



ESEA Flexibility

Renewal

Minnesota



March 13, 2015

OMB Number: 1810-0581

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Cover Sheet for ESEA Flexibility Request

Legal Name of Requester: Minnesota Department of Education	Requester's Mailing Address: 1500 West Highway 36 Roseville, MN 54113
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: Stephanie Graff Position and Office: Federal Education Policy Specialist, Office of Commissioner Contact's Mailing Address: 1500 West Highway 36 Roseville, MN 54113 Telephone: 651-582-8242 Fax: 651-582-8727 Email address: stephanie.graff@state.mn.us	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dr. Brenda Cassellius	Telephone: 651-582-8204
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X <u><i>Brenda Cassellius</i></u>	Date: January 29, 2015
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of ESEA flexibility.	

Waivers

By submitting this updated ESEA flexibility request, the SEA renews its request for flexibility through waivers of the nine ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements, as well as any optional waivers the SEA has chosen to request under ESEA flexibility, by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested.

- ☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.
- ☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.
- ☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.
- ☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.
- ☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a school-wide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and “focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.
- ☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of “priority schools” and

“focus schools,” respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State’s reward schools that meet the definition of “reward schools” set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA’s State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools.

☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

☒ 13. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

The SEA requests this waiver in addition to waiver #6 so that, when it has remaining section 1003(a) funds after ensuring that all priority and focus schools have sufficient funds to carry out interventions, it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs to provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in other Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #13, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request that it has a process to ensure, on an annual basis, that all of its priority and focus schools will have sufficient funding to implement their required interventions prior to distributing ESEA section 1003(a) funds to other Title I schools.

Waiver #13 update is found on pages 158-159.

☐ 14. The requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i) that, respectively, require the SEA to apply the same academic content and academic achievement standards to all public schools and public school children in the State and to administer the same academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students. The SEA requests this waiver so that it is not required to double test a student who is not yet enrolled in high school but who takes advanced, high school level, mathematics coursework. The SEA would assess such a student with the corresponding advanced, high school level assessment in place of the mathematics assessment the SEA would otherwise administer to the student for the grade in which the student is enrolled. For Federal accountability purposes, the SEA will use the results of the advanced, high school level, mathematics assessment in the year in which the assessment is administered and will administer one or more additional advanced, high school level, mathematics assessments to such students in high school, consistent with the State's mathematics content standards, and use the results in high school accountability determinations.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #14, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request how it will ensure that every student in the State has the opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school.

Click here to enter page numbers where edits have been made and where new attachments have been added. Do not insert new text here – insert new text in redline into the revised request.

Assurances

By submitting this request, the SEA assures that:

- ☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of ESEA flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
- ☒ 2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 3. It will administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii) no later than the 2015–2016 school year. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
- ☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
- ☒ 7. It will annually make public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools prior to the start of the school year as well as publicly recognize its reward schools, and will update its lists of priority and focus schools at least every three years. (Principle 2)

If the SEA is not submitting with its renewal request its updated list of priority and focus schools, based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, it must also assure that:

- ☐ 8. It will provide to the Department, no later than January 31, 2016, an updated list of priority and focus schools, identified based on school year 2014–2015 data, for implementation beginning in the 2016–2017 school year.

- ☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
- ☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its ESEA flexibility request.
- ☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. (Attachment 2)
- ☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice. (Attachment 3)
- ☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout its ESEA flexibility request, and will ensure that all such reports, data, and evidence are accurate, reliable, and complete or, if it is aware of issues related to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of its reports, data, or evidence, it will disclose those issues.
- ☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group, each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II), and for any combined subgroup (as applicable): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. In addition, it will annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively. It will ensure that all reporting is consistent with *State and Local Report Cards Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended Non-Regulatory Guidance* (February 8, 2013).

Principle 3 Assurances

Each SEA must select the appropriate option and, in doing so, assures that:

Option A	Option B	Option C
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15.a. The SEA is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on State assessments into educator ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals.	<p>If an SEA that is administering new State assessments during the 2014–2015 school year is requesting one additional year to incorporate student growth based on these assessments, it will:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.b.i. Continue to ensure that its LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation systems using multiple measures, and that the SEA or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.b.ii. Ensure that each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year.</p>	<p>If the SEA is requesting modifications to its teacher and principal evaluation and support system guidelines or implementation timeline other than those described in Option B, which require additional flexibility from the guidance in the document titled <i>ESEA Flexibility</i> as well as the documents related to the additional flexibility offered by the Assistant Secretary in a letter dated August 2, 2013, it will:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15.c. Provide a narrative response in its redlined ESEA flexibility request as described in Section II of the ESEA flexibility renewal guidance.</p>

INTRODUCTION

On August 16, 2011, due in part to unique conditions and delayed reporting created by the state's government shutdown, Minnesota applied for a limited and conditional waiver from certain provisions of No Child Left Behind. Shortly after, President Obama authorized Secretary Duncan to offer every state the opportunity to apply for waivers from the current No Child Left Behind law. As a result of the larger waiver opportunity and resulting guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, the Administration did not take action on Minnesota's temporary waiver request.

Due to the careful thought and consideration put into the initial waiver request, Minnesota was primed and ready to take on the challenge of implementing a better approach to school accountability. The waiver request we submit today presents a bold and creative accountability plan that we believe is better and more appropriate for the needs of Minnesota.

It is no secret that Minnesota ranks at the top of states in overall student achievement on many indicators, including our NAEP and ACT performance. However, we also know those results are not reflective of the academic performance of all Minnesota children. Our state ranks among the worst in the nation for our large achievement gaps. This is untenable and unacceptable. It is notable that among other measures, our new accountability plan measures progress on narrowing achievement gaps as one very important indicator of school performance.

When Secretary Duncan visited Minnesota in January of 2011, he remarked on Minnesota's seeming lack of urgency to aggressively tackle this most pressing issue. That lack of urgency is no more. It has been replaced by a deep and compelling urgency, and a commitment to lead the nation on the important work of replacing outdated accountability measures with a plan that provides a true picture of school performance and sets high expectations for every student in our state. It is a plan that makes sense for our teachers, our schools, our stakeholders, and most importantly, for our children.

This ESEA Flexibility Request is just one part of this larger plan for Minnesota's education system. The Request represents the next step forward in a year that

has been full of them. In early 2011, newly-elected Governor Dayton announced a Seven-Point Plan for education built around:

1. Funding for the Future
2. Better Early Childhood Education
3. Raise the Bar-Close the Gap
4. Reading Well by 3rd Grade
5. Support Teaching for Better Schools
6. Better Testing, Better Results
7. A Department that Provides Educational Leadership and Support

Since the Seven-Point Plan was announced, we have made great strides in almost every area. We increased per pupil funding for K12 education. A new Literacy Incentive Aid Fund of \$50 million was created to promote early literacy. We were awarded a Race to the Top Early Learning Grant to build on our innovative system of early childhood education, and were awarded a major Promise Neighborhood Grant in North Minneapolis. The legislature passed a law that adopted WIDA Standards for English Learners. We launched a statewide literacy campaign and set accountability targets to ensure all students are reading by 3rd Grade. We passed legislation to allow for alternative pathways to teaching, and adopted principal and teacher evaluation systems. We contracted with a new testing vendor that allows us to use online formative assessments that can inform classroom instruction. MDE restructured to create a more collaborative and supportive SEA for districts and schools.

These positive steps have put us on a path toward a dramatically reformed education system that is more responsive to the needs of students in the 21st Century. This ESEA Flexibility Request is the next step toward that goal. Our proposal gives schools and districts more funding flexibility to better target resources to their needs. It frees up more Title I funding for early childhood programming. For the first time ever in Minnesota, it sets growth targets aligned with proficiency, and with closing the achievement gap. It provides parents with more data to use in assessing the successes and needs of their child's school. It

empowers a statewide system of support that can provide better professional development and content knowledge to teachers. It better utilizes our assessment system by meaningfully measuring growth. It allows MDE to be more responsive to the schools that are in the greatest need of support.

We believe that for all these reasons and more, this proposal will lead to better student outcomes. This proposal is the right one for Minnesota because it is the next step in our efforts to build excellent schools with excellent leaders and teachers getting excellent results for students.

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

- 1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.*
- 2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited 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.*

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) engaged stakeholders through a formal process in order to solicit input on its request. These stakeholders referred to as the ESEA Flexibility Work Group represented a wide array of interest groups. Representatives of the following groups were invited to participate:

- Teachers (representatives from the statewide teachers' union and the Minneapolis teachers' union)
- Business
- Superintendents
- Higher Education
- Charter Schools
- School Boards
- Legislators
- Parents
- Minority Groups (Asian, Hispanic, African-American, American Indian)
- Principals
- Rural School Districts
- Title I Practitioners
- Assessment Directors
- Special Education
- English Learners

A list of the Work Group members who regularly attended meetings and their affiliations can be found in Attachment 20.

The Work Group met weekly for one month to discuss all aspects of Minnesota's request. These all day meetings allowed for stakeholder input on the various components of the request. Meetings were open to the public and were well-attended by both Work Group members and other interested parties. The Work Group was presented with different options particularly as they related to element two in the request form and was given an opportunity to express their preferences. This included having the opportunity to look at different scenarios for how to measure schools for differentiated recognition, support, and accountability.

For the entire period during which the Work Group met, MDE maintained a website where handouts from meetings were available to members and the public. Work Group members were encouraged to contact MDE staff with questions and feedback during the week leading up to each meeting, and this feedback was incorporated and discussed during meetings. The Work Group also received periodic electronic communications providing clarification on points that were unresolved during previous meetings.

Throughout the process, Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility Request proposal was adjusted to reflect feedback given by the Work Group. One of the most significant contributions was the suggestion from teachers, principals and superintendents to abandon a proposed "gap group," which would have measured the performance of all lower-performing subgroups together instead of individually. This proposal was rejected by the Work Group, and MDE adjusted the measurements accordingly. Additionally, MDE was dissuaded by the Work Group from assigning schools to Priority, Focus and Reward School categories proportionally based using school type. Such a proposal would have ensured that a proportional number of charter schools were included in each of the three categories. The Work Group insisted that assignment to these three categories should be based on performance alone, not on the type of school being measured. Finally, the Work Group provided vocal support for the idea of identifying the best practices of Reward Schools and creating an online clearinghouse of best practices that could be accessed by other schools. The

Work Group's support for this proposal led to MDE making it a more prominent part of its proposal for providing support to Priority and Focus Schools.

Prior to the Work Group's final meeting, members of the Work Group were sent a decisions form that summarized every policy proposal MDE planned to include in its final Request. Members were encouraged to review the form and submit comments and questions electronically or during the final Work Group meeting. During that meeting, Work Group members and public observers had an opportunity to ask questions about every aspect of MDE's proposal and provide input. Based on this input, MDE made final adjustments to its proposal to reflect the preferences of the Work Group. Following the initial feedback from the US Department of Education on the original ESEA Flexibility Request, MDE again consulted the Work Group to get feedback on adjustments being made to the request.

MDE's stakeholder engagement went beyond the Work Group. In the weeks leading up to Minnesota's official request submission, the Commissioner of Education and MDE staff took advantage of several opportunities to present aspects of the proposal to stakeholders from a variety of groups. These included (but were not limited to) minority groups, LEAs, representatives from rural schools, principals, and regional education groups. The Commissioner of Education and MDE staff members also engaged legislators of both the Senate and House K12 Education Committees on Oct. 17, 2011 whereby the legislators were provided time to give feedback and assess the need for any legislative action. More formally, the Commissioner and staff testified to the content of the proposal in a public hearing in the Minnesota House of Representatives on Nov. 2, 2011. Testimony was posted to the MDE website, Facebook and Twitter accounts and was widely covered by the media. Additionally, information on the Request was shared with all superintendents in the state by email each week. Furthermore, the Commissioner presented on the waiver at the Minnesota Rural Education Association annual conference on Nov. 3, 2011, and MDE staff presented information to the Association of Metropolitan School Districts on Nov. 4, 2011. This was filmed and put on YouTube, posted to all MDE social media, and sent directly to superintendents and our education associations.

The Title I Committee of Practitioners (COP) was also consulted during this process. A representative of the COP served on the Work Group to ensure that

the COP had the opportunity to provide input in crafting Minnesota's proposal. All members of the COP were also sent information and materials on the various options. Once a final proposal was in place, the COP was consulted through a conference call that allowed for participation of all COP members around the state. Prior to the conference call, COP members were provided with an outline of Minnesota's proposal. During the conference call, members of the COP were given opportunity to ask questions and provide input. Members were supportive of the Request and asked to be involved in the implementation of changes related to the Request.

MDE will continue its stakeholder engagement subsequent to its official ESEA Flexibility Request. MDE will tour the state to educate schools and members of the public on changes being made to the state's accountability system. MDE will also produce online tutorials and videos to explain aspects of the Request. This effort will be aimed at teachers, principals, parents and members of the public with the goal of ensuring the legitimacy of the state's plan.

2015 Waiver Renewal

MDE engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders regarding the implementation of waiver principles and the state's plans to continuously improve systems under waiver renewal. Feedback was solicited through regional meetings, statewide webinars, small group meetings and a large waiver stakeholder meeting. Individuals representing the following groups were invited to participate in the series of meetings:

- Teachers
- Business
- Superintendents
- Charter Schools
- School Boards
- Legislators
- Parents
- Minority Groups
- Principals
- Rural School Districts
- Metro School Districts
- Title I Practitioners

- Assessment Directors
- Special Education
- English Learners
- Higher Education

The Commissioner of Education reconvened nearly the same work group that supported the development of Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility Waiver on January 20, 2015. The Commissioner and MDE staff provided highlights of the state's waiver implementation and discussed how the state will continue to improve on the systems that are incorporated into Minnesota's waiver. Members of the group were given an opportunity to ask any questions about the waiver renewal process and provided valuable input about the areas Minnesota is addressing in its request.

On January 7 and January 9, representatives from some of Minnesota's education organizations were also invited to small group meetings to discuss the waiver renewal. These groups include the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, Minnesota Association of Secondary School Administrators, Minnesota Elementary School Principal's Association and the Minnesota School Board's Association. In addition, the Commissioner met with Education Minnesota, the state's largest teacher's union to outline the waiver renewal process and seek feedback on the proposals in Minnesota's waiver renewal request.

Members from the state's civil rights organizations were also invited to discuss the waiver renewal with MDE staff on January 26, 2015. The organizations invited include the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, Chicano Latino Affairs Council, Somali American Parent Association, Minneapolis Urban League, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Council of Black Minnesotans and Isaiah Minnesota.

Statewide webinars were offered on January 12 and January 20, 2015. MDE invited superintendents, charter school directors, charter authorizers, Title I and Title III practitioners, school and district assessment coordinators to participate in the webinars. All participants were encouraged to ask questions or provide input during the webinar presentations.

The Deputy Commissioner of Education and MDE staff traveled to southwest and northern Minnesota and provided opportunities for stakeholders in these regions to engage in discussion around waiver renewal. These regional meetings took place on January 13 and January 14, 2015.

MDE provided a variety of stakeholder engagement opportunities; however, the statewide webinars and the large stakeholder discussion with Commissioner Cassellius on January 20 were the only meetings that were well-attended. Several individuals and organizations were invited to the other meetings but chose to not participate. This is likely because Minnesota is making few changes in this waiver renewal and has actively engaged and informed stakeholders throughout the implementation of the waiver.

For this reason, MDE provided information about the waiver renewal on its ESEA Flexibility Waiver webpage on the agency's website. On this page, the same presentation that was used in each of the meetings and webinars mentioned above was made available for districts and the public to review and provide comments to MDE.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☒ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

- 1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and*
- 2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.*

Since the last reauthorization of the ESEA, Minnesota has raised academic standards, developed tools for holding schools accountable for improving the academic performance of students, and provided schools with support to improve the quality of instruction. The waivers and principles included in this Flexibility Request proposal will allow Minnesota to utilize these carefully developed tools for improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction.

Minnesota's academic standards are the core of our accountability system. Schools are accountable for all students meeting statewide college- and career-ready academic standards. All accountability efforts are, therefore, directed at increasing the likelihood that students will achieve proficiency on the assessments aligned to the state standards.

ESEA Flexibility will allow us to take advantage of a wider variety of data to better identify schools that truly need support. With legislative support, Minnesota has developed a growth model to measure students' academic performance from year-to-year. If approved, Minnesota will use growth metrics, along with proficiency status and graduation rates to identify schools for Priority, Focus and Reward. The addition of growth data to the accountability system will give the public a more complete picture of how schools are performing.

Minnesota's experience with No Child Left Behind has shown it that it is not enough to just measure schools for accountability. Schools need to put the right school improvement plans in place, and have the necessary support from the state, and other education partners. School improvement requires teams of dedicated working together. With the help of such teams, Priority and Focus Schools will implement plans based on Turnaround Principles to change the

trajectory of the school. ESEA Flexibility will allow schools, LEAs and MDE to exercise financial and programmatic flexibility to implement essential activities at those schools that are most in need of support.

Because both high-quality leadership and instruction are critical to the continuous improvement of all schools, Minnesota has moved beyond No Child Left Behind's high-quality teacher requirements to implement a system of meaningful principal and teacher evaluation. These changes have legislative approval and will be in place within the timelines required for ESEA Flexibility.

Finally, ESEA Flexibility will allow Minnesota to reduce the administrative burdens of LEAs. The less time LEAs must spend on unnecessary requirements, the more time they have for ensuring that schools are continuously improving.

We are not looking for a pass on accountability. We are looking for the flexibility to use the systems and tools we have created to increase the quality of schools and to improve student achievement.

1.A Adopt College- and Career-Ready Standards

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A

☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.

- i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)

Option B

☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.

- i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)
- ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

1.B B Transition to College- and Career-Ready Standards

- 1. B Provide the SEA’s plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is 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. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.**

Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. 120B.023, Subd.2), establishes requirements for revising state academic standards in each subject to include an increased level of rigor that prepares students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in college and the skilled workplace.

This statute also sets forth a revision and implementation schedule. Minnesota’s current state academic standards in reading/language arts were aligned to college- and career-ready standards in 2010. Full LEA implementation for these standards is required by 2012-2013.

The University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System have certified the mathematics academic standards declaring that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the post-secondary level (See Attachment 5). This reflects the involvement of Minnesota’s Institutes of Higher Education in the standard-development process and includes students with disabilities and English language learners.

In addition to reading/language arts and mathematics Minnesota will have a required series of college- and career-readiness standards to be implemented in LEAs by 2013-2014 as evidenced by the statutorily defined revision timeline below.

