important legislative work, system design, and follow-through remains
Technical Assistance Suggestions	

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

3.A   Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

3.A.i   Has the SEA developed and adopted guidelines consistent with Principle 3 through one of the three options below?

<u>If the SEA selected Option A:</u>
If the SEA has not already developed any guidelines consistent with Principle 3:

     i.   Is the SEA's plan for developing and adopting guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to result in successful adoption of those guidelines by the end of the 2011–2012 school year?

3.A.i, OPTION A.i PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *7 Yes, 0 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey states that they will develop guidelines by end of 2011-2012 school year and has clear leadership commitment
Strengths	• SEA presented framework with key elements, reasonable expectation that would be developed by 2011-2012 school year • Task force making recommendations
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☐ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option B or Option C*	

ii.   Does the SEA's plan include sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines?

3.A.i, OPTION A.ii PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *5 Yes, 2 No*	
Rationale	• Pilot provides involvement of teachers and principals
Strengths	• Current pilot includes 11 LEAs, including State's largest, and 19 SIG schools, teachers, and principals • Plan includes external evaluator capturing lessons learned from pilot phase
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Educator Effectiveness Taskforce lacks participation of a broad group of stakeholders • External evaluator of the pilot not yet selected
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Ensure additional review from stakeholders beyond initial pilot districts
☐ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option B or Option C*	

Note to Peers: Staff will review iii.

<u>If the SEA selected Option B:</u>
If the SEA has already developed and adopted one or more, but not all, guidelines consistent with Principle 3:

<u>*Note to Peers: Staff will review i and iii.*</u>

ii. Are the guidelines the SEA has adopted likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? (See question 3.A.ii to review the adopted guidelines for consistency with Principle 3.)

3.A.i, OPTION B.ii PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* NA	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A or Option C*	

iv. Is the SEA's plan for developing and adopting the remaining guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to result in successful adoption of these guidelines by the end of the 2011–2012 school year?

3.A.i OPTION B.iv PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* NA	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A or Option C*	

v. Did the SEA have sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines? Does the SEA's plan include sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of the remaining guidelines?

3.A.i OPTION B.v PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not Applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A or Option C*	

If the SEA selected Option C:
If the SEA has developed and adopted all guidelines consistent with Principle 3:

i. Are the guidelines the SEA has adopted likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? (See question 3.A.ii to review the adopted guidelines for consistency with Principle 3.)

3.A.i, OPTION C.i PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
⊠ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A or Option B*	

Note to Peers: Staff will review ii.

iii. Did the SEA have sufficient involvement of teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines?

3.A.i OPTION C.iii PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
⊠ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option A or Option B*	

ONLY FOR SEAs SELECTING OPTION B OR C: If the SEA has adopted guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by selecting Option B or C in section 3.A, review and respond to peer review question 3.A.ii below.

3.A.ii For any teacher and principal evaluation and support systems for which the SEA has developed and adopted guidelines, consistent with Principle 3, are they systems that:

a. Will be used for continual improvement of instruction?

➢ *Are the SEA's guidelines likely to result in support for teachers that will enable them to improve their instructional practice?*

3.A.ii.a PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

b. Meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels?

> *Does the SEA incorporate student growth into its performance-level definitions with sufficient weighting to ensure that performance levels will differentiate among teachers and principals who have made significantly different contributions to student growth or closing achievement gaps?*

3.A.ii.b **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

c. Use multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including as a significant factor data on student growth for all students (including English Learners and students with disabilities), and other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous teacher performance standards, teacher portfolios, and student and parent surveys)?

(i) Does the SEA have a process for ensuring that all measures that are included in determining performance levels are valid measures, meaning measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA?

3.A.ii.c and 3.A.ii.c(i) **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

(ii) For grades and subjects in which assessments are required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3), does the SEA define a statewide approach for measuring student growth on these assessments?

3.A.ii.c(ii) PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

(iii) For grades and subjects in which assessments are not required under ESEA section 1111(b)(3), does the SEA either specify the measures of student growth that LEAs must use or select from or plan to provide guidance to LEAs on what measures of student growth are appropriate, and establish a system for ensuring that LEAs will use valid measures?

3.A.ii.c(iii) PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

d. Evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis?

3.A.ii.d PANEL RESPONSE
Tally of Peer Responses: *NA*

Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

e. Provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development?
  ➢ *Will the SEA's guidelines ensure that evaluations occur with a frequency sufficient to ensure that feedback is provided in a timely manner to inform effective practice?*

  ➢ *Are the SEA's guidelines likely to result in differentiated professional development that meets the needs of teachers?*

3.A.ii.e PANEL RESPONSE
Tally of Peer Responses: *NA*

Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

f.   Will be used to inform personnel decisions?

3.A.ii.f PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *NA*	
Rationale	
Strengths	
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	
Technical Assistance Suggestions	
☒ *Not applicable because the SEA selected 3.A, Option C*	

3. B   Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

3.B   Is the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines likely to lead to high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems?