Minnesota Academic Standards Revision Timeline (Minn. Stat. § 120B.023, Subd. 2)			
Subject Area	Revision Year	Implementation Year	Next Revision
Mathematics	2006-2007	2010-2011	2015-2016
Arts	2007-2008	2010-2011	2016-2017
Science	2008-2009	2011-2012	2017-2018
Reading/Language Arts	2009-2010	2012-2013	2018-2019
Physical Education	2009-2010	2012-2013	2018-2019
Social Studies	2010-2011	2013-2014	2019-2020

- *1.B.1 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 the 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?*

Minnesota has formally analyzed the alignment of the state academic standards to college- and career-ready standards through several initiatives. Our system of standards-based education has been influenced by Achieve, P-16 Education Partnership and Common Core State Standards. This work has informed the 2007 revision of the mathematics state standards leading to IHE certification and the 2010 revision of the reading/language state arts standards, which included Common Core State Standards among other state requirements. These initiatives are summarized below.

Achieve

In 2006, Minnesota joined the American Diploma Project (ADP) sponsored by Achieve. A chief goal was to ensure college- and career-readiness for all students through a system of standards and assessments aligned with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school. To this end, the state sent a team of K-12 educators, postsecondary educators, curriculum directors, MDE standards and assessment staff, and business representatives to a series of three ADP Alignment Institutes. Minnesota participants learned to design a process resulting in the development of rigorous K-12 standards in reading/language arts and mathematics that garners the trust of educators and the public. They researched the knowledge and skills needed for success in college and careers, and

developed a plan for revising the state's 2003 reading/language arts and mathematics standards.

P-16 Education Partnership

Following the involvement in the ADP Alignment Institutes, the Minnesota P-16 Education Partnership convened the College and Work Readiness Working Group to craft college- and work-readiness standards in reading/language arts and math. The group was comprised of K-12 and postsecondary instructors in each discipline and included members of the state's ADP team. The college- and career-ready standards for reading/language arts and mathematics, known formally as the *Minnesota College and Work Readiness Expectations*, were endorsed by Achieve and were included in the reading/language arts mathematics standards revisions in 2007 and 2010, respectively.

Minnesota's emphasis on creating and requiring standards that prepare all students to be college- and career-ready is evidenced by Minn. Stat. 120B.023, subd. 1(a). This statute sets forth a mandate that all students satisfactorily complete College- and Career-Ready (CCR) academic standards.

Common Core State Standards

Minnesota's scheduled revision of the reading/language arts standards coincided with the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Common Core initiative promised to create K-12 standards that were:

- Research and evidence based
- Aligned with college and work expectations
- Rigorous
- Internationally benchmarked

Minnesota actively participated in the development of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Beginning with the draft College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards in the summer of 2009, the Minnesota Department of Education convened a series of educator focus groups. The groups provided detailed feedback on the CCR standards and each successive draft of the grade specific K-12 Standards until they were completed in June 2010. Many of the suggestions provided by Minnesota educators were incorporated

into the Common Core State Standards. There is a close alignment between the Common Core State Standards and the *Minnesota College and Work Readiness Expectations*.

- *1. B.2 Does the SEA intend to analyze the linguistic demands of the State's 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 have the opportunity to achieve 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 on the same schedule as all students?*

To ensure high quality support for English Learners and their teachers, Minnesota has joined the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium. Our participation in WIDA was codified legislatively during the 2011 legislative session (Minn. Laws SS 2011, Art. 1, Sec. 46). MDE conducted an alignment study between the WIDA English language proficiency standards and the Minnesota content standards in math and science in November 2011 in order to gather information about the extent to which Minnesota's English language proficiency standards prepare English Learners to access content knowledge with minimal language support. MDE plans to use the results of the study to support English Learners in accessing the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students. Information from this alignment study will inform the next revision cycle of mathematics academic standards scheduled for 2015-2016.

There have been two alignment studies done for WIDA implementation in Minnesota. One between WIDA and Common Core standards and the other between WIDA Standards and the ACCESS for English Learners.

The WIDA English language development standards are aligned with the national TESOL standards and address specific language development in core content areas. These are aligned to common core standards. Our 2011 reading/language arts standards are aligned to the common core standards. These common core, aligned, reading/language arts standards, in conjunction with the preK-12 WIDA ELD standards, provide a framework for teachers to scaffold instruction for English learners.

As a member of WIDA, Minnesota districts have access to the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™), which may also be used as a screener for identification purposes. Additionally, ACCESS for ELLs® will be administered annually, replacing Minnesota developed English Learners assessments. These tools will provide better measures for assessing how well English Learners are learning content needed to fully access the Minnesota academic standards, which are aligned to college- and career-ready standards.

- *1.B.3 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-readiness standards? If so, will the results be used to support students with disabilities in accessing college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students?*

A review of standards with a lens of access for students with disabilities is important to clarify the essence of each standard and to be explicit about where there is flexibility in instruction and assessment and where there is not. In past iterations of Minnesota academic content standards, there have been areas of mismatch between implied flexibility in instruction and the limitations felt by item writers and developers of statewide assessments based on a literal interpretation of the standards as written.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and frameworks have been used to guide the development of both the 2007 mathematics state standards and the 2010 reading/language arts state standards.

UDL principles provide for:

- Multiple and flexible methods of presentation to give students with diverse learning styles various ways of acquiring information and knowledge;
- Multiple and flexible means of expression and representation provide diverse students with alternatives for demonstrating what they have learned;

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- Multiple and flexible means of engagement to tap into diverse learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

Addressing UDL principles in the development of standards creates more consistent access in instruction and assessment for students with disabilities and increases their opportunities to demonstrate what they know. Current versions of Minnesota academic standards were written to reduce barriers for special needs students in representation, expression and engagement. Acceptable demonstration of standards mastery is compatible with a variety of learning styles and modes of receptive and expressive communication. The following examples illustrate UDL principles applied to the 2010 reading/language arts standards.

- Demonstrate understanding of text using vocabulary...
- Produce and expand complete sentences in response to questions and prompts.
- Sort words into categories (e.g., colors, clothing).

Some traditional standard language needed adjustments to apply UDL principles. The following are examples from reading/language arts:

Original: Explain how the author of the text uses to structure information...

Alternate: Demonstrate an understanding...

Original: Speak audibly and clearly.

Alternate: Communicate clearly...

Examples of Math Standards:

Original: Use facts about angles to write and solve simple equations...

Alternate: Use facts about angles to develop and solve...

Original: Say the number word sequence to 100.

Alternate: Demonstrate understanding of...

Minnesota has data on the use of specific accommodations on statewide assessments and will continue to review and analyze this information annually.

Assessment data is entered and recorded as a part of each student testing record. This data can be pulled to review statewide usage trend data.

Minnesota's Accommodations Committee meets annually to address new accommodations requests that are not covered in assessment procedures manuals. The committee reviews and updates policies on accommodations annually as technology continues to develop and improve.

A comprehensive list of accommodations and codes for reporting their use is included annually in Chapter 5 of the Procedures Manual for Minnesota Assessments.

Standards Revision Lens for Students with Disabilities

MDE has developed a review process for standards revisions in which the Special Education Policy Division coordinates a review of the drafts to improve the accessibility of the standards for students with disabilities. This process was done for the 2007 Mathematics standards and the 2010 Common Core English Language Arts standards. Common themes across domain areas and previous revisions have helped improve the extent to which principles of Universal Design are incorporated into the standards. Comments from the last review process are included in Attachment 12.

- *1. B.4 Does the SEA intend to conduct outreach and dissemination of the college- and career-ready standards? If so, does the SEA's plan reach the appropriate stakeholders including educators, administrators, families and IHE's? Is it likely that the plan will result in all stakeholders increasing their awareness of the state's college- and career-ready standards?*

The Minnesota Department of Education content specialists work with many of our state professional and research organizations to provide a wide variety of outreach and professional development opportunities related to dissemination of the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards, including the standards associated with college- and career-readiness.

Stakeholders

Dissemination of the standards is provided through a variety of organizations including:

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- Education Minnesota (Minnesota's teachers' union).
 - Minnesota Academy of Reading
 - Minnesota Administrators of Special Education
 - Minnesota Assessment Group
 - Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs
 - Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs
 - Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
 - Minnesota Association of Curriculum and Staff Development
 - Minnesota Association of School Administrators
 - Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
 - Minnesota Center for Reading Research
 - Minnesota Council of Teachers of English
 - Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics
 - Minnesota Curriculum Leaders, the Metro Area Curriculum Leaders
 - Minnesota Elementary School Principal Association
 - Minnesota Mathematical Association of Two Year Colleges
 - Minnesota PTA/PTO
 - Minnesota Reading Association
 - Minnesota Rural Education Association
 - Minnesota School Boards Association
 - Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
 - Minnesota Writing Project
 - State-Approved Alternative Programs

MDE also partners with the Target Corporation, United Way, and the McKnight Foundation as part of the *Blueprint for Literacy* implementation plan to reach a wider range of stakeholders and to coordinate efforts between institutes of higher education, our state agency, local school districts, and philanthropic organizations to share information on college- and career-ready standards and rigorous academic expectations for all students with the goal of closing the achievement gap.

The *Electronic Library for Minnesota* offers resources to help educators and the general public understand the Academic Standards.

The *Minnesota Parents Know* website offers families with children of all ages resources and information about the standards and academic success that will lead to college- and career-ready skills and knowledge.

MDE content specialists also work with our regional Education Service Cooperative Units (ECSUs) to provide a State-wide System of Support in a train the trainer format. They provide professional development and technical assistance to ECSUs. These organizations then provide professional development and technical assistance aimed at assisting schools and districts in making Adequate Yearly Progress. These centers are located in Minnesota. The ECSUs host sessions provided by MDE and also provide follow-up training and support to districts in their service areas.

Increasing Awareness of College- and Career -Ready Standards

Trainings provided by MDE staff range from sessions on the overview of the standards, to deep discussions and development of tools such as curriculum maps, gap analyses, and planning aids for reviewing instructional materials. These trainings allow the MDE content specialists to learn along with schools and districts as they strive to interpret and communicate the Academic Standards, particularly the more rigorous standards associated with college- and career-readiness. Often, this information is useful to other LEAs and becomes a valued resource created by peers for peers.

- *1. B.5 Does the SEA intend to provide professional development and other supports to prepare teachers to teach all students including English Language 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.*

MDE regularly provides professional development for general education teachers

as well as special education and EL teachers to understand and implement standards enabling them to teach all students and to assess student learning related to the academic standards. Educators learn instructional practices to support the learning of all students. Professional development is also provided in teaching literacy in the content areas as it relates to the ELA Common Core State Standards for all groups of students.

Data Decision-Making

MDE supports schools and districts in aligning staff development plans and activities with educational outcomes. The professional development emphasizes best practices such as professional learning communities, coaching and mentoring and using data for instructional decisions to improve teaching practice over time. Schools receive training to:

- Examine statewide assessment data (e.g., MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS data) to identify under-achieving subgroups.
- Examine MCA participation data to better understand the population of students who are not taking the MCA and their related participation issues.
- Examine alternate assessment data for students with disabilities to better understand issues related to those who are meeting expectations on those assessments and those who do not currently meet expectations.
- Use other kinds of formative and performance assessment data to further identify the needs of the subgroups.
- Use other kinds of assessment data (e.g., English language proficiency data provided on the ACCESS test, including common assessments used in special education) to identify the instructional needs of individuals
- Utilize data and other kinds of information that identify the non-instructional factors that impact academic performance. (e.g., which school policies or practices are limiting the amount of instructional time available for students? Do policies that suspend students from school prevent them from accessing the college- and career-ready curriculum? What is the academic achievement of students who have been removed from instruction?)
- Use research or evidence-based strategies to address individual student

needs.

Implementation

The theory of action driving professional development in Minnesota from the state level is to operationalize systemic change from within and intentionally connect the science of implementation to our standards work. This enables us build the capacity of districts, schools and early learning providers to meet the needs of all learners.

Implementation is synonymous with coordinated change at the system, organization, program and practice levels. This is done by examining and understanding educational practices (the “what”) and developing the capacity (the “how”) to support those practices system-wide (Fixsen, Blase, Horner & Sugai, 2009). The implementation plan for supporting teachers with standards-based instructional practices is highlighted below:

Minnesota’s Plan for Supporting Implementation of Academic Standards		
Year 1	Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule regional information sessions to disseminate information on the standards and considerations for implementation• Provide web-based information sessions to disseminate information on the standards with viewing guides• Host face-to-face and virtual conversations with district leaders on considerations for implementation• Post a Frequently Asked Questions document• Compose the Statement of Needs and Reasonableness for the Rulemaking Process• Partner with professional organizations to provide information on standards and resources applicable to the content areas related to the standards• Work cross-agency to communicate information on standards and align common initiatives related to standards-based instruction• Determine resources and other tools needed for schools and districts to fully implement standards• Provide targeted professional development as needed

Year 2		
	Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regional information sessions to support implementation of the standards • Provide web-based information sessions on standards implementation with viewing guides • Create resources on technical aspects of the standards to support schools and districts with implementation • Partner with professional organizations to provide content specific information on standards implementation and alignment to best practices • Work cross-agency to align common initiatives related to standards-based instruction and deliver consistent message to stakeholders • Determine resources and other tools needed for schools and districts to fully implement standards • Provide targeted professional development as needed, specific to school data, student populations, and special concerns
Year 3-4-5	Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-going information as needed for full implementation of standards regionally and virtually • Continue to provide resources on technical aspects of the standards to support schools and districts with on-going implementation considerations • Partner with professional organizations to provide content specific information on standards implementation and alignment to best practices • Work cross-agency to align common initiatives related to standards-based instruction and deliver consistent message to stakeholders • Determine resources and other tools needed for schools and districts to fully implement standards • Provide targeted professional development as needed, specific to school data, student populations, and special concerns

Professional Development Provided by Organizations and Institutions

MDE is currently in discussions with local public television (PBS) networks and Clear Channel Communications concerning a proposal to provide virtual professional development, free of charge, to all teachers in Minnesota. Teacher Domain, available through PBS, is aligned to the Common Core Standards and provides on-demand training modules. The modules include instructional materials to meet the needs of all learners, including support for students with disabilities and students who are English learners.

Other organizations that support professional development for teachers aligned with college- and career-ready academic standards: This list is adapted from the list on pages 23 and 24.

- Education Minnesota (Minnesota's teachers' union).
- Minnesota Academy of Reading
- Minnesota Administrators of Special Education
- Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs
- Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs
- Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
- Minnesota Association of Curriculum and Staff Development
- Minnesota Association of School Administrators
- Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
- Minnesota Center for Reading Research
- Minnesota Council of Teachers of English
- Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- Minnesota Curriculum Leaders, the Metro Area Curriculum Leaders
- Minnesota Elementary School Principal Association
- Minnesota Mathematical Association of Two Year Colleges
- Minnesota Reading Association
- Minnesota Rural Education Association
- Minnesota School Boards Association
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- Minnesota Writing Project

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- Special Education Directors Forum
 - State-Approved Alternative Programs

MDE content specialists also work with our regional Education Service Cooperative Units (ECSUs) to provide a State-wide System of Support in a train the trainer format. They provide professional development and technical assistance to ECSUs. These organizations then provide professional development and technical assistance aimed at assisting schools and districts in making Adequate Yearly Progress. These centers are located in Minnesota. The ECSUs host sessions provided by MDE and also provide follow-up training and support to districts in their service areas.

Professional Development Provided by SEA

Trainings by the MDE content specialists on academic standards are also provided through the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs, State-Approved Alternative Programs, Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs, the Superintendent's Conference, MDE's Assessment Conference, Minnesota American Indian Educators Conference, Minnesota ESL, Bilingual and Migrant Education Conference, and content area professional organizations. This training supports all educators who teach a wide variety of students in a wide variety of settings.

MDE is partnering with MN ASCD to offer a summer professional development, called "Standards Camp." The goal of the Camp is to assist schools in their efforts to implement Minnesota academic standards in all content areas. Schools will send a cross discipline leadership team. Together the leadership teams will learn current best practices in teaching and learning in their content area. The teams will hone their leadership skills and leave the camp with an action plan for school wide implementation and assessment of standards. Together the MDE and Minnesota ASCD will provide continued support to the team's efforts at their home site. This will be provided through on-site and regional support.

MDE is planning to institute regional content-specific coaching networks. Professional development opportunities will be provided for coaches. The coaches will, in turn, implement them in their classrooms or support other teachers with implementation. The goal is that the network will extend beyond school boundaries to attend to the needs of schools in the region.

Training opportunities on the standards that are supported by other agency initiatives include coordinated efforts with our Q Comp teacher development/teacher compensation program, AYP support, Minnesota Office of Indian Education, Turnaround Schools, alternative programs, alternative delivery systems of instructional support, service learning, research and assessment, special education policy, integrating technology, Minnesota Common Course Catalog, No Child Left Behind, online learning, and charter schools and non-public schools programs.

Differentiated Support for All Students

MDE offers on-going training specifically to support and prepare teachers to teach all students, including English Learners (ELs), students with disabilities, and low-achieving students to prepare teachers for full implementation of reading/language arts standards no later than the 2013-14 school year.

Professional Development for Teachers of English Learners

As the Secretary noted on in a speech on November 3, 2011 “The future of the country rests on these students (ELs) doing really well”. ELs are the fastest growing population in MN. Meeting their learning needs is critical to meeting college- and career-readiness goals in the state.

As a member of the WIDA consortium, Minnesota has access to high quality professional development supports for teachers of ELs. In the spring of 2007, EL Program Directors from districts with 500 or more ELs met to discuss the status of Minnesota's ELD standards. A subcommittee analyzed three sets of ELD standards and recommended the 2006 TESOL/WIDA standards for adoption in Minnesota. Additionally, more than 1,000 principals, teachers, and teacher trainers were surveyed and approximately 40 participated in focus groups regarding ELD standards and standards implementation.

Data from survey responses revealed strong support for working with ELD standards to bring more specificity, clarity and applicability to standards implementation models so that educators can be more successful in working with ELs.

The Minnesota Department of Education English Learner Education Specialists

work with many of our state professional and research organizations to provide a wide variety of outreach and professional development opportunities related to dissemination of the preK-12 WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Trainings provided by MDE staff range from sessions on the overview of the standards, to deep discussions and development of tools such as transformations of model performance indicators, and planning tools for reviewing instructional materials. These trainings allow the MDE English Learner Education Specialists to learn along with schools and districts as they strive to interpret and communicate the WIDA English Language Development Standards. Often times this information is useful to other LEAs and becomes a valued resource created by peers for peers.

Trainings by the MDE English Learner Education Specialists are provided on academic standards through the Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs, the Superintendent's Conference, and MDE's Assessment Conference, and ESL, Bilingual and Migrant Education Conference.

Other training opportunities connected to the standards and supported within other agency initiatives include coordinated efforts within MDE's AYP support, Turnaround Schools, Alternative Programs, Alternative Delivery Systems of Instructional Support, Service Learning, Research and Assessment, Special Education Policy, Consolidated Federal Programs, Charter Schools and Non-public schools.

Minnesota's Plan for Supporting Implementation of WIDA ELD Standards	
Year 1 2011-12 Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule regional information sessions to disseminate information on the standards and considerations for implementation• Provide monthly webinars to disseminate information on the standards with viewing guides• Host face-to-face and virtual conversations with district leaders on considerations for implementation• Form an English Learner Stakeholder Input Group to formulate an implementation framework• Compose the Rulemaking Process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with professional organizations to provide information on standards and resources applicable to the content areas related to the standards • Work cross-agency to communicate information on standards and align common initiatives related to standards-based instruction • Determine resources and other tools needed for schools and districts to fully implement standards • Provide targeted professional development as needed
<p>Year 2 2012-13 Stage 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule regional information sessions to support implementation of the standards • Provide monthly webinars to disseminate information on the standards with viewing guides • Create resources on technical aspects of the standards to support schools and districts with implementation • Partner with professional organizations to provide content specific information and alignment to best practices • Work cross-agency to align common initiatives related to standards-based instruction and deliver consistent messages to stakeholders • Determine resources and other tools needed for schools and districts to fully implement standards • Provide targeted professional development as needed
<p>Years 3-4-5 Stage 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-going information as needed for full implementation of standards regionally and virtually • Continue to provide resources on technical aspects of the standards to support schools and districts with on-going implementation considerations • Partner with professional organizations to provide content specific information on standards implementation and alignment to best practices • Work cross-agency to align common initiatives related to standards-based instruction and deliver consistent message to stakeholders • Determine resources and other tools needed for schools and

In order to address the professional development of all educators in providing appropriate linguistic modification and scaffolding to content lessons in math, language arts, science and social studies, MDE plans to identify the linguistic demands of the Minnesota content standards. MDE plans to utilize the taxonomy developed by Dr. Edynn Sato at WestEd in order to analysis language progressions of the content standards. MDE will use the linguistic analysis to help inform instructional planning and practice in order to be intentional and appropriate in supporting students' cognitive and linguistic progress toward proficiency and achievement. Additionally, MDE plans to develop instructional support materials for content teachers that will allow for more supportive instruction for students who are acquiring English.

Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities

MDE is working with Dr. Margaret Heritage to provide guidance and support for general education teachers and special educators on creating more effective reading standards-based IEPs. Through information and training provided by content specialists and special education policy staff, educators will better understand grade level academic standards and how to scaffold learning opportunities so that all students have access to appropriate outcomes. Opportunities are being explored to extend this work to other content areas.

Additionally, the Minnesota *Blueprint for Literacy* provides a model plan for schools and districts to consult as they design a comprehensive literacy education system focused on academic success for all learners. The *Blueprint* links the Early Childhood Indicators of Success (for ages 3-5) to the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in reading, mathematics, and science. The purpose of this linkage is to highlight the importance of providing quality instruction throughout a child's academic experiences so that we can close achievement gaps and ensure that all students are ready for college and careers.

Teacher Licensure Standards for Special Education Teachers

The Board of Teaching is in the final stages of public rulemaking to revise and update the required knowledge and skill competencies for special education teachers. These standards are the basis for Institutions of Higher Education to design their teacher preparation programs and to receive program approval. A

public hearing was held in September and the final decision regarding the need and reasonableness of the proposed rules is due from the Administrative Law Judge by the end of November, 2011.

One significant area of revision in the proposed rules relates to knowledge and skills that special education teachers are expected to know regarding state academic content standards, particularly as they relate to instruction and a source of data to inform student progress. Examples of the proposed standards include:

- All special education teachers must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the relationship of special education to other components of the education system, including access to grade-level content standards, prevention efforts and early intervening services, Title 1, bilingual education, the education of English language learners, Section 504 accommodations, and gifted education (Minn. Rule 8710.5000, Subp. 2, A, (2));
- All special education teachers must be able to integrate multiple sources of student data relative to progress toward grade-level content standards from prior prevention and alternate instruction efforts into the referral process (Minn. Rule 8710.5000, Subp. 2, B (4));
- All special education teachers must be able to
 - adapt and modify curriculum and deliver evidence-based instruction, including scientific research-based interventions when available, aligned with state and local grade-level content standards to meet individual learner needs;
 - lead individual education plan teams through statewide assessment options and make appropriate decisions for a learner's participation within the statewide assessment system; and
 - apply evidence-based methods, strategies, universal design for learning, and accommodations including assistive technologies to meet individual student needs and provide access to grade-level content standards (Minn. Rule 8710.5000, Subp. 2, C (1-3));

General Education and Special Education Teachers of Low Achieving Students

Teachers seeking to improve the achievement of struggling students have at least two important kinds of support: 1) the *Minnesota RtI Community of Practice*, and 2) Minnesota's *Model Plan for Adolescent Reading Intervention and Development*.

The *Minnesota RtI Community of Practice* is an active community of RtI implementers and stakeholders who collaborate to build effective and sustained implementation of the RtI (Response to Intervention) framework at the local, district, regional, and state level. The Community focuses its attention on the complexities and challenges of implementing and sustaining RtI over time. The functions of the Community are to:

- Develop a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing implementation challenges.
- Apply collective knowledge to improve practice, inform policy decisions, and develop technical guidance that community members can use, scale-up and integrate with other evidence-based practices and systems of support.
- Provide positive examples at earlier stages of implementation for districts to observe.

RtI Community members come together as learners to share insight from lessons learned as well as solve burning issues of the day. The broader community of practice is made up of smaller work groups focused on resolving specific problems and implementation challenges. As the facilitator of the Minnesota RtI Community of Practice, MDE is often called upon to help bridge gaps in expertise by linking participants with specialists in particular fields. For example, in collaboration with the North Central Comprehensive Center (NCCC), MDE convened experts to help the community address critical issues surrounding struggling learners, many of which relate to classroom instructional practices.

A second kind of support that is especially helpful to educators with struggling students is the *Model Plan for Adolescent Reading Intervention and Development*. The plan is designed to meet the cognitive needs of adolescent students whose reading performance ranges from those significantly below expectations through those reading at or above grade level so that they can independently and proficiently read complex and rigorous texts in every content area.

In this model, core instruction is considered to be the standards-based instruction and curriculum all students receive in general education, academic classroom settings. All students participate in core instruction, whereas interventions are in

addition to, and aligned with, this basic component of a comprehensive instructional framework.

Even though core instruction is designed to provide all students with rigorous and relevant curriculum, it may not sufficiently meet the needs of every learner. Some students will require intervention, additional support and instruction.

A systematic framework, such as this Model Plan, outlines how data can be used to determine those students who need additional support. Intervention then is based on the screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative data collected on students at risk, and instruction is provided with evidence- and research-based practices that are specific to the needs of an adolescent, struggling reader.

Professional Development Targeted to Implementation of Mathematics Standards

Following the 2007 revision of the state mathematics standards, a task force was formed to provide recommendations for structures to provide state-wide professional development for implementation of the new rigorous standards. Funds were appropriated and the *Minnesota Mathematics and Science Teacher Academy* was formed. The Academy consists of nine regional teacher centers located throughout the state. The teacher centers are not necessarily physical locations but rather partnerships between education organizations and higher education institutions to provide year-long professional development for teachers in mathematics and science.

The professional development is focused on content knowledge and pedagogy, including a job-embedded emphasis, particularly for professional learning communities. The goal of the program is to improve academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in mathematics and science by increasing instructional quality. Though each center began with an emphasis on algebra in grades 6-8 as this was the highest need with the new standards, currently each center provides an emphasis that is specific to the needs of that region.

Teacher Evaluation

Starting with a pilot during the 2013-14 school year, all Minnesota schools will implement teacher evaluation systems. These systems are intended to provide information about the quality of instruction in schools not only to local educational authorities but to the local community as well. The system is also

intended to provide information for teachers regarding their performance. A portion of teacher evaluations must be based on assessment results, which are aligned to Minnesota's academic standards. Therefore, the teacher evaluation system will be another tool for improving teacher performance in teaching Minnesota's academic standards. Further information on Minnesota's teacher evaluation system can be found in Principle 3 of the ESEA Flexibility request.

2015 Waiver Renewal

MDE will continue to ensure the college and career readiness of all students through technical assistance that supports implementation of the state's rigorous academic standards in English language arts and mathematics.

Standards Implementation Support Using the Regional Centers of Excellence

In addition to the supports described in the original waiver application, MDE implemented a new initiative to provide technical assistance to low performing schools not already designated as "Priority" or "Focus" schools. The initiative, known as "Standards Implementation Support Using the Regional Centers of Excellence," utilizes an English Language Arts field representative in each region to provide a multi-tiered system of support for each school.

- *Tier 1 services:* The standards implementation leadership team in each school receives professional development and planning assistance on issues related to instructional shifts in the standards, alignment of curriculum and assessment, considerations for addressing students with special needs, implementation science and other issues.
- *Tier 2 services:* The standards implementation leadership team in each school receives special training and technical assistance on issues that are identified as high priority for the schools in that region. These needs are identified based on the data of the schools in the region.
- *Tier 3 services:* Schools receive customized on-site coaching to improve implementation.

By the end of the 2014-15 school year, each school leadership team will know how to build the infrastructure needed for standards implementation and will have led their staff through the critical steps in aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment to the standards. They will also know and will have practiced protocols for ensuring that instruction and assessment are research-based and reflect best practices in ELA.

The Standards Implementation Support Initiative was launched in the 2014-15 school year in English Language Arts with long-term plans to expand it to mathematics and other subject areas. In this first year, technical assistance was limited to Tier 1 and Tier 2 services. Tier 3 services are expected to be added in the long term.

Standards Implementation Toolkit

Another resource that MDE developed since the original waiver application is the Standards Implementation Toolkit, an easy-to-use website that assists schools at all stages of their implementation of the K-12 academic standards. The toolkit uses a fully integrated approach to help leadership teams support teachers as they instruct mainstream students, English language learners, and students who require special education services. Features of the toolkit include the following:

- Self-assessment tools for leadership teams to assess their current readiness and resources, identify gaps and incorporate ideas to customize a detailed roadmap for moving forward.
- Targeted resources developed by MDE specialists in English language arts, reading, special education and English language learning designed to assist teachers in preparing students to be ready for career and postsecondary education.
- Additional resources developed by experts around the country, carefully selected for teachers and fully reviewed by MDE specialists.
- Guides, promoting school-wide collaboration and designed for professional learning communities and leadership teams. The guides identify resources, tips and strategies for working together to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.

The Toolkit is currently focused on the English Language Arts standards. Future plans for the Toolkit include expanding it to include mathematics and perhaps other subject areas. Plans are also under development to make the Toolkit more user-friendly through interactive components, enhanced site navigation and the addition of a learning management system. Link to the Toolkit:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/StandImplToolkit/index.html>

English language arts

The Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR) was prepared as part of the English Language Arts standards rulemaking process. The *2010 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts* were officially adopted into rule

effective November 29, 2011. Link to the SONAR and information about the rulemaking process:

https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/rule_display.php?id=R-03983&keyword=english+language+arts+K-12+academic+standards&keyword_set%5B%5D=document&keyword_set%5B%5D=title&keyword_set%5B%5D=action&keyword_set%5B%5D=revisor&keyword_set%5B%5D=Irl&keyword_set%5B%5D=oah&keyword_set%5B%5D=ag&keyword_type=all&org%5B%5D=129

Mathematics

The Minnesota Mathematics and Science Frameworks, as identified in the original waiver application, is an online resource designed to help educators plan standards-based instruction, professional development, curriculum and assessment. MDE plans to periodically update content on the website and include more resources to help educators address the needs of gifted and talented, special needs and English language learners. The goal is to create a community of practice for educators around the state by building interactive components for creating and using materials from the site. Link to the Frameworks: <http://scimathmn.org/stemtc/>

Supporting English Learners

After three years of administering Minnesota's English language proficiency assessment, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Regional Centers of Excellence are focused on supporting schools in using ACCESS for ELLs © results and other data to identify patterns and trends that can be used for improvement. With better, more complete data that tells us exactly how our English learners are achieving and progressing from year to year, there is a sense of urgency and need to utilize the data to meet the needs of every student as well as the improvement needs of schools.

MDE and the Regional Centers are working to build the capacity of school teams in the area of English learner data analysis through trainings that offer support to schools in using ACCESS for ELLs © and other data. Through this work, school teams will create data-informed plans to guide program and instructional improvement supported by a regional English language development field representative. Participants of the training are introduced to an English language development data analysis process and apply this process to school data. The purpose of this is for school teams to gain experience in analyzing language data for school-level decision making. MDE and the Regional Centers understand the importance of district oversight and support in this area and have required that one

district-level staff member (i.e. district administrator, EL director or coordinator or curriculum director) also be involved in this work.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is a comprehensive, multi-year plan that focuses on improving results for children and youth with disabilities. The development and implementation of the SSIP requires strong collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

To place a greater emphasis on monitoring for results, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has added this new indicator which requires states to develop a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) focused on improving results for children with disabilities. OSEP has changed its approach to monitoring and supporting states with the goal of improving educational and functional outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. OSEP’s vision for changing their approach to a Results Driven Accountability system is to create a balance between the focus on improved results and functional outcomes for children and youth with disabilities while considering compliance as it relates to those results and outcomes.

The SSIP is divided into three phases:

Year 1—FFY 2013 Delivered by April 2015	Year 2—FFY 2014 Delivered by February 2016	Year 3—FFY 2015 Delivered by February 2017
Phase I Analysis	Phase II Plan	Phase III Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Analysis, • Infrastructure Analysis • State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) • Coherent Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-year plan addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure Development ▪ Support Early Intervening Services Program and Districts in implementing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on progress including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Results of ongoing evaluation ▪ Extent of progress • Revisions

Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of Action 	evidence-based practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation Plan 	to the SPP
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Based on a review of state data regarding academic performance, access to instruction, and graduation rates of students with disabilities, we are targeting increasing graduation rates for students with disabilities through the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). More specifically, our focus will be targeting 6-year graduation rates for American Indian and Black students with disabilities. While our data shows that all students with disabilities graduate at lower rates than students without disabilities, these two groups of students show the lowest graduation rates overall, and over time. These decisions are based on the state data we’ve gathered thus far with feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

Specific districts will be identified with whom MDE will work to build capacity for improving outcomes for these groups of students which we expect, in turn, will affect outcomes for all students with disabilities.

Supporting Economically Disadvantaged Students

As a state, Minnesota has implemented many statewide strategies to support the success of economically disadvantaged students. The following strategies support student needs to create a foundation for success:

- MDE provides support to schools around building the infrastructure needed to implement the standards for ALL students, including economically disadvantaged students. All efforts around standards implementation are directed to improve student performance and close achievement gaps. The following strategies are particularly important for meeting the needs of economically disadvantaged students:
 - Differentiating instruction to address specific student needs
 - Ensuring that all students have access to rigor and all standards
 - Developing text-dependent questions rather than questions which rely exclusively on students’ background knowledge (to ensure equity in participation)

- Minnesota requires that the state's socio-economic indicator (free and reduced lunch status) be disaggregated in all reporting and incorporates FRP student performance in all accountability, including graduation rates, adequate yearly progress and the Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR).
- Minnesota added students in poverty to our protected class of students in the state's achievement and integration program that provides over \$100 million annually for districts to pursue racial and economic integration and reduce academic disparities. The new program requires districts to develop plans which support the goals of increasing student achievement and creating equitable educational opportunities for protected students, including those in the FRP student group. Districts must also establish goals around increasing racial and *economic* integration within school sites or between districts.
- Minnesota annually funds around \$524 million in state aid for compensatory education to districts based on the percentage of students eligible for free- and reduced-priced lunch, and these funds are used to meet the educational needs of students that are performing below expectations.
- Minnesota targets Pre-K scholarships to high poverty three- and four-year olds in order to improve school readiness for all young children. Priority for scholarships is given based on family income, child poverty and geographic region.
- Minnesota provides free breakfast to kindergarteners, and MDE is proposing providing free breakfast to PreK – 3rd grade to ensure all students, including economically disadvantaged students, start their school day with a nutritious school breakfast.
- Minnesota eliminated the "reduced" lunch and now offers it free to all kids who qualified for reduced lunches.
- Minnesota supports PBIS in high poverty schools, and over half of the schools trained by MDE in PBIS are Title I schools. Additionally, around 40 percent of the state's initial Priority and Focus schools working with the statewide system of support are implementing PBIS.

- MDE works with the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) on workforce development programs aimed at youth in poverty. The Minnesota Youth Program provides short-term employment and training services for economically disadvantaged youth ages 14-21; the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Program provides work experience skills acquisition (academic and work readiness) and exposure to in-demand jobs for economically disadvantaged youth ages 14-21; lastly, the Youthbuild program provides specialized training, credentials, and work experience for youth in construction and other building trades for low-income youth ages 16-21 with severe barriers to employment. MDE and DEED will continue a partnership to align efforts around supporting economically disadvantaged students in the state.
 - Through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) grant and Title I Pre-K Incentives fund, Minnesota is increasing school readiness of high-needs children by improving access to high-quality early learning. Title I Pre-K Incentive and RTTT-ELC funds are used to support initiatives occurring in four high-poverty communities, known as Transformation Zones which include the White Earth Reservation, Itasca County, St. Paul's Promise Neighborhood and Minneapolis' Northside Achievement Zone.
 - In 2015, an Indian Education Working Group made recommendations to better support American Indian students in Minnesota, most who are students on free- or reduced-price lunch. Out of the 20 highest-poverty districts in Minnesota, ten of them serve at least 35% American Indian students. The Working Group's recommendations ensure equitable funding for American Indian students, including those in Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, and more access to successful programs such as Success for the Future and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE).
- *1. B.6 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?*

The Minnesota Department of Education offers professional development to prepare principals to provide strong supportive leadership based on the new

standards through the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) training. This training is also supported through several statewide professional organizations including:

- Minnesota Elementary School Principal Association
- Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
- Minnesota Curriculum Leaders
- Metro Area Curriculum Leaders
- Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs
- Minnesota Administrators of Special Education
- Minnesota Association of School Boards
- Minnesota Association of School Administrators

Instructional Leadership Support

Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. 120B.12) requires all Minnesota districts to write local literacy plans to ensure all students are reading well by third grade. MDE offers a series of trainings and materials for principals, superintendents, and other instructional leaders aligned to the reading/language arts academic standards through in-person, virtual, and regional means.

MDE also partners with the Minnesota Association of School Administrators to

provide training and information on a regular basis to support strong instructional leadership. Training supports include analysis tools to evaluate current alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the Minnesota Blueprint for Literacy, and on-site technical assistance for principals to better identify quality instructional practices aligned to academic standards, and aligning intervention programs to core instruction for students not at grade level.