> *Does the SEA have a process for reviewing and approving an LEA's teacher and principal evaluation and support systems to ensure that they are consistent with the SEA's guidelines and will result in the successful implementation of such systems?*

> *Does the SEA have a process for ensuring that an LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements its teacher and principal evaluation and support systems with the involvement of teachers and principals?*

> *Did the SEA describe the process it will use to ensure that all measures used in an LEA's evaluation and support systems are valid, meaning measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance, and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA?*

> *Is the SEA's plan likely to be successful in ensuring that LEAs meet the timeline requirements by either (1) piloting evaluation and support systems no later than the 2013−2014 school year and implementing evaluation and support systems consistent with the requirements described above no later than the 2014−2015 school year; or (2) implementing these systems no later than the 2013−2014 school year?*

> *Do timelines reflect a clear understanding of what steps will be necessary and reflect a logical sequencing and spacing of the key steps necessary to implement evaluation and support systems consistent with the required timelines?*

> *Is the SEA plan for providing adequate guidance and other technical assistance to LEAs in developing and implementing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems likely to lead to successful implementation?*

> *Is the pilot broad enough to gain sufficient feedback from a variety of types of educators, schools, and classrooms to inform full implementation of the LEA's evaluation and support systems?*

3.B PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *5 Yes, 2 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey provided comprehensive plan for developing guidelines; however, there are concerns about timeline and complexity of implementation across 600 school districts.
Strengths	• Requires every district to establish district advisory committee • Framework provides a balance of inputs and outputs, i.e. teacher practice is 50% and student performance is 50% • Pilots in SIG schools has potential to provide guidance related to differentiation of instruction for subgroups
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Timeline for training and implementation of State pilot next year seems short; may be hard for districts to contract, plan, execute on implementation guidelines • Statewide draft guideline planned for January 2012, prior to receiving feedback from pilot (see Timeline p. 191)
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Develop process for approval and checks on implementation fidelity to ensure comparability between districts • Acknowledge potential need for reassessment of guidelines after pilot feedback • Review practicality and strategic sequencing of timelines established in implementation plan, for example professional development plan requirements (linked to evaluation results and district goals by Jan/Feb 2012) to ensure reasonable high quality as opposed to compliance

Principle 3 Overall Review

Is the SEA's plan for the SEA's and LEAs' development and implementation of teacher and principal evaluation and support systems comprehensive, coherent, and likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

PRINCIPLE 3 OVERALL REVIEW PANEL RESPONSE *Tally of Peer Responses:* *3 Yes, 4 No*	
Rationale	• New Jersey provided comprehensive plan for developing guidelines; however, there are concerns about timeline and complexity of implementation across 600 school districts.
Strengths	• Requires every district to establish district advisory committee • Framework provides a balance of inputs and outputs, i.e. teacher practice is 50% and student performance is 50% • Pilots in SIG schools has potential to provide guidance related to differentiation of instruction for subgroups
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Timeline for training and implementation of State pilot next year seems short; may be hard for districts to contract, plan, execute on implementation guidelines • Statewide draft guideline planned for January 2012, prior to receiving feedback from pilot (see Timeline p. 191) • Weak plans and structures for ensuring coherence and high quality implementation across districts
Technical Assistance Suggestions	• Develop process for approval and checks on implementation fidelity to ensure comparability between districts • Acknowledge potential need for reassessment of guidelines after pilot feedback

PRINCIPLE 3 OVERALL REVIEW **PANEL RESPONSE** *Tally of Peer Responses:* *3 Yes, 4 No*	
	• Review practicality and strategic sequencing of timelines established in implementation plan, for example professional development plan requirements (linked to evaluation results and district goals by Jan/Feb 2012) to ensure reasonable high quality as opposed to compliance

Overall Request Evaluation

Did the SEA provide a comprehensive and coherent approach for implementing the waivers and principles in its request for the flexibility? Overall, is implementation of the SEA's approach likely to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement? If not, what aspects are not addressed or need to be improved upon?

OVERALL REQUEST EVALUATION PANEL RESPONSE	
Summary	• New Jersey's proposal is a solid beginning. It presents a strong vision and outlines a framework for a coherent strategy. However, substantial design work and staff development remains ahead that will provide needed R&D, specificity in measurement and interventions, and capable regional delivery. Until additional design work is completed, it is not possible to fully evaluate the quality of the plan and its likelihood of success.
Strengths	• Commitment to implementation of Common Core State Standards, PARRC Assessments, and Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (Appendix p. 354) • Acknowledged commitment to addressing the needs of persistently low-performing schools and schools with large achievement gaps • Transparency ensured by multiple reports of extensive data including Early Warning, College Readiness, Post-Secondary Success, and detailed, clear, comprehensive draft report card by subgroup
Weaknesses, issues, lack of clarity	• Although a broad, comprehensive plan for implementation of CCSS is provided, the plan provided does not appear to be realistic or appropriately detailed to meet the 2013-2014 deadline. • The components of the SEA's differentiated accountability and support plan as described lack sufficient detail to demonstrate that the components fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive system that will support continuous improvement or dramatically improve performance in priority and focus schools (see 2.D, 2.E, 2.F) • New Jersey provided comprehensive plan for developing teacher and principal evaluation guidelines; however, there are concerns about timeline and complexity of implementation across 600 school districts (see 3.B)
Technical Assistance Suggestions	