In addition, Minnesota Law (Minn. Stat. 122A.60) defines Minnesota's Staff Development Program and district expectations for aligning staff development outcomes, plans and activities with education outcomes determined by the local school board. The legislation emphasizes establishing best practices such as professional learning communities, coaching and mentoring and using data for instructional decisions to improve teaching practice over time. Districts and schools are required to annually report their staff development goals, activities and results. Analysis of these reports demonstrates a growing trend in districts' use of job-embedded professional development activities with the adoption of professional learning communities, peer coaching and mentoring and ongoing use of student data to inform instruction.

Principal Evaluation

Starting with a pilot during the 2013-14 school year, all Minnesota schools will implement principal evaluation systems. These systems are intended to provide information to local educational authorities and local community about the quality of instructional leadership in schools. The system is also intended to provide information for principals regarding their performance. A portion of principal evaluations must be based on assessment results, which are aligned to Minnesota's academic standards. Therefore, the principal evaluation system will be another tool for improving principal performance in providing leadership in teaching Minnesota's academic standards. Further information on Minnesota's principal evaluation system can be found in Principle 3 of the ESEA Flexibility request.

- *1. B.7 Does the SEA propose to develop and disseminate high-quality instructional materials aligned to 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.

MDE works in collaboration with Minnesota content-specific organizations such as the Minnesota Reading Association, the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English, the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Minnesota Center for Reading Research, the Minnesota Writing Project, the Minnesota Humanities Commission, the Minnesota History Center, and classroom teachers to design and share lessons that align with college- and career-ready standards, making those materials available to schools and teachers throughout the state. Many of the professional organizations listed above post examples of instructional materials on their websites, share materials at conferences that are designed to support teaching and learning of all students, and give information on how to meet the needs of all learners in their newsletters and publications.

Minnesota LEAs have the authority to determine which instructional materials best meet the needs of their students. The role of MDE is to provide guidance on current best practices and pedagogy and alignment of instructional materials rather than restrict instructional material selection. MDE's efforts focus on the systematic approach to implementation and alignment of standards so that programs and practices are available to meet the needs of all learners, at every level in every content area. Some examples of what we offer in terms of support and guidance include:

Reading/English Language Arts Standards Instructional Materials Dissemination
MDE provides a number of instructional support materials specific to the Minnesota Reading/English Language Arts Academic Standards.

- A Model Plan for Adolescent Reading Intervention based on the principles of Response to Intervention (RtI) that provides guidance to districts and schools as they develop or revise reading intervention for students in grades 4-12 aligned to the 2010 Reading/English Academic Language Arts Standards.
- Balanced Literacy Instruction Examples offered on the MDE webpage illustrate the reading components of balanced literacy and the research that supports this framework for reading instruction, assessment and

intervention.

- Resources consistent with Minn. Stat. 122A.06 identifying scientifically-based reading instruction (SBRI) is offered on the MDE reading webpage and training is planned for Winter 2012 on connecting SBRI to the Reading/English Language Arts Academic Standards

The Minnesota Comprehensive Birth through Grade12 Literacy Plan

Implementation Guide is a comprehensive tool for schools and early learning providers that outlines the five essential elements of creating and maintaining a developmentally appropriate framework for all learners to reach their fullest potential. These elements are complemented by four foundational principles synonymous with coordinated change at the systems, organizational, programmatic and practice levels. This is done by examining and understanding educational practices and developing the capacity to support those practices system wide. The model provides a structure for schools to use to align curriculum, instruction, and assessments from the MN Indicators of Progress for Infants and Toddlers to the 2010 Minnesota K-12 Reading/English Language Arts Academic Standards and WIDA standards in order to prepare all students for the rigorous coursework. It also includes multi-tiered systems of support for students in tiered instruction from early learning through high school to support all learners in rigorous and relevant learning environments. The plan explains how partnering with families, communities and faith-based organizations can provide literacy opportunities for parents of youth during the school day and beyond to extend learning and create a culture of literacy. An emphasis on leadership and professional development at all levels creates and maintains an environment that supports powerful learning and high expectations for all learners. Data Driven Decision Making, Culturally- Relevant Pedagogy, Technology and Innovation, and Evidence-based Literacy Practices are the guiding principles for all programmatic choices based in this plan. These principles are imperative for creating a comprehensive literacy plan to meet the needs of all learners from birth to grade 12 and beyond.

Math and Science Standards Instructional Materials Dissemination

MDE provides a number of instructional support materials specific to the state's math and science standards. A recently launched initiative is an innovative online resource called the *Minnesota Mathematics and Science Frameworks*. This

website is designed to support professional development, curriculum planning and instruction for the revised standards. It provides supporting materials for both the mathematics and science standards, including an overview of each standard, student misconceptions, and vignette of classroom instruction with linked resources, sample assessment items and support for differentiation. The Frameworks are easily accessed in a searchable, web-based format that will continue to evolve as feedback is provided, materials are added, and connections are made to new resources.

English Language Development Instructional Materials Dissemination

MDE provides a number of instructional support materials specific to the preK-12 WIDA English Language Development Standards. The MinneTESOL organization provided multiple training opportunities for 135 educators to transform model performance indicators of the WIDA standards and align them to materials used at school and district levels. The training focused on scaffolding rigorous content instruction across five levels of language proficiency and keeping cognitive engagement high regardless of levels of language proficiency in all four domains of language development. The teachers also learned how to design instructional frameworks to teach academic language and linguistic discourse for math, science, social studies, and language arts.

Special Education Instructional Materials Dissemination

Historically, special education teachers have had limited and inconsistent access to roll-out activities when new academic standards are put into place. To improve outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities, we need to approach roll-out training and professional development in standards with the focus on all teachers who share responsibility for core instruction and targeted interventions in academic content areas. Without this focus, professional development and service delivery to students with disabilities will continue to be inconsistent and fragmented.

There are a number of current, cross-agency partnerships underway that will help improve the support for teaching and learning of students with disabilities, including:

- *Standards-Based IEPs*

MDE has developed a number of web-based professional development

modules to support the implementation of standards-based IEPs, including promoting understanding of the grade-level content standards. MDE is currently field testing these materials and supplementing them with field-generated case studies. In addition, this content is being integrated into other special education professional development initiatives. Discussions are currently underway on how this process and these materials would be adapted to benefit teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

- *Learning Progressions*

MDE has been working with a number of field practitioners, representatives from across MDE Divisions and Dr. Heritage from UCLA to articulate the essential understandings necessary to achieve proficiency in grade level standards. The outcome is that all teachers of students with disabilities will be able to map an instructional pathway, using learning progressions, from a student's present levels of performance to the enrolled grade level standard. This content, once pilot tested, will be embedded within the standards-based IEP training. In addition to this, plans are underway to develop training materials on formative assessment of the learning progressions.

- *Mitigating the Effects of the Disability on Achieving Grade-Level Standards*

Technical assistance is provided to special education teachers on how to use multiple sources of data to define the gap between a student's current performance level and grade level content standards. This content is foundational to training that is being provided on psychological processes that impact attainment of grade level standards. Following training, teachers will use this knowledge to target accommodations, modifications, and research-based strategies to mitigate the effects of the disability and allow student to make progress in the general curriculum.

- *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*

District teams have been trained to support local implementation of UDL principles in instruction across environments and student groups to further make grade level content standards accessible to all students,

including students with disabilities.

- *Revision of Special Education Teacher Licenses*

These efforts have strengthened the knowledge and skill competencies of special education teachers relative to instruction and coordinating intervention with grade level content. These new competencies will improved pre-service teaching coursework and provide a more consistent language for instructional collaboration between general educators and special educators.

- *1. B.8 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?*

Minnesota high school students have broad and varied access to college-level courses through a variety of low- or no-cost options through local, state, and national programs. These programs provide an opportunity for high school students to be better prepared for college and to earn college credit and/or advanced standing, thus saving students and their parents' time and money during postsecondary education.

Dual Credit Options

Minnesota supports dual credit options in partnership with postsecondary institutions through the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) programs both on high school and college campuses. PSEO which served over 25,000 students in 2008. Career and technical education programs also offer dual credit opportunities for students throughout the state. Minnesota also supports STEM opportunities, and online course offerings are embedded in all of our dual credit opportunities.

Over the next five years, we will develop a comprehensive data system for all dual credit programs. This system will identify gaps and areas of need, creating better access for students of color and low-income students as well as increasing student success in these programs. As part of the commitment to preparing all Minnesota students to be ready for postsecondary training and education, the development

of a shared data system between K-12 and postsecondary institutions across the state will create a more seamless transition for students and encourage more rigorous and relevant educational opportunities at both the K-12 and higher education level.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate

We have high participation and success levels in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Support is provided to school districts for teacher training and exam cost subsidies. State statute supports training to develop instructor competence in using AP and IB research-based strategies to reach all students.

AP exams are open to all students, not just those who have taken an AP course, and most, if not all of the cost of these exams, as well as those taken through and IB, are covered through the legislative appropriation (Minn. Stat. 120B.13). The AP Course Credit Manual, available online, offer students and parents lists of AP courses accepted for college credit at in-state colleges and universities.

- In 2010, 256 public schools in Minnesota offered AP courses
- In May, 2011, 31,484 students took 50,605 exams with 64% earning a score of 3 or above on a scale of 1-5. (The US average is 56%)
- The five-year increase in the number of students earning a score of 3 or above:
 - White 41%
 - Black 49%
 - Hispanic 69%
 - Asian 57%

Students who score a 3 or higher on AP exams typically experience greater academic success in college and have higher graduation rates than comparable non-AP students.

The Advanced Placement Incentive Program (APIP) grant, a collaborative effort partnering MDE with Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools, aims to increase the

number of underrepresented and low-income students enrolling, testing, and scoring at proficient levels on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams. The *Ready/Set/Go* Access and Equity website currently under development through an Advanced Placement Incentive Program (APIP) federal grant is designed to provide information and support for students, parents and teachers to increase enrollment and proficiency in rigorous coursework. The site will be field tested by Minnesota students this winter and is scheduled to launch in June 2012.

International Baccalaureate numbers also reflect an increase of total students in the Diploma Program from 1,220 in 2004 to 2,196 in 2009. The total exams increased from 2,734 in 2004, then to 4,970 in 2010 and to 5,414 in 2011. The number of students of color participating increased from 273 in 2005 to 668 in 2009. Low-income student exam numbers increased from 243 to 498 in the same time period. In 2010 IB programs were in place in fifty schools, delivering the rigorous and challenging International Baccalaureate curriculum. Participants included nineteen high schools at the Diploma Program (DP) level, sixteen schools (both middle and high schools), and fifteen primary schools (PYP) at the elementary level. The high schools offering the Diploma Program enrolled 2,330 students.

Most of Minnesota's public and private colleges and universities have credit awarding policies for AP and IB course credits for exams taken by students.

Teacher training is a critical component to student success in AP and IB programs. MDE has worked closely with Augsburg College and Carleton College Summer Programs as well as the College Board to facilitate in-depth training for AP teachers. MDE has also worked with IB International to support training for IB teachers. Scholarships are available for public and nonpublic teacher training to initiate or improve AP and/or IB courses. In 2010 over 733 AP teachers attended in-depth training while 1,018 IB teachers participated in state-supported professional development.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options

Minnesota's the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (Minn. Stat. 124D.09) allows high school students to enroll in college courses on a high school or college campus to earn credit for high school and college simultaneously. Each college

and/or university that offers PSEO sets its own requirements for enrollment into the program. Students may take PSEO courses on a full- or part-time basis. Full-time PSEO students who begin in their junior year may graduate from high school with enough college credits for an Associate's Degree. Minnesota was the first state, beginning in 1985, to offer this postsecondary opportunity to high school students. Enrollment in PSEO on the college campus has risen from 6,086 in 2005, to over 7,500 students across the state in 2009.

Concurrent Enrollment courses are taught during the regular school day and are offered through a partnership between a high school and a college or university. Qualified high school instructors or college faculty teach the courses. The same assessment methods and content are used as the equivalent sections taught on the college campus. Students can earn high school and college credit upon successful completion of the course or courses. In 2009, 17,581 concurrent enrollment students took 42,120 college level courses on their high school campuses.

These programs provide students with a greater variety of class offerings and the opportunity to pursue more challenging coursework than may be available at the high school. The tuition, fees and required textbooks are at no cost to students to increase access and equity.

The Minnesota Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (MNCEP) is working with MDE and the Minnesota State College and University System to plan a statewide professional development training plan for high school teachers and college faculty to increase student access.

On Ramp Models

Statewide, on-ramp models, such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Admission Possible, provide students with the opportunity to develop college-readiness skills and knowledge. AVID is a college-readiness program targeting under-represented students. It is designed to prepare them to succeed in rigorous high school courses and enroll in four-year colleges. It provides a comprehensive approach that can be adapted for students in grades 8-12, integrating school-centered and student-centered strategies. The key component is an elective AVID class in which students focus on specific strategies and behaviors leading toward academic success.

The AVID model is grounded in the belief that all students can achieve in rigorous classes if they are given social and academic supports. As of September 2009, approximately 35 schools from 11 districts were implementing AVID. MDE is collaborating with the East Metro Integration District and AVID to provide enhanced training opportunities for current AVID sites as well as support and planning opportunities for potential new sites.

Early Graduation Scholarship

During the 2010-2011 legislative sessions, Minnesota passed the Early Graduation Scholarship Initiative. These are financial awards provided by the state to eligible students. Students who graduate early during the 2011-2012 school year are eligible to apply. Students who graduate one semester (two quarters) or two trimesters early are eligible for \$2,500, students who graduate two semesters (four quarters) or three trimesters early are eligible for \$5,000, and students who graduate three or more semesters (at least six quarters) or five or more trimesters early are eligible for \$7,500. The Achievement Scholarship must be used for postsecondary instruction.

EXPLORE and PLAN College Readiness Assessments

The Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), one of the components of the state *Get Ready, Get Credit* program, guides Minnesota students toward postsecondary success. School districts and charter schools voluntarily participate in the EPAS program funded by the state. EPAS provides a longitudinal, systematic approach to educational and career planning, assessment, instructional support and evaluation. It is an achievement assessment that includes components in language arts, reading, mathematics, science, and on course- and career-planning.

These assessments are linked to the ACT assessment used for college admission and allow students, teachers, schools, and parents to determine college readiness earlier than the junior or senior year in high school. Funding provided through a federal College Access Challenge Grant supports training provided by the Center for Postsecondary Success for middle and high school counselors and teams to analyze data from EPAS assessments. A grant extension will allow for enhanced technical assistance in 2011-2012.

- 90,522 Minnesota students participated in these assessments in 2010,

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- an increase from approximately 85,000 in 2008
 - Counselors from over 200 Minnesota districts have participated in training
 - 70% of Minnesota graduates took the ACT in 2010
 - Minnesota's ACT average composite score of 22.9 increased by 0.2 in 2010. The national average composite score is 21.0
 - Since the state began supporting EXPLORE and PLAN testing in 2005, the average composite ACT score has moved from 22.3 to 22.9
 - In 2010, 346 more underrepresented students took the ACT than in 2009

Middle School Supports

The *Your Choice, Your Future* campaign for eighth graders, initiated during 2010-2011, involved 58 middle schools around the state in an effort to address the opportunity gap by making students aware of the benefits of taking more rigorous courses in high school. The campaign targets students in middle school, especially students of underrepresented groups, encouraging them to take a rigorous, "college-prep" curriculum in high school. MDE hosted several college- and career-readiness forums for eighth grade students, provided workshops and distributed materials.

Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership Task Force

Minnesota's P-20 Education Partnership has charged a task force to develop a statewide plan by December 2011 to ensure that all middle school and high school students take rigorous courses that prepare them for college and careers. The plan must:

- Analyze the number, type and quality of courses that secondary students currently take and how this relates to achievement patterns of student subgroups and students overall.
- Suggest strategies for ensuring that the following occur :
 - Educators, policy makers, business leaders and families understand the role of high expectations and support the achievement of all students;

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- All students are enrolled in and successfully complete rigorous courses;
 - Minority students and those from low-income families have access to a rigorous college-prep curriculum, including but not limited to content typically taught in Algebra II;
 - All students have opportunities to build the skills necessary for success in rigorous coursework throughout their K-12 experience (e.g. Springboard, AVID, etc.); and
 - The content suggested by course titles is sufficiently challenging and not watered-down (e.g., the content in Algebra II is not advanced arithmetic).

Minnesota Common Course Catalogue

The Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) currently lists classifications for all the courses that could be offered in high schools across Minnesota. MDE is implementing the MCCC in response to federal and state legislation, including:

- Federal HR 2272 America COMPETES Act of 2007 SEC. 6401. Required Elements of a Statewide Longitudinal Data System
- Minn. Statute 120B.35 Student Academic Achievement Growth,
- Minnesota Sessions Law 2009, Chapter 96, Article 2, Section 60– Implementing Rigorous Coursework Measures Related to Student Performance.

The MCCC is also an essential component in updating and modernizing MDE’s data collection systems. The MCCC data collections will track rigorous and dual credit courses students complete.

- *1.B.9 Does the SEA intend to work with the State’s IHEs and other teacher and principal preparation programs to better prepare: Incoming teachers to teach all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students to the new college- and career-ready*

standards; and Incoming principals to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership; on teaching the new standards? If so, will the implementation of the plan likely improve the preparation of incoming teachers and principals?

Incoming Teachers

The Board of Teaching's pedagogical standards are required for all teacher candidates as part of their initial preparation as part of a mandated system under which all pre-service teacher preparation institutions are held accountable. Current standards are based on the 1992 INTASC standards. In particular, those standards require a teacher candidate to "understand Minnesota's graduation standards and how to implement them" (MN Rule 8710.2000, Subp. 5, A), as well as "be able to assess student performance toward achievement of the Minnesota graduation standards..." (MN Rule 8710.2000, Subp. 9, A), thus ensuring pre-service teachers are being prepared to teach new standards. Accountability in meeting these requirements is assured through the process of initial and ongoing program approval for teacher preparation institutions as part of the Board's process outlined in the manual for "Institutional and Teacher Education Program Evaluation," 2011 (e.g., p. 41). Furthermore, content standards for pre-service teachers outlined in MN Rule 8710.2000 mandates that teacher candidates "understand the role and alignment of district, school, and department mission and goals in program planning;" i.e., that all pre-service teachers must understand the state system of student standards and their implementation in the classroom.

We will revise standards to align with the new INTASC standards which are "a set of model core teaching standards outlining what teachers should know and be able to do to help all students reach the goal of being college- and career-ready in today's world." The new INTASC standards also strongly and directly address the needs of English learners and students with disabilities.

Additionally, the Board of Teaching adopted new literacy standards for Elementary and Early Childhood Education teacher candidates as well as teacher candidates in 16 content-specific fields. These literacy standards also address the needs of all students and will strengthen the preparation of teachers to serve all students.

Incoming principals

The current system that determines preparation of new principals through oversight of the Minnesota Board of School Administrators requires principal preparation programs to do so according to a set of mandatory and systematic standards outlined in MN Administrative Rule. The Board also ensures those standards are being met as part of its administrative process of initial and ongoing approval of programs. The rules state that principals “shall demonstrate competence in... developing, adjusting, and implementing policy to meet local, state, and federal requirements and constitutional provisions, standards, and regulatory applications” (MN Rule 3512.0510, Subp. 1, D). Sections H and I of the Rule outline in detail principal standards for curriculum planning and instructional management to ensure principals act as effective instructional leaders in delivery of student standards for all students: e.g., “(4) demonstrating the ability to design appropriate assessment strategies for measuring learner outcomes; (5) demonstrating the ability to implement alternative instructional designs, curriculum, behavior management, and assessment accommodations and modifications.”

As part of an effort to support continuous improvement of principal preparation standards, the Minnesota Board of School Administrators initiated a study to review the licensing standards for principals. The study began in November 2010 and is funded by the Saint Paul Foundation and the Minnesota Community Foundation. It includes the following:

- Recruitment of Potential School Leadership.
 - Review and advise on targeted recruitment of leadership.
 - Design or identify models for leadership recruitment.
 - Design or identify “aptitude” and “attitude” pre-assessment tools to be used in part as an administrative license program screening device.
- Pre-service Preparation Programs.
 - Design or identify pre-administrative training internship or practicum experience to assist identifying promising principal program candidates.
 - Review existing policies and procedures related to licensure training programs.

-
- Recommend alteration and streamlining of administrative competencies.
 - Design or identify specific principal competencies that will equip principals to lead instruction and create a school environment that will close the race and economic achievement gap for pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students.
 - Advise the Minnesota Board of School Administrators on use of the National Board Principal Certification as an alternative to Minnesota Licensing for those who meet that standard.
 - Research and determine the feasibility of a principal-internship or residency program with a focus on the “real life” principal experience.
 - Design or identify a pilot, mandatory Performance Assessment for Initial Licensure for all School Principals.
 - Advise the Minnesota Board of School Administrators on possible modifications in the approval, regulation and oversight of higher education administrative licensure training programs.
- Licensing and Certification
 - Design or identify model policy language for Tiered Administrative Licensure
 - Design or identify model policy language for Alternative Principal Licensure. Authority exists under Minnesota Statute 122A.27.
 - Continuing Professional Development
 - Design or identify model policy language for ongoing professional development linked with proposed Tiered Administrative Licensure
 - Design or identify model for “state of the art” professional development with a focus on closing the academic achievement gap.

Teacher Preparation

Revised literacy standards and subsequent preparation will directly and significantly impact teacher preparation in Minnesota. A revision of our broad pedagogical standards to align with the new INTASC standards will also strengthen our preparation system. We do not yet have target dates for initiating and completing this work, but will soon be engaging in preliminary discussions to establish potential timelines and work plans.

Principal Preparation

The results of the Minnesota Board of School Administrators study will be presented no later than May 2012. The Board will then determine which of the studies' recommendations will become recommendations for Minnesota Administrative Rule, the governing standard for training Minnesota Principals. The Minnesota Administrative Rule changes are to be in effect no later than July 1, 2013. The thirteen Minnesota Higher Education Institutions currently licensing new principals will be required to modify their curricular offerings based on the changes in the Minnesota Administrative Rule, thus improving the preparation of Minnesota principals.

- *1.B.10 Does the SEA plan to evaluate its current assessments and increase the rigor of those assessments and the alignment to the State's college- and career-readiness standards, in order to better prepare students and teachers for the new assessments through one or more of the following strategies:*
 - *Raising the State's academic achievement standards on its current assessments to ensure that they reflect a level of post-secondary 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 post-secondary readiness by back-mapping from college entrance requirements or remediation rates, analyzing the relationship between proficient score on the State assessments and the ACT or SAT scores accepted by most of the state's 4 year public IHE;s or conducting NAEP mapping studies.)*
 - *Augmenting or revising current State assessments by adding questions, removing questions or varying formats in order to better align with the state's college- and career-ready standards?*

-
- *Implementing another strategy to increase the rigor of current assessments, such as using the “advanced” performance level on state assessments instead of “proficient” performance level as the goal for individual student performance or using college-preparatory assessments or other advanced tests on which IHE’s grant course credits to entering college students to determine whether their students are prepared for post-secondary success?*

If so, is this activity likely to result in an increase in the State’s current assessments and their alignment with college- and career-ready standards?

Minnesota revises and updates its assessment program on a cycle that follows the standards revision timeline set forth in section 1.B.1 of this section. The new MCA III assessments are aligned to college- and career-ready standards as certified by a letter from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges.

Minnesota chose to raise the level of its achievement standards through the standard-setting process. The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) as described on page 8 of Attachment 13 reflect the efforts of Minnesota to increase rigor of the assessment and the alignment with college-and career-ready standards. This same ALD process will be used for all MCA III series assessments.

Mathematics

Grades three through eight MCA III mathematics assessments are aligned to the 2007 academic standards. These standards are certified as meeting college- and career-readiness requirements by Minnesota IHEs (Attachment 5).

The standard setting activity for these assessments was conducted in June 2011. The Mathematics MCA-III, MCA-Modified, and MTAS in grades 3-8 have been peer reviewed.

Reading/Language Arts

Minnesota’s recently revised 2010 academic standards in reading/language arts are aligned to the common core state standards. These assessments will be operational for spring 2013 administration. From 2013 and beyond these assessments will be aligned to college- and career-readiness standards.

The Scope of Work for the 2011-12 assessment contract with AIR found in section 2 of Attachment 14 provides further evidence for Minnesota's commitment to implement assessments aligned to college-and career-ready standards.

To facilitate an operational assessment in Reading MCA-III, Minnesota is conducting an online field test administration in February 2012. This field test includes item development consistent with the 2010 Minnesota Academic Standards in Language Arts, specifically increased Lexile readability, text sets, and technology-enhanced items to assess more cognitively complex concepts.

- *1. B.11 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 the State's college- and career-ready standards?*

MDE is developing several initiatives and tools that will support the implementation of college- and career-ready standards. First we are developing an implementation plan for aligning and fully implementing the *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards*, the *Minnesota Academic Standards* as well as the *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)* standards.

We are also using the innovative *Stages of Standards-Based Education* alignment tool. This rubric defines the stages of implementation for a system of standards-based education. It is based on the science of implementation and will guide the agency and school districts in the planning and implementation of systemic, standards-based education. Some of the areas addressed by the *Stages of Standards-Based Education* alignment tool are the following:

- Leadership
 - Decision makers / Who
 - Vision
 - School culture
- Policies/ Structures
 - Common focus/Structure
 - Beliefs about time and resources

-
- Evaluation (program)
 - Grading (student)
 - Teacher support and evaluation
 - Professional development
 - Purpose
 - Characteristics of delivery
 - Evidence of effectiveness
 - Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
 - Curriculum development/mapping
 - Instruction
 - Assessment (formative, summative, diagnostic, other data as evidence of student learning)
 -

MDE will also continue to support districts in the implementation of the *Blueprint for Literacy* Plan that builds upon the college- and career-ready literacy expectations for 21st century learners and is designed to ensure a seamless delivery system for B-12 literacy instruction. This state literacy plan addresses the value of clear academic standards that ensure equity of opportunity and academic achievement for all learners, guidance and support on evidenced-based literacy instruction, and an expectation that schools and districts use multiple data points to assess whether learners have achieved the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful readers and writers. In addition through its network of *Math and Science Teacher Centers*, the newly launched *Minnesota Math and Science Frameworks*, and extensive menu of other supports, Minnesota will continue to build district capacity in mathematics and science.

Minnesota has a long history of adopting, implementing, and supporting college- and career-ready standards. The purpose of Minnesota's system of standards-based education is to equip all students with the knowledge and skills for success in postsecondary education as well as advanced work and civic participation. Minnesota law requires that the standards identify the K-12 educational expectations for the achievement of all students across the state, including college- and career- readiness skills. While academic standards are determined at

the state level, local school districts have flexibility to determine the curriculum, instructional methods, assessment tools and learning environments that will best help their students achieve the standards. MDE will continue to plan and implement systems of professional development and supports to ensure each school's success with its students.

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

Option C:

If the SEA has developed and begun annually administering high-quality assessments in all LEAs and has set academic achievement standards, did the SEA attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review (Attachment 7), or a timeline showing when the SEA will submit the assessments to the Department for peer review (Attachment 7)?

MDE is administering high quality assessments that have been peer reviewed. Proficiency, growth and growth gap reduction methodologies all use results from Minnesota's high quality assessments.

- Math grades 3-8 was submitted for initial Peer Review in June 2011. We are currently preparing follow-up documentation requested for submission in January 2012.
- Reading/language arts grades 3-8 will be submitted for peer review in August 2013 after the initial administration.
- Math grade will be submitted for peer review in August 2014 after the initial administration.

Documentation of the peer review process currently taking place for Minnesota's math assessments can be found in Attachment 7.

2015 Waiver Renewal

MDE is administering high quality assessments, some of which have been peer reviewed. Proficiency, growth, and growth gap reduction methodologies all use results from Minnesota's high quality assessments. All Minnesota are aligned to the most current version of the corresponding Minnesota Academic Standards. Minnesota's Academic Standards are Career and College Ready Standards.

- Math grades 3-8 assessments had their initial administration in 2011. These assessments received Peer Review approval in early 2012.
- Reading/language arts grades 3-8 and 10 had their initial administration in 2013.
- Math grade 11 had their initial administration in 2014.

The academic achievement standards were established immediately following the initial administration.

Consistent with ESEA Flexibility requirements, beginning in 2014-2015, Minnesota no longer administers the modified assessment to any students in the state.

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

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012-2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's Differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement, school performance, close achievement gaps and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Minnesota's proposed system of recognition, accountability and support has three goals:

1. Fairly and accurately measure the performance of all schools
2. Identify those Title I schools that need the most support
3. Give schools the data and tools they need to assess their needs and achieve meaningful school improvement.

At the core of this effort is the use of multiple measurements. Educators around the state have been asking to be judged not only by student proficiency rates but also by their ability to achieve high individual student growth, particularly with students from lower-performing subgroups. Minnesota's proposed system does that in a way that extends the information currently provided in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system to provide a more complete picture of school performance.

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 LEA's 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 identifies 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 performance and progress of all subgroups.

Fair Measurements of Adequate Yearly Progress

Minnesota will continue to use its federally approved Adequate Yearly Progress Measures (AYP) measurements to provide Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for all LEAs and schools in the state. Our current AMOs model includes participation on statewide assessments, an index rating for determining proficiency on statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, and attendance or four-year on-time graduation for the other indicator. Using the same AMOs also allows for continuity between the current and future accountability systems. Targets will be adjusted according to the requirements outlined in Option A. A full discussion of this can be found in section 2.B. of this document.

Annual Measurable Objectives-Progress on each AMOs status component is published annually on the School Report Cards. A link to the Functional Requirements for the 2011 No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress Calculations, providing a full technical description of these computations, is included as Attachment 15.

Even though the current AMOs system provides disaggregated information in each domain (participation, proficiency, attendance and graduation) for all eight required subgroups the underlying measurements do not include growth or credit for closing the achievement gap. A more complete picture is needed.

Multiple Measurements of School Performance - If approved, Minnesota will add an additional component to the statewide accountability system. A new Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) will be calculated for each school in the state. The MMR combines four achievement measures to arrive at an overall rating:

- Proficiency
- Individual student growth
- Growth gap reduction
- Graduation rates

A school's performance on these measures is determined by student performance on Minnesota's statewide assessments in math and reading and the four-year on-time cohort graduation rate. This new rating is centered on what stakeholders deem to be the four most important factors in a school's success. If approved Minnesota's school accountability profile for the 2011-2012 school year will add the MMR to the accountability data it currently provides on an annual basis. A district's accountability profile will continue to show only the AMOs.

The MMR is based on state assessment data and graduation rate computations. It provides textured information to support school improvement activities and focus attention on closing the achievement gap by combining performance and progress measures.

- *Proficiency*

This domain uses the approved AYP index model which allows for a continued emphasis on the goal of promoting maximum levels of proficiency among students. For the MMR, two adjustments have been made to the approved index model with the goal of creating a stronger status achievement model that addresses the concern that the MMR does not have a strong enough emphasis on status achievement. First, schools and subgroups will not be able to make AYP through the state's approved AYP growth model. With a greater emphasis on growth in other domains, it is important to maintain a high value on the status achievement measurement in AYP. Second, to further strengthen the expectation of student proficiency, schools and subgroups will not be able to make AYP through Safe Harbor for the purposes of the MMR. While Safe Harbor has value in showing year-to-year improvement in the AYP measurement, the emphasis on growth in other domains makes this adjustment less relevant to the calculation. With these two adjustments to the AYP index model, schools will earn points in the proficiency domain only through reaching the AYP targets set by the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). This places a greater emphasis on the importance of promoting proficiency as one of the primary goals in our accountability system. Schools earn points based on the percentage of measured subgroups that make AYP, with subgroups

weighted according to their size. MDE will continue to use multi-year averaging to account for small schools with dramatic statistical variations. A more detailed discussion of this calculation can be found in Attachment 15.

A weighted percentage of the number of groups making AYP is calculated to determine each school's overall achievement measure and their Focus achievement measure. The square root of the number of students in each group is used to weight the percentages. Weighting by the square root of the number of students gives greater relative weight to smaller/minority groups than larger/majority groups, which reinforces Minnesota's goal of closing achievement gaps. For example, if a school has 49 students eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 400 ineligible/affluent students, then their weights are 7 and 20, respectively. The lower-performing group comprises 11 percent ($49/449$) of the students in this example, but they account for 26 percent ($7/27$) of the weighted measure. In addition to reinforcing Minnesota's goal of closing achievement gaps, weighting by the square root of the number of students in each group helps ensure that the overall achievement measure and the Focus achievement measure are more precise than simply averaging percentages across groups.

For the MMR that will be calculated in early 2012 for the purposes of identifying the initial Priority, Focus and Reward Schools, Minnesota will use the first year targets of the proposed AMO model discussed in Section 2B. In effect, schools will be measured on whether their subgroups performed relative to the statewide averages of each subgroup in 2011. Schools that make AYP in a subgroup performed above the state average of that subgroup in 2011. Similarly, schools make AYP in the “all students” group if their percentage of proficient students was above the state average from 2011. This will allow MDE to identify Priority and Focus Schools that performed below the state average, and Reward Schools that performed above the state average.

- *Growth*

Parents, teachers, administrators, and policy makers have valid questions about the relative progress of students over time (Smith and Yen 2006). In accordance with NCLB, the Minnesota Assessment System develops and administers criterion-referenced tests aligned to grade-level academic standards. The tests are primarily designed to enable a determination of each student's proficiency level within their grade. Additionally, Minnesota's tests can provide information about students' relative achievement growth over time. Growth modeling represents a cost-effective way to maximize the return on Minnesota's investment in criterion-referenced testing by providing growth information.

Purpose and validity

The purpose of the Minnesota Growth calculation is to compute a standardized growth score for each student who took the same test in two consecutive administrations (e.g., students who took the reading MCA in grades 3 and 4). The Minnesota Growth methodology qualifies as a "grade-to-grade" growth model. (Smith and Yen 2006) Grade-to-grade growth models possess some of the same features that make vertical scaling, student growth percentiles, and value-added modeling useful, but grade-to-grade growth models are simpler and more defensible. In particular, by basing growth scores on two years' of matched data and using nonparametric smoothing, the Minnesota Growth model largely rules out the following validity threats:

1. falsely assuming unidimensionality across grades
2. confounding the influence of two or more schools on a student's most recent growth score
3. mis-specifying functional forms
4. making conclusions biased by student attrition and/or exclusion of students with special needs.

Minnesota's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has reviewed the Minnesota Growth methodology and found it appropriate. Even though Minnesota has developed a vertical scale for reporting purposes, it does

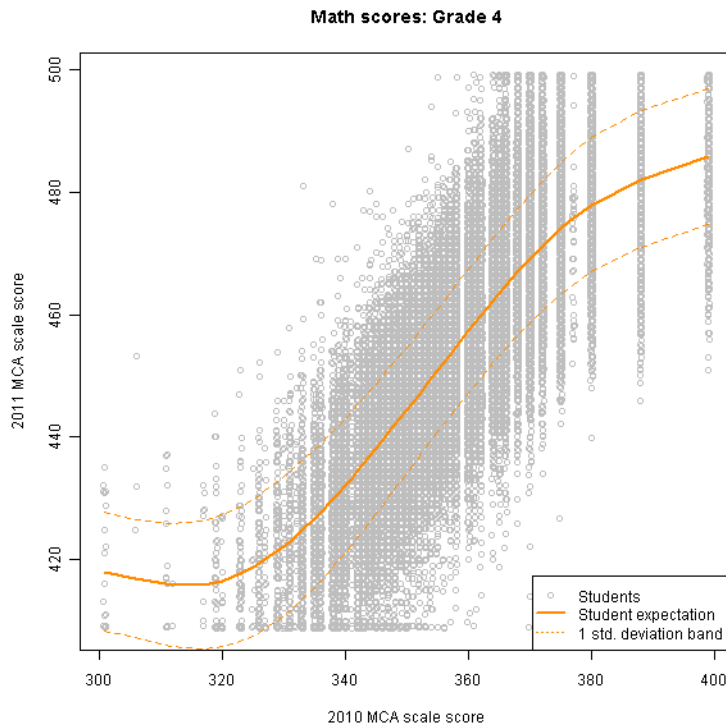
not include students with special needs who took the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (alternate assessment); nor does it accommodate standard setting changes. Members of the TAC agreed that updated Minnesota Growth Model methodology is inclusive and flexible. Additionally, they felt that Minnesota's growth methodology would yield results that are comparable to those from the student growth percentile and value-added methodologies implemented in other states. The local TAC member participated fully in the stakeholder advisory meetings that helped shape Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility request.

Calculating student growth for state and federal accountability

Growth is based on each student's current test score and their score from the prior administration (see the figure below). Statewide means are calculated for each prior score and subtracted from each student's current score to determine the degree to which each student exceeded expected/predicted growth. First, statewide means and standard deviations of students' current-year scale scores are calculated for each prior scale score. Second, nonparametric, kernel density methods are used to smooth and interpolate the conditional means and standard deviations across the prior scale score range. When possible, two cohorts of student test scores are used to calculate conditional means and standard deviations for better accuracy and precision. Third, at each prior scale score, the conditional mean is subtracted from each student's current score, yielding an unstandardized conditional growth score. Lastly, the conditional growth scores are standardized (i.e., converted to z-scores) by dividing by the conditional standard deviation. The formula for calculating student growth

z-scores is $z_i = \frac{x_{ij} - \bar{x}_{.j}}{\sigma_{.j}}$, where x_{ij} is student i's current-year scale score indexed by their prior scale score j on the test aligned to grade- and subject-specific standards, $\bar{x}_{.j}$ is the smoothed mean of current-year scores of all students statewide with prior score j, and $\sigma_{.j}$ is the smoothed standard deviation of current-year scores of all students statewide with prior score j. Note that after standardizing, each student's growth z-score is no longer specific to the prior score on the grade-level test.

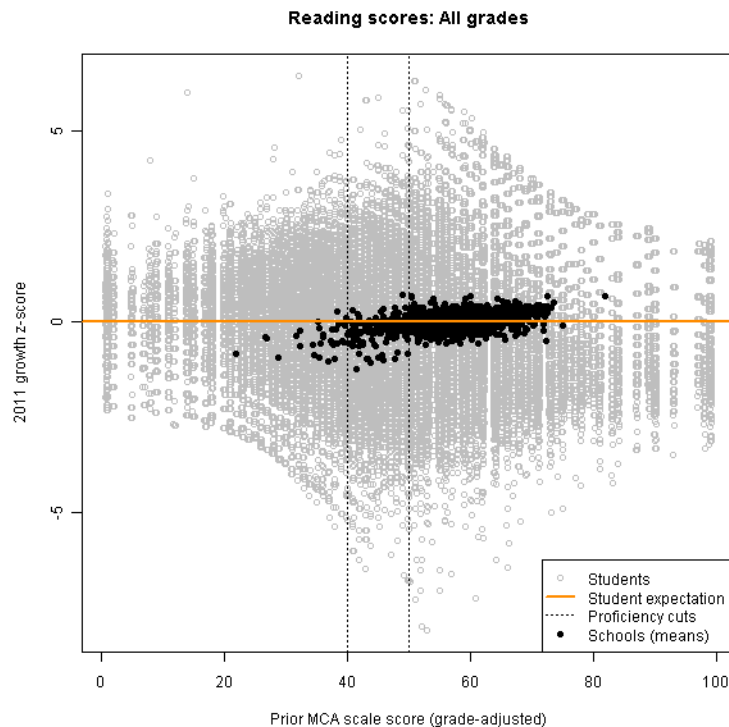
Illustration of student growth calculation: Smoothed conditional means and standard deviations



Aggregating student growth at the school level

A major advantage of student growth z-scores is that they can be averaged across tests and grades to achieve reliable measures of school-level growth. The Minnesota Assessment System develops criterion-referenced tests aligned to the state's grade-specific academic standards. As such, scores from different grades and tests do not share a common scale. In order to appropriately aggregate scores across tests and grades, scores must be standardized (i.e., converted to z-scores). The figure below illustrates how student growth z-scores are averaged across tests and grades within schools. Each school's mean z-score represents the degree to which students in that school grew faster (or slower) than expected. School means of student growth z-scores exhibit good overall reliability (0.86 for math and 0.74 for reading).

Illustration of averaging student growth across grades within schools to identify high- and low-growth schools.



Note: Plot limited to MCA takers only for illustration purposes.

Growth to proficiency

Until now, Minnesota has not directly tied the Minnesota Growth Model to its academic standards that lead to college and career readiness. State statute (Minn. Stat. 120B.299) defines low growth as one-half standard deviation (SD) below expectation (i.e., a growth z-score below -0.5), medium growth as between -0.5 and 0.5 SD, and high growth as 0.5 SD and above. Those targets, while well-meaning, were not based on statistical evidence of the levels of growth necessary for students to achieve proficiency. Minnesota took the peer reviewers' recommendation to communicate an expectation of growth to standard seriously and conducted a predictive validity study to establish new growth targets that lead to college- and career-readiness.

The new growth-to-proficiency targets are based on a predictive validity study using historical data. If overall student achievement increases over time as intended, then the targets will be updated so they remain relevant

and rigorous. The study's main research question was, "To what degree do students at each score/achievement level need to grow in order to reach proficiency in four years or by graduation?" The data included students' 2011 proficiency levels (the outcome variable), their 2008 growth z-scores, and their 2007 scale scores for math and reading. Proficiency levels were logistically regressed on growth z-scores interacted with prior scale scores. The regression prediction equation was then used to classify students as either "on track" or "not on track" to proficiency. The equation was also used to determine the growth targets that best predict growth to proficiency.

The results indicate that adequate growth depends highly on a student's starting point (i.e., their prior achievement). Students who "do not meet" standards need to exhibit exceptional growth in order to reach proficiency. Students who "partially meet" standards have a good chance of achieving proficiency if they exhibit very high growth. The growth needed to reach proficiency declines as achievement approaches the "meets" and "exceeds" cut scores. And students who already exceed proficiency are highly likely to maintain proficiency. In terms of accountability, the results indicate that it is important to hold schools accountable for student growth because proficiency is within reach of students who are not yet proficient and students who are proficient but exhibit below-average growth are at risk for falling behind.

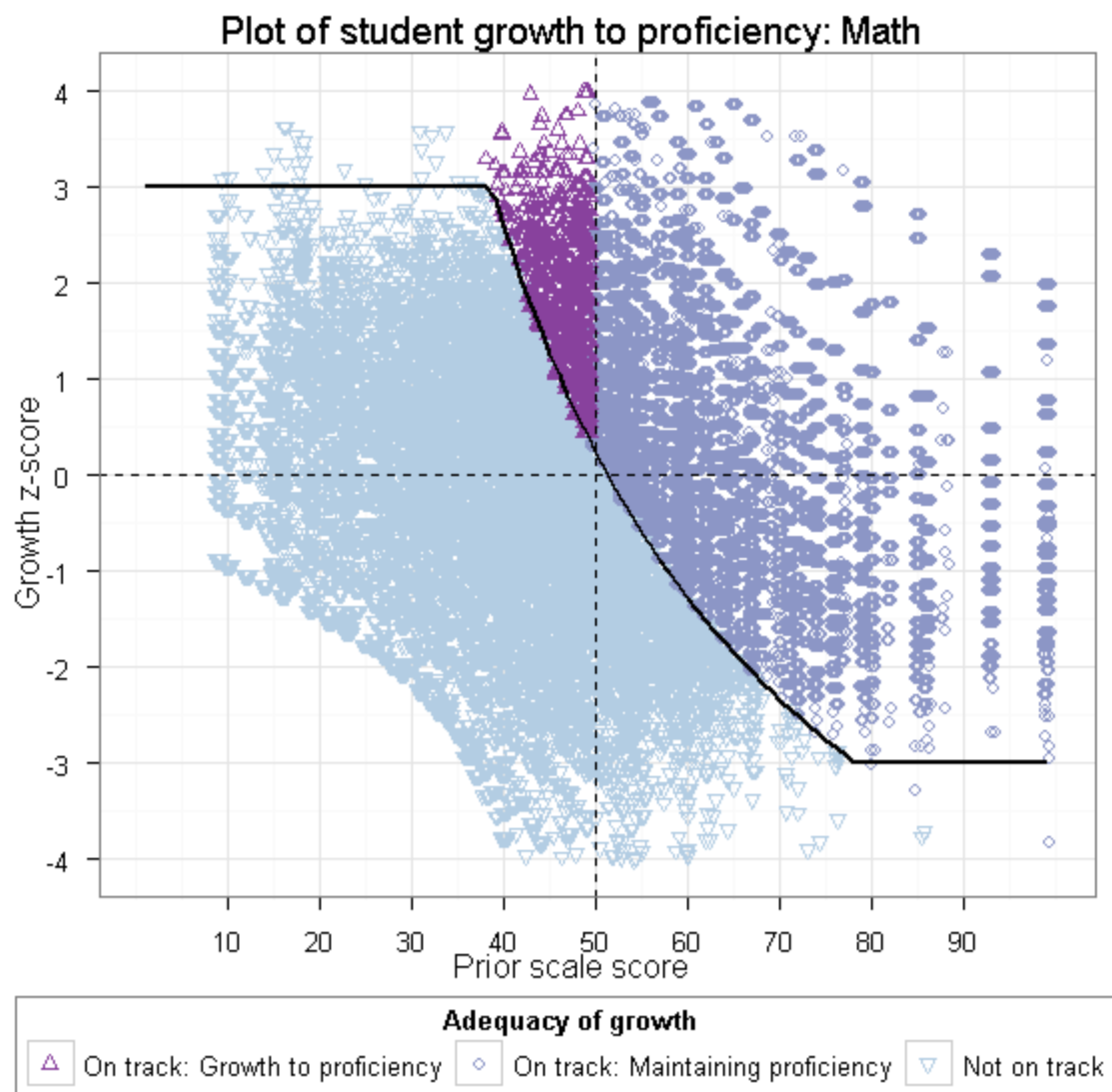
For both math and reading, the new growth targets correctly predict eventual proficiency a very high percent of the time (about 80 percent). As shown in the tables below, the new targets result in much higher accuracy than the statutorily defined "high growth" target. They also result in better accuracy than simply using a student's prior proficiency level to predict later proficiency. Given that the new targets- established in response to panelists' concerns- are valid predictors of proficiency, Minnesota will use them to communicate and strengthen expectations that growth should lead to college and career readiness for all students.

Growth to proficiency prediction accuracy and targets: Math

Prediction accuracy rates			
Current proficiency level	Prior proficiency level	High growth (statutorily defined)	On track growth (new targets)
Not proficient	0.703	0.784	0.798
Proficient	0.859	0.359	0.822
All students	0.786	0.559	0.810

Growth targets			
Prior scale score (grade adjusted)	Growth z-score	Achievement level	Mean growth z-score within achievement level
1-38	3.00	Does not meet	2.99
39	2.89	Does not meet	2.99
40	2.58	Partially meets	1.39
41	2.29	Partially meets	1.39
42	2.02	Partially meets	1.39
43	1.75	Partially meets	1.39
44	1.51	Partially meets	1.39
45	1.27	Partially meets	1.39
46	1.04	Partially meets	1.39
47	0.83	Partially meets	1.39
48	0.62	Partially meets	1.39
49	0.43	Partially meets	1.39
50	0.24	Meets	-0.47
51	0.06	Meets	-0.47
52	-0.12	Meets	-0.47
53	-0.28	Meets	-0.47
54	-0.44	Meets	-0.47
55	-0.59	Meets	-0.47
56	-0.74	Meets	-0.47
57	-0.88	Meets	-0.47
58	-1.02	Meets	-0.47
59	-1.15	Meets	-0.47
60	-1.28	Exceeds	-2.16
61	-1.40	Exceeds	-2.16
62	-1.52	Exceeds	-2.16
63	-1.63	Exceeds	-2.16
64	-1.75	Exceeds	-2.16
65	-1.85	Exceeds	-2.16
66	-1.96	Exceeds	-2.16
67	-2.06	Exceeds	-2.16
68	-2.15	Exceeds	-2.16
69	-2.25	Exceeds	-2.16
70	-2.34	Exceeds	-2.16
71	-2.43	Exceeds	-2.16
72	-2.51	Exceeds	-2.16
73	-2.60	Exceeds	-2.16
74	-2.68	Exceeds	-2.16

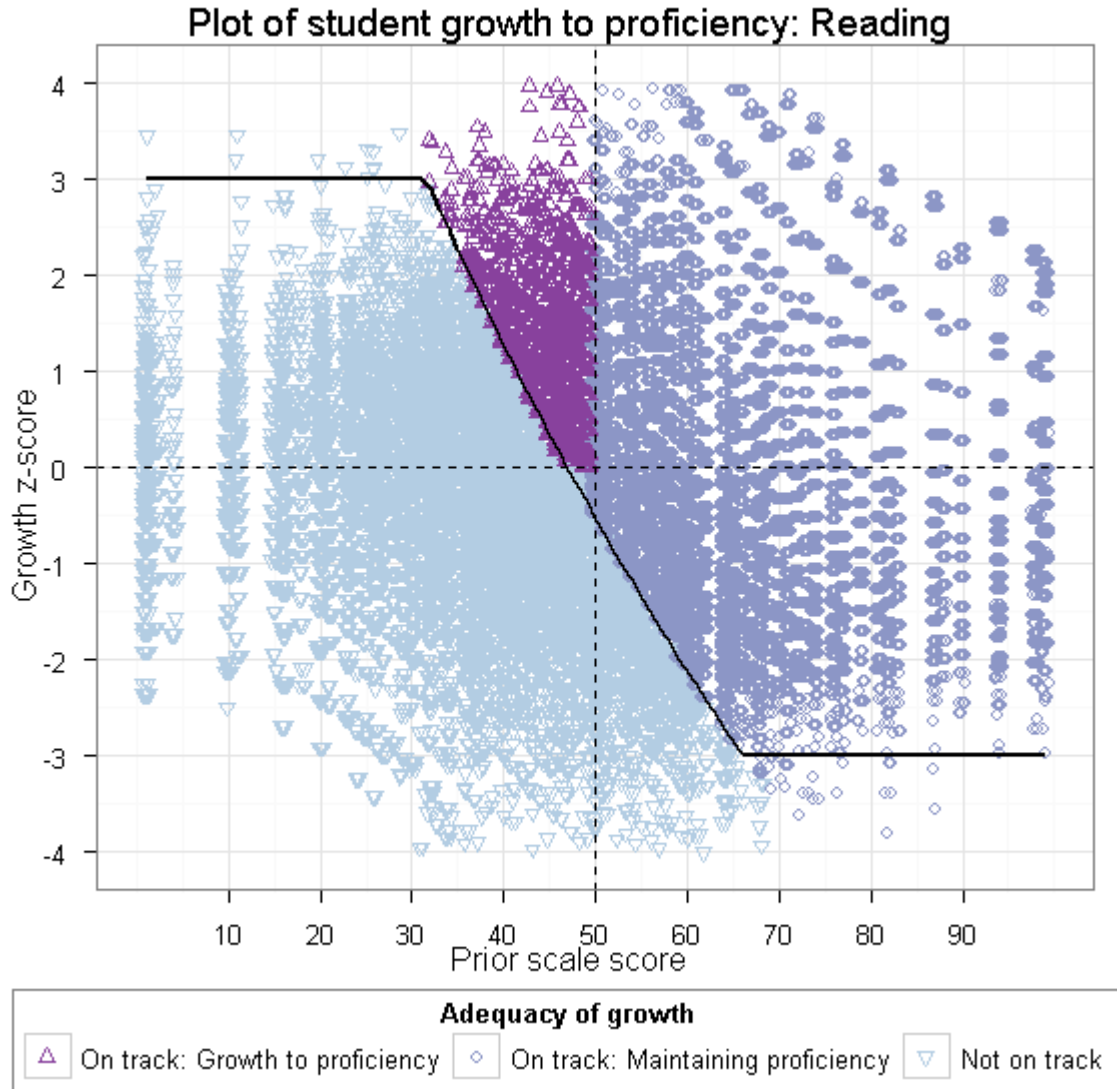
75	-2.76	Exceeds	-2.16
76	-2.83	Exceeds	-2.16
77	-2.91	Exceeds	-2.16
78	-2.98	Exceeds	-2.16
79-99	-3.00	Exceeds	-2.16



Growth to proficiency prediction accuracy and targets: Reading

Prediction accuracy rates			
Current proficiency level	Prior proficiency level	High growth (statutorily defined)	On track growth (new targets)
Not proficient	0.610	0.809	0.594
Proficient	0.894	0.328	0.926
All students	0.816	0.460	0.834

Growth targets			
Prior scale score (grade adjusted)	Growth z-score	Achievement level	Mean growth z-score within achievement level
1-31	3.00	Does not meet	2.55
32	2.90	Does not meet	2.55
33	2.69	Does not meet	2.55
34	2.48	Does not meet	2.55
35	2.27	Does not meet	2.55
36	2.07	Does not meet	2.55
37	1.87	Does not meet	2.55
38	1.67	Does not meet	2.55
39	1.47	Does not meet	2.55
40	1.28	Partially meets	0.42
41	1.09	Partially meets	0.42
42	0.90	Partially meets	0.42
43	0.71	Partially meets	0.42
44	0.53	Partially meets	0.42
45	0.35	Partially meets	0.42
46	0.17	Partially meets	0.42
47	-0.01	Partially meets	0.42
48	-0.18	Partially meets	0.42
49	-0.35	Partially meets	0.42
50	-0.52	Meets	-1.23
51	-0.69	Meets	-1.23
52	-0.86	Meets	-1.23
53	-1.02	Meets	-1.23
54	-1.18	Meets	-1.23
55	-1.34	Meets	-1.23
56	-1.50	Meets	-1.23
57	-1.66	Meets	-1.23
58	-1.81	Meets	-1.23
59	-1.97	Meets	-1.23
60	-2.12	Exceeds	-2.79
61	-2.27	Exceeds	-2.79
62	-2.41	Exceeds	-2.79
63	-2.56	Exceeds	-2.79
64	-2.70	Exceeds	-2.79
65	-2.84	Exceeds	-2.79
66	-2.98	Exceeds	-2.79
67-99	-3.00	Exceeds	-2.79



The functional specifications of the Minnesota Growth computation can be found in Attachment 16. Adjustments will be made to this document to reflect changes associated with the approval of this Request.

- Growth gap reduction***
 Growth gap reduction is focused on students in black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, special education, English learners and students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch subgroups.

Schools receive a score based on the average of individual student growth Z-scores in these seven subgroups compared to the statewide average individual student growth in higher-performing subgroups.

Growth gaps are a school-level measure of the degree to which higher-performing student groups at the state level are growing faster than lower-performing students in the school. Within each school, student growth score means are calculated for each of seven, lower-performing subgroups: students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, English learners, special education students, and students identifying as American Indian, Asian, Black, or Hispanic. The growth of each of these groups is compared to the fixed statewide average growth of their higher-performing counterparts. The Free/Reduced Price Lunch subgroup is compared to students who do not qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The Limited English Proficient subgroup is compared to students who are not Limited English Proficient. The Special Education subgroup is compared to students who are not in Special Education. The four racial and ethnic minority groups are compared to the White subgroup.

By subtracting the statewide mean growth of each higher-performing group from the school's mean growth exhibited by the corresponding lower-performing group the result is a standardized effect size measure of the degree to which a given school closed the achievement gap. Negative values indicate the gap is closing and positive values indicate a widening gap. A student-weighted average of growth gap effect sizes is calculated to determine each school's overall growth gap effect size.

Some of the peer reviewers expressed concern that the achievement gap reduction measure could allow a school to get credit for closing achievement gaps even if their within-school gaps stagnate or widen. We have adopted their suggestion and revised the way in which growth gap targets are fixed. ESEA Flexibility requires that we rank and recognize schools according to their performance relative to other schools, but we intend to fix the growth gap targets so they do not automatically fluctuate with changes in the performance of other schools. That is, a school should

not get credit for reducing achievement gaps if the achievement of a higher-performing subgroup declines. That risk is minimized by empirically setting the growth targets to the statewide mean growth of higher performing groups rather than to each school's mean. Individual schools cannot influence the statewide mean growth of students as they could the average growth of their own students, and the statewide means will remain more stable over time. (Note that the growth gap targets are hard-wired into the growth gap measurement by subtracting school means from the targets.) After setting the targets in the first year, they will be fixed at those values to prevent normative fluctuations. The statewide means will be re-calculated every year, but the targets will only be updated if the average growth of higher-performing group increases substantially. The empirically-based targets will be fixed in order to track progress towards closing achievement gaps over time in terms of the achievement gap measurement, and the targets will only be updated to make them more rigorous and relevant. As the final list of Reward, Focus, and Priority schools shows, nearly every reward school contributed to a statewide reduction in achievement gaps. This confirms that hard-wiring the empirically fixed growth gap targets into the ranking measure is rigorous and appropriate for identifying schools for recognition, accountability and support.

Calculating growth gaps for state and federal accountability

Coinciding with ESEA Flexibility, Minnesota has begun using growth scores to focus attention on closing achievement gaps. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Minnesota students exhibit high levels of achievement compared to other states, but our achievement gaps are among the worst in the nation. For example, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch had a mean score of 43.87 on the math MCA (grade-adjusted), which corresponds to "partially meets" proficiency. Their more affluent peers "met" proficiency at 54.38 on average. What is more, students in poverty did not grow positively (-0.14), but their more affluent peers grew positively (0.9) for a growth gap of 0.24 standard deviation statewide.

Because students who have economic and other educational advantages exhibit higher achievement and higher growth than their less advantaged peers, closing achievement gaps will require disadvantaged groups to grow at a faster rate than their advantaged peers. Minnesota's growth gap measure is consistent with that theory of action. It focuses attention on the need to accelerate the growth of disadvantaged subgroups in order to close achievement gaps. Were all schools to reverse this growth gap so students in lower-performing subgroups were growing at a higher rate than their currently higher-performing peers, the achievement gap would be eliminated over time. The table below lists Minnesota's achievement and growth gaps.

*Achievement gaps and growth gaps: Statewide by subject**

	Students	Mean prior score (grade adjusted)	Mean current score (grade adjusted)	Mean growth z-score (fixed targets highlighted)	Growth gap
Math					
Eligible for free or reduced price lunch					
No	219316	59.64	54.38	0.1	
Yes	120747	50.01	43.87	-0.14	0.24
English learner					
No	318158	57.05	51.45	0.02	
Yes	21905	44.48	39.44	-0.11	0.13
Special education					
No	297102	57.68	52.24	0.05	
Yes	42961	45.17	38.6	-0.24	0.29
Race/ethnicity					
American Indian	6938	48.63	41.42	-0.29	0.34
Asian	21572	55.32	50.69	0.13	-0.08
Hispanic	21469	48.2	42.02	-0.17	0.22
Black	30431	45.91	39.72	-0.2	0.25
White	259653	58.38	52.9	0.05	
Reading					
Eligible for free or reduced price lunch					
No	218632	62.01	61.12	0.09	
Yes	121944	51.43	51.41	-0.12	0.21
English learner					
No	318707	59.31	58.55	0.02	
Yes	21869	42.77	44.84	-0.11	0.13
Special education					
No	297948	59.85	59.19	0.05	
Yes	42628	45.76	45.72	-0.26	0.31
Race/ethnicity					
American Indian	7067	50.45	49.96	-0.2	0.24
Asian	21416	54.61	55.14	0.04	0
Hispanic	21599	49.42	50.01	-0.1	0.14
Black	30647	48.69	49.57	-0.1	0.14
White	259847	60.6	59.66	0.04	

* The mean scale score columns in the table are limited to MCA scores to incompatibility with the MTAS scale. MTAS takers are included in the counts and z-scores.

For each school, the statewide mean growth of each higher-performing group (i.e., the fixed growth gap target) is subtracted from the school's mean growth exhibited by the corresponding lower-performing group. This yields a standardized effect size measure of the degree to which a given school closed the achievement gap, with negative values indicating closure and positive values indicating a widening gap. Growth gap sizes of -0.3 standard deviation represent a small achievement gap reduction, -0.5 medium, and -0.8 large. (Cohen 2003) A weighted average of growth gap effect sizes is calculated to determine each school's overall growth gap z-score. The square root of the number of students in each group is used to weight the average. Weighting by the square root of the number of students gives greater relative weight to smaller/minority groups than larger/majority groups, which reinforces Minnesota's goal of closing achievement gaps. For example, if a school has 49 students eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 400 ineligible/affluent students, then their weights are 7 and 20, respectively. The lower-performing group comprises 11 percent (49/449) of the students in this example, but they account for 26 percent (7/27) of the weighted measure. In addition to reinforcing Minnesota's goal of closing achievement gaps, weighting by the square root of the number of students in each group helps ensure that the growth gap measure is more precise than a simple average across groups.

Illustration of the school-level economic growth gap calculation

School	Statewide mean of advantaged students' growth z-scores	School mean of disadvantaged students' growth z-scores	Gap (statewide advantaged z-score minus school's disadvantaged z-score)	Gap interpretation
1	0.09	0.21	-0.12	Favors disadvantaged group (closing achievement gap)
2	0.09	-0.20	0.29	Favors advantaged group (increasing achievement gap)

The functional specifications of the growth gap calculation can be found in Attachment 16. Adjustments will be made to this document to reflect changes associated with the approval of this Request.

- **Graduation**

The graduation rate domain measures schools by their ability to meet statewide targets for graduation rates. Using the same methodology as the proficiency domain, we will assign points to schools based on the number

of subgroups that made AYP in the graduation rate indicator. This provides continuity not only with the proficiency domain, but with the expectations for graduation rates that have been set in the current AYP model. This methodology differs from the current AYP model, which only uses subgroup graduation rates to determine eligibility for Safe Harbor. Schools will earn points based on not just their overall graduation rate, but also on the graduation rates of their subgroups. This sets a clear expectation that all subgroups must meet graduation rate targets. In this way, the proposed model places greater emphasis on the importance of subgroup performance. The inclusion of subgroup accountability for graduation rates addresses concerns raised by peer reviewers.

For the MMR that will be calculated in early 2012 for the purposes of identifying the initial Priority, Focus and Reward Schools, Minnesota's current AYP graduation rate calculation and targets will be used. The graduation rate calculation that is currently used for AYP looks at the number of students that graduated in 2010 and the number of students in grades 9 through 12 that dropped out of school. The target for making AYP is 85 percent. The minimum cell size for subgroup measurement is 40 students. While this methodology differs from the cohort-adjusted graduation rates that all states must use beginning with the 2011-12 school year, it is the methodology that was known to schools during the year for which they will be measured (2010). In fairness to schools, Minnesota will maintain this methodology and its associated targets for the 2010-11 school year MMR, but will then transition to cohort-adjusted graduation rates in 2011-12 as mandated by federal regulation. Minnesota is already reporting cohort-adjusted graduation rates in compliance with regulation, but its cohort-adjusted graduation rate model has not yet been approved by the US Department of Education, and AMOs for graduation rate have not yet been assigned. Upon approval, and the establishment of targets in 2012, the new methodology and targets will be used in the graduation rate domain of the MMR. A more detailed discussion of this cohort-adjusted calculation can be found in Attachment 17.

The graduation rate domain will not count subgroups or schools that make AYP through progress. In the current AYP model, schools can make AYP by improving their graduation rates by two percent or more, even if they are below the 85 percent target. For the purposes of the MMR, only schools and subgroups that meet or exceed the target will be considered to have made AYP. This makes the graduation rate domain a stronger status achievement indicator.

A weighted percentage of the number of groups meeting graduation rate targets is calculated to determine each school's overall graduation rate measure. The square root of the number of students in each group is used to weight the percentage. Weighting by the square root of the number of students gives greater relative weight to smaller/minority groups than larger/majority groups, which reinforces Minnesota's goal of closing achievement gaps. For example, if a school has 49 students eligible for free or reduced price lunch and 400 ineligible/affluent students, then their weights are 7 and 20, respectively. The lower-performing group comprises 11 percent ($49/449$) of the students in this example, but they account for 26 percent ($7/27$) of the weighted measure. In addition to reinforcing Minnesota's goal of closing achievement gaps, weighting by the square root of the number of students in each group helps ensure that the overall graduation rate measure is more precise than simply averaging percentages across groups.

The nature of high school graduation in Minnesota also makes graduation rate a strong status achievement indicator. In order to graduate, students are assessed in three subjects with college- and career-ready standards, and must take courses aligned with college- and career-ready expectations. Therefore, graduation in Minnesota is aligned with college- and career-ready expectations, and graduation rates are a reflection of students meeting college- and career-ready standards.

Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR)

Each of the four domains described above is computed individually and is based on two years' worth of data to ensure statistical validity and minimize the effects of small group sizes.

Schools receive a total number of points based on all four of the domains described above. Schools that do not generate data in any of the four domains (e.g. schools without a graduation rate) have a reduced number of possible points. The following steps are used to combine the four measures into a total rating. First, schools are separated into four categories by grade ranges: elementary, middle/junior high, high school, and other. Schools that do not qualify as one of the three main groups are labeled "other". This includes schools such as care and treatment programs or schools without traditional grade range structures.

Through ESEA Flexibility extension process, Minnesota proposes to make minor technical modifications to the methods used for assigning points within each of the four MMR domains. It is important to note that the state proposes no changes to the underlying measures within each domain (as described in previous pages of this approved request). After a series of meetings with an external group of technical experts and discussion with a broad base of stakeholders, it was determined that improved methods for calculating points within domains should be considered.

The approaches described below better stabilize MMR results from year-to-year, thus reducing the volatility some schools have observed since the approval of this request. The modified calculations also better equalize the weighting of the four MMR domains, as the prior calculations for assigning points gave greater weight to the Proficiency and Graduation Rate domains. The original intent was to combine four measures (Proficiency, Growth, Achievement Gap Reduction, and Graduation Rates) all equally counting towards a school's overall MMR, and the improved calculations do just that. These new calculations, particularly the method used for the Proficiency and Graduation Rate domains, are also more transparent for schools, districts, parents and communities to better understand the school's performance.

Each school receives a proportion of the 25 possible points within each of the four domains based on the following methods:

- For Proficiency, points are earned by multiplying the weighted percentage of cells reaching proficiency targets by 25 possible points.
- For Growth, points are earned using Normal Curve Equivalents (NCEs) that are calculated as follows:
 - The mean and standard deviation of the observed data (average schoolwide growth z-scores) are calculated. A z-score is then calculated by using the following formula:
$$z - score = \frac{\text{observed school data} - \text{mean for school type}}{\text{standard deviation for school type}}$$

The z-score is then transformed into an NCE using the following formula:

$$NCE = 50 + 21.063 (z \text{ score})$$

Extreme NCEs are then truncated to maintain a score range of 0-100. Lastly, because each domain has 25 points, NCEs are divided by 4 to calculate the Growth domain points.

- For Achievement Gap Reduction, points are also earned using NCEs that are calculated in the same way as the Growth domain. However, the observed data in the Achievement Gap Reduction domain are the weighted growth gap effect sizes of each school.
- For Graduation Rates, points are earned using the same method as the Proficiency domain. The weighted percentage of cells reaching graduation rate targets is multiplied by 25 possible points.

Lastly, each school's total earned points are divided by their total possible points to arrive at a percentage of possible points earned. This percentage is a school's MMR.

Peer reviewers concluded that Minnesota's proposed system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support meets the technical requirements. The panel noted that a strength of Minnesota proposed system is its focus on college- and career-readiness, including student achievement, growth, and graduation. However, the panel recommended strengthening expectations for raising achievement and closing gaps communicated through the MMR. In this submission, Minnesota has taken concrete steps to address the panel's concern and strengthen expectations by:

- placing more weight on status achievement by removing both safe harbor

and value-table growth from the MMR Proficiency domain;

- revising the MMR graduation rate measurement so that schools receive points for each student subgroup meeting rigorous graduation rate targets;
- establishing new, more rigorous growth targets that clearly communicate the levels of growth necessary for students to achieve proficiency in four years or by graduation.

Some peer reviewers expressed concern that MMR points are calculated relative to the performance of other schools. We have revised our measurement so that each one is now tied to defined performance targets that are fixed in time so they do not automatically fluctuate with changes in the performance of other schools. For example, a school cannot earn points for reducing achievement gaps if the achievement of an advantaged subgroup of students declines. Because ESEA Flexibility requires us identify the top 15% and bottom 5% of schools we must rank schools relative to other schools. The MMR reinforces the expectation that schools make Adequate Yearly Progress because the Annual Measurable Objectives and the MMR both require schools to keep pace with each other as overall student achievement increases.

After two years using the MMR system, Minnesota has also found that the percentile ranking mechanism within each domain is not the preferred method for assigning points. We are proposing to adjust the calculations (as described on page 88-89) to remove percentile ranking. The improved methods for calculating MMR points reduce volatility and provide a more stable system that is better reflective of the school's performance in the four areas of the MMR.

The MMR method for identifying schools for recognition, accountability and support uses a proper balance of status achievements and growth. In three of the four domains, status achievement targets are utilized to determine the number of points a school earns. The proficiency domain sets hard targets for proficiency based on the state's AMOs. The achievement gap reduction domain sets hard targets for the growth of students in lower-performing subgroups that are aligned to the goal of closing the achievement gap. Finally, the graduation rate domain sets hard targets for graduation rates based on the state's AYP model. Since graduation in Minnesota is aligned to career- and college-ready expectations, graduation rates are a measure of success in meeting these expectations. Only the growth measurement lacks status achievement targets, but the lack of targets reflects a desire to avoid incentivizing an over-focus on the small group of students right above or below the proficiency line. Even in the this domain, which lacks hard targets, there are clearly communicated growth goals that set expectations for schools that are aligned with college- and career-readiness. In

the growth domain, results will be published alongside soft growth targets that communicate the expectation of growth to standards for those students who are not proficient.

The impact data for the MMR clearly exhibits that the methodology rewards schools with high achievement, and identifies problems at schools with low achievement. Evidence of this can be found in the Demonstration that Minnesota's List of Schools Meets the US Department of Education's Definition of Priority, Focus and Reward Schools. (Attachment 23)

A Multiple Measurements Chart will be posted in the school accountability profiles on the MDE website for every school in the state. The chart will show the school's performance on all four domains and its total percentage of points earned out of their possible points. Using the interactive data center on the MDE website, interested members of the public can compare school performance on all four of the domains and on the overall percentage of points earned. An example of the Multiple Measurements Chart can be found below:

DISTRICT: Sampleville SCHOOL: Sampleville Secondary TITLE I: Yes ACCOUNTABILITY STATUS: Reward School		
MEASUREMENT	POINTS EARNED/POINTS POSSIBLE	PERCENTAGE
Proficiency	25/25	100%
Student Growth	23.7/25	94.8%
Achievement Gap Reduction	22.9/25	91.6%
Graduation Rate	24.8/25	99.2%
Total	96.4/100	96.4%
Statewide Average		50.1%

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A X The SEA only includes student achievement on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	Option B If the SEA includes 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, it must: a. 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 assessment for all grades assessed; and b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.
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2. B Set Ambitious But Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives

Option A:

Did the SEA set its AMO's so they increase in annual increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient?

- i. Did the SEA provide the new AMO's and the method used to set these AMO's?**

Minnesota has chosen to reset Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) using Option A. We selected this option because it is both ambitious and achievable. Setting different targets for different subgroups reflects the current conditions in classrooms and shines a light on Minnesota's biggest educational crisis: the achievement gap.

By drawing more attention to the current situation and setting an ambitious six-year goal, the hope is that the state as a whole will rally around this goal and continue to make closing the achievement gap a major priority in education. AMOs are used to award points in the proficiency category of the MMR, which gives greater importance to the AMOs and the underlying goal of closing the achievement gap. The new AYP targets can be found in Attachment 19.

Methodology- We used the process in our approved workbook for the approved index system for computing proficiency but revised the index targets. Revised statewide targets were set by using the current proficiency rates based on our approved AYP index model for each grade and subgroup from the 2011 results (See Attachment 8). These values were incremented in equal steps so that there would be a 50% reduction in non-proficient students by 2017.

50% reduction

$((1 - [\text{starting index}]) * 0.5) + [\text{starting index}]$

If .58 was the starting index, they would need to be at .79 by 2017

$1.00 - .58 = .42$

$.42 * .5 = .21$

$.58 + .21 = .79$

The Functional Requirements for the 2011 No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress Calculations” can be found in Attachment 15.

ii. Did the SEA use current proficiency rates from the 2010-2011 school year as the base year?

To generate the new AMOs, Minnesota used the current proficiency rates on the assessments taken during the 2010-2011 school year for every subgroup at every grade level as the starting points for every subgroup and projected a 50 percent decrease in non-proficiency over the course of six years using equal annual increments. The statewide averages can be found in Attachment 8.

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

The effect of this method is that subgroups that currently have a lower rate of proficiency start with lower targets but are expected to make greater rates of annual progress during the six-year period. Within six years, the gap between the lower-performing subgroups and the higher-performing subgroups is cut in half.

2. C Reward Schools

2.C.i Describe the methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools?

Philosophy of Reward School Identification

To understand how Reward Schools are identified, it is important to first understand the purpose that is served by identifying Reward Schools: Incentivizing high performance and progress among Title I schools, and highlighting best practices to be shared with all schools, particularly Priority and Focus Schools. To those ends, the methodology used to identify Reward Schools must identify schools that are performing well in all measurements that are valued by the state and identify school types proportionally.

Methodology- Reward Schools will be identified using the Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) described in detail in section 2.A.i of this document. Using the top 15 percent of Title I schools will be identified as Reward Schools. These schools will represent the highest-performing elementary schools, middle schools and high schools in the state based on their ability to achieve high rates of proficiency, high levels of growth, growth gap reduction and high graduation rates.

Within the four school classifications of elementary school, middle school, high school, and others, the Title I schools with percentages that fall within the top 15 percent are identified as Reward Schools. The final group of Reward Schools will not be differentiated between highest-progress and highest-performing schools because the MMR captures both performance status using proficiency, and student progress using student growth. Reward Schools will exhibit both high levels of performance and high levels of progress.

This methodology achieves the two goals of identifying Reward Schools by incentivizing schools to perform well on the four measurements that are most valued by the state and creating a group of high-performing schools that is representative of the schools around the state. Using this methodology, the state can incentivize high proficiency and growth while highlighting the best practices from schools around the state.

Recognition- Each year, the Governor and Commissioner of Education will publicly recognize the achievement of the top 15 percent of Title I schools based on their MMR. Public recognition will continue to be the primary reward for these schools. Minnesota is also pursuing funds from the state or private sources to financially support Reward Schools that are willing to partner with low-performing schools to share best practices.

Through the waiver extension process, a broad base of stakeholders were consulted and they provided a recommendation to ensure Reward schools have an assessment participation rate above 95% in both math and reading. It is important to consider the validity of the results of these high-performers, and schools should only be recognized if participation rates on state assessments meet the 95% threshold. Minnesota will make certain that any school receiving the Reward recognition meets this requirement.

2015 Waiver Renewal

Reward schools are the highest-rated schools in Minnesota and represent the top 15 percent of Title I schools in the state based on the MMR. Beginning in 2015, schools that miss their AMOs or graduation rate targets for the same student group for two or more consecutive years cannot receive the Reward recognition. This change is consistent with the waiver renewal criteria that the highest-rated schools need to demonstrate achievement and graduation rate gap closure across student groups. In order to be recognized as an excellent Minnesota school and given the Reward distinction, the school must be showing progress for *all* groups of students by consistently meeting AMOs and graduation rate targets.

**2.C.ii Did the SEA’s request identify both highest-performing and high-progress schools as part of its first set of identified reward schools?
(Table 2)**

We have included a table to identify preliminary Reward Schools (Attachment 9). This list does not disclose the identity of individual schools as the computation is based on preliminary impact data runs. Upon approval of the methodology by USDOE, Minnesota will begin the standard production process to create new annual statewide accountability statistics. The IT development team will use SQL programming to pull data from production warehouse sources creating full functional documentation. Quality assurance routines will be run to verify and validate the computational results. This is the standard methodological process for releasing any statewide high stakes education statistics to ensure validity and reliability of data.

The attached table (Attachment 9) identifies 125 Reward Schools. This number of schools represents 15 percent of the state’s Title I schools. In 2010-11, Minnesota had 842 Title I schools. Some of the attached documentation reflects a lower number of Title I schools in 2011-12, which reflects Title I applications that are still being processed by the state. Historically, Minnesota has had between 835 and 845 Title I schools.

Reward Schools, like Priority and Focus Schools, were identified on a proportional basis using grade classification. This is why the table reflects a far greater number of elementary schools than any other grade classification. This decision was made to accurately reflect the universe of schools participating in Title I, and to create

natural partnerships among Reward Schools and Priority and Focus Schools in order to share best practices.

Please note that in order to avoid unnecessary disruption in schools, identifying information about schools has been redacted from Attachment 9. Upon approval of Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility Request, MDE will perform quality assurance on the MMR computation to ensure that the lists are completely accurate.

Minnesota will also perform outreach to identified schools in order to ease the transition to Priority and Focus status once the results are made public. MDE anticipates that this process of finalizing the lists and releasing them publicly will take approximately eight weeks.

The Reward Schools listed in Attachment 9 meet the Department's definition of Highest Achieving and Highest Progress. Evidence of this can be found in the Demonstration that Minnesota's List of Schools Meets the US Department of Education's Definition of Priority, Focus and Reward Schools. (Attachment 23)

2.C.iii Did the SEA Describe how the SEA will publically recognize and, if possible, reward the highest 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 LEA's and schools in designing its recognition, and where applicable, rewards?*

Minnesota believes the opportunity to identify Reward Schools is one of the most critical elements of its proposed system of recognition, accountability and support. The current AYP system is based mostly on sticks and lacks the carrots necessary to motivate schools to improve and set ambitious goals that go beyond the AMOs. Reward Schools are the carrot that an effective accountability system must have to motivate high achievement and identify the best practices of schools around the state.

The primary reward for schools will be public recognition. In consulting with stakeholders from schools and LEAs, MDE has gleaned that the most meaningful

incentive for schools is the opportunity to have their good work recognized. The SEA will work with LEAs to determine the best methods for publicly recognizing Reward Schools.

Proposed Recognition- At a minimum, Minnesota plans to hold an annual press conference to announce the list of Reward Schools, publish a list of Reward Schools on MDE's website, have the Governor or Commissioner of Education visit Reward Schools to congratulate the students and staff and present plaques or certificates to Reward Schools. LEAs have said that such steps would make the Reward School designation meaningful and motivate schools to set ambitious goals to reach Reward School status.

*Stakeholder Input -*A lack of state resources at the present time limits MDE's ability to provide additional rewards to Reward Schools, but over time MDE hopes to develop ways to provide financial and other incentives to Reward Schools. One way the MDE hopes to provide financial rewards is by securing a funding source, either through private donations or repurposing of state funds, to provide financial incentives to Reward Schools that are willing to partner with Priority or Focus Schools to share best practices.

Stakeholders from around the state have expressed support for this idea and principals and superintendents have expressed a willingness to participate in such partnerships if financial restitution was available for those Reward Schools willing to have personnel take time to work with Priority and Focus Schools. Experience has shown that collaboration between educators is one of the most effective ways to improve performance and create a better academic environment for students, so finding a way to provide financial incentives to help Reward Schools that are willing to share their best practices with other schools holds great promise for improving the academic achievement of schools statewide.

Another preference expressed by stakeholders and LEAs that will not require additional resources is to have Reward Schools audited so MDE can share with leaders and instructors at Reward Schools which of their practices are most effective. This audit would be provided at no cost to the Reward School or its LEA and could be used by the school to assess what it is doing well and how it could continue to improve. The results of the audit would also increase the capacity of MDE to assist other schools by highlighting practices that work best in promoting

high academic achievement. MDE would use the results of such audits to create an online clearinghouse of information on best practices that schools around the state could access.

2.D Priority Schools

2.D.i Did the SEA describe its methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as Priority Schools ?

Philosophy of Priority School Identification

To understand how Priority Schools are identified, it is important to first understand the identification of Priority Schools serves the purpose of identifying the lowest-performing schools so they can implement turnaround principles to fundamentally change the way they operate. It is critical that the methodology for identifying schools is comprehensive and has the necessary legitimacy to justify the severe sanctions they will be required to implement.

Every three years Minnesota will identify 5 percent of Title I schools with the lowest performance. Two groups will be included: those with the lowest MMRs and Tier I School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools that are implementing one of the four turnaround models.

They will take their designation seriously and make the necessary improvements to change the trajectory of the school. Furthermore, the measurements that are used to identify Priority Schools must provide those schools with data they can use to assess their own needs and set improvement goals. Finally, it is also important to ensure that the methodology for identifying the lowest-performing schools is consistent with the methodology for identifying the highest-performing schools so there is continuity within the accountability system.

Methodology

Minnesota plans to achieve these goals by identifying Priority Schools with the MMR. All schools in the state will be measured with this rating and every three years the bottom five percent of Title I schools will be identified as Priority Schools. The inaugural class of Priority Schools will be generated using graduation data from the 2009-10 school year and results from the statewide 2010-11 math and reading assessments.

This methodology achieves the goals of the state by accurately identifying those schools that are not only exhibiting low levels of proficiency, but are also failing to

achieve adequate levels of student growth, are contributing to the state's achievement gap by failing to improve the performance of lower performing subgroups, and are graduating a low percentage of students within four years.

Educators around Minnesota have been asking MDE to use growth for school accountability purposes. A methodology for identifying Priority Schools that includes student growth gives the system greater legitimacy and will create more buy-in for schools that are identified as Priority Schools. This is critical to the success of the system of recognition, accountability, and support because for any turnaround principles to be effective they must be implemented with fidelity. The methodology for identifying Priority Schools ensures that no school identified in this category can make the claim that they do not deserve to be in the Priority School category.

2.D.ii Does the SEA's request include a list of its Priority Schools? (Table 2)

We have included a table identifying Priority Schools (Attachment 9). This list does not disclose the identity of individual schools as the computation is based on preliminary impact data runs. Upon approval of the methodology by USDOE, Minnesota will begin the standard production process to create new annual statewide accountability statistics. The IT development team will use SQL programming to pull data from production warehouse sources creating full functional documentation. Quality assurance routines will be run to verify and validate the computational results. This is the standard methodological process for releasing any statewide high stakes education statistics to ensure validity and reliability of data.

a. Did the SEA identify a number of Priority Schools equal to at least five percent of its Title I schools?

The attached table (Attachment 9) identifies 48 Priority Schools. This number of schools represents approximately 5 percent of the state's Title I schools. In 2010-11, Minnesota had 842 Title I schools. Some of the attached documentation reflects a lower number of Title I schools in 2011-12, which reflects Title I applications that are still being processed by the state. Historically, Minnesota has had between 835 and 845 Title I schools. The number of Priority Schools we have

identified is greater than 5 percent because in generating the list, it was necessary to utilize a rounding technique that captured a greater number of schools than 5 percent.

Please note that in order to avoid unnecessary disruption in schools, identifying information about schools has been redacted from Attachment 9. Upon approval of Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility Request, MDE will perform quality assurance on the MMR computation to ensure that the lists are completely accurate. Minnesota will also perform outreach to identified schools in order to ease the transition to Priority and Focus status once the results are made public. MDE anticipates that this process of finalizing the lists and releasing them publicly will take approximately eight weeks.

Priority Schools, like Reward and Focus Schools, were identified on a proportional basis using grade classification. This is why the table reflects a far greater number of elementary schools than any other grade classification. This decision was made to accurately reflect the universe of schools participating in Title I, and to create natural partnerships among Reward Schools and Priority and Focus Schools in order to share best practices.

The Priority Schools listed in Attachment 9 meet the Department's definition of Most Persistently Low-Performing. Evidence of this can be found in the Demonstration that Minnesota's List of Schools Meets the US Department of Education's Definition of Priority, Focus and Reward Schools. (Attachment 23)

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?

Priority Schools will implement turnaround plans based on the turnaround principles outlined in the ESEA Flexibility guidance. MDE will create diagnostic value-added profiles for Priority School to help identify the root causes of their performance, assess their academic needs, and monitor student improvement. Priority Schools will also have the opportunity to partner with Reward Schools to share best practices and collaborate on school improvement activities. To achieve turnaround, Priority Schools will be required to set aside 20 percent of their Title I

funds for state-approved school improvement activities. These funds must be earmarked in a Priority School's turnaround plan to ensure that resources are being directed to the specific aspects of a school's plan. The approval of a Priority School's Title I application will be dependent on the approval of their turnaround plan, and the earmarked funds within that plan. Only activities such as those outlined in this section that are tied to turnaround principles will be approved as uses of the 20 percent set-aside. The turnaround efforts of Priority Schools will be supported by MDE and the state's newly-reformed Statewide System of Support (SSOS).

These efforts will build on the improvements Minnesota has already made to its system of supports for school improvement. Striving to meet the NCLB requirements, MDE's historical role of support to AYP schools has expanded into a more proactive model of technical assistance and support at the district and school level. Historically focused on promulgating regulations, setting and developing policy, disseminating funds and collecting data, MDE is now being held to a different standard for supporting schools in the current "age of accountability." The capacity of SEAs to manage and provide compliance oversight to all schools in need of improvement has been hampered by an archaic model of oversight that has proven to be ineffective in increasing student achievement, makes incorporating change cumbersome, and has become fiscally impossible to sustain with the ever-decreasing fiscal resources at the SEA level.

The proposed system (Minnesota School Improvement and Support Model) will feature a tiered system of support to identified schools, complete with a differentiated coaching model to address specific strategies that schools should undertake to improve. Under the high-stakes accountability systems that are prevalent in education, the state's role increasingly includes direct support and technical assistance to districts and individual schools to assist them in building capacity for meaningful change that will lead to improved academic outcomes. This level of support has been evident in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program where MDE not only disseminates funds to the eligible schools but also provides oversight, monitoring and direct technical assistance to schools to implement one of the program models. With minimal resources at the agency level, MDE staff will leverage Title I resources to create regional support centers around the state that will provide the basic components of the school improvement process: a comprehensive needs assessment, data analysis to

determine root causes of the school's problem, alignment of the operational curriculum with state standards, and identification of specific evidence-based instructional strategies that are learned in professional learning teams and subsequently implemented in the classroom with ongoing formative assessment to determine the extent of student learning and/or subsequent re-teaching. This is all supported with instructional leadership that is sensitive to and learned in the specific needs of the students in their school.

This is a shift in Minnesota's SSOS from the traditional organization built around categorical funding streams, content areas, monitoring and compliance, to one that is organized around school improvement and educational leadership. The SSOS is at the core of Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility proposal, and will be the driver of change in Priority Schools.

School Improvement Plans

It is the expectation that ALL schools in the state should develop an actionable school improvement plan that is based on the most recent data and implemented with fidelity under the auspices of the LEA.

In our proposed system, all Priority Schools will develop a detailed action plan on how they will address the specific root causes of the school's identification, whether it is based on a lack of student growth, an achievement gap with a specific subgroup, overall student proficiency, low graduation rates, or all of these issues. These plans will be submitted to MDE through the SSOS and reviewed for fidelity with an established set of action standards (see Attachment 22) and will be the basis of the technical support and improvement efforts at the building level. The regional staff in the SSOS will provide assistance in any and all aspects of the school improvement planning process described above.

The regional staff will then work with a cross-agency MDE team comprised of MDE staff members from content standards, EL, Special Ed, school improvement specialists, implementation science, Title I accountability programs, and any other necessary programmatic focuses to determine the most appropriate and impactful course of action for each and every Priority School. The regional staff

will then collaborate with the LEAs to implement the plan and provide support, and resources for the work.

MDE will work with Priority Schools and their data teams to identify goals that are differentiated to their specific student needs (“contextualized goals”) identified by the student data and needs assessment. These measurements will be monitored by the Priority School’s LEA through the use of implementation rubrics based on the best practices in implementation sciences.

Building principals will be the leaders of the turnaround efforts within Priority Schools. In order to improve school capacity to implement turnaround plans, principals of Priority Schools will be given tools and training to monitor the progress of the work including monthly instructional leader checklists that ensure fidelity. The SSOS will work with Priority School principals on best practices for turnaround schools and LEAs will support them with resources and opportunities for growth. Another example of principal support provided by the SSOS is a professional growth rubric for principals of turnaround schools. (See Attachment 21)

The proposed support model will be implemented consistently across all Priority Schools to ensure that there are not discrepancies in the type or duration of interventions that schools are incorporating at any given time. Each Priority School will go through data analysis, goal-setting, development and implementation of professional learning teams, incorporation of an effective educator evaluation system, curriculum alignment, instructional time audit, and fidelity of plan implementation.

District leadership involvement in the building leadership teams is paramount, and the action plans should speak specifically to how the LEA will oversee plan implementation. The LEAs for Priority Schools must complete an LEA-wide needs assessment to provide direction and context for the Priority School’s school improvement plan. The LEA must also use the results of the needs assessment to create a plan to address any weaknesses in the district’s ability to implement improvement plans within Priority Schools. These plans could include the identification of a need for a staff member dedicated to data analysis, or the designation of an LEA-level liaison between the LEA, MDE, the SSOS and the Priority School. The nature of an LEA’s plan will vary depending on their existing

capacity to lead turnaround efforts and the number of Priority and Focus Schools in the LEA. Minnesota statute requires all LEAs to have Educational Improvement Plans, which will serve as the foundation for the process of LEA assessment and improvement planning. LEAs will be required to update their Educational Improvement Plans based on the results of the needs assessment with the goal of improving their capacity to turn their Priority Schools around. Title I funds will be deferred from LEAs that fail to comply with the school improvement requirements at Priority Schools until they have taken positive steps such as submitting a turnaround plan, completing a Title I budget that reflects the priorities in the turnaround plan, or begun implementing activities included in the turnaround plan. Mandatory set-asides for state-approved district improvement activities may be put in place if LEAs with Priority Schools persistently fail to improve student achievement. These set-asides would be linked to an LEA improvement plan that could include the identification of a need for a staff member dedicated to data analysis, or the designation of an LEA-level liaison between the LEA, MDE, the SSOS and the Priority School. The nature of an LEA's plan will vary depending on their existing capacity to lead turnaround efforts and the number of Priority and Focus Schools in the LEA.

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;

Performance Reviews to Establish Track Record - MDE will work with each Priority School's LEA to determine if the current principal is an effective leader and has proven to be effective in improving student achievement in a turnaround effort. MDE will require all Priority Schools to adopt an MDE-approved principal evaluation tool that will be utilized to review the performance of the current principal and serve as the basis to replace the principal if the performance measures are not met.

MDE will provide support to Priority School principals by incorporating a turnaround leadership component into the technical assistance provided to the LEA to ensure ongoing measurement of the principal's growth as a turnaround leader. This support will be initiated by MDE staff and a contracted vendor with a track record of providing support to turnaround principals.

Operational Flexibility- Priority School principals will be required to provide regular formative data reports on student achievement to the LEA and MDE to monitor student achievement over time. MDE will work with LEA leadership to increase the operational flexibility for the principal as needed to meet the building's identified needs.

(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;

All Priority Schools will be required to implement a standards-based teacher evaluation system for all teachers in alignment with the recently adopted teacher evaluation legislation. The system should require three formal observations for all teachers with pre- and post-conferences to provide ongoing coaching and performance review.

The principal in each building will also be required to implement other strategies to monitor and measure teacher effectiveness such as goal-based walk through, teacher sharing of student work portfolios, and other measures of teacher growth. Based on the results of the evaluations, building leaders will make relevant staffing decisions to ensure that teachers are as effective as possible given the needs of turnaround schools.

Each Priority School will develop a School Improvement Plan based on a comprehensive needs assessment and, within the plan, include a detailed professional development program. This program should be grounded in the

practice of professional learning communities (PLCs) providing 90 minutes of job-embedded professional development each week to promote teacher learning of need-based instructional strategies and collaboration around student work and achievement.

Professional Learning Communities - PLCs are to be led by identified teacher leaders trained in PLC facilitation and implementation. Principals are an integral component of the PLCs and teacher learning which will be monitored through the teacher evaluations and ongoing observations.

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

Improvement plans will incorporate structures within the PLCs to allow for teacher collaboration time. This will require the school to revisit the weekly schedule and teacher contract to ensure this time is provided.

Increased and extended learning time for students will be encouraged contingent on the completion of a time audit to measure the amount of instructional time that is currently in place for the core subjects and explore possibilities to increase the length of instructional time for all students.

Extended learning opportunities for high-need students should be explored to find researched-based models that can be implemented. Extended learning opportunities should be based on an extension of the core curriculum and instruction and include a system of ongoing measurement of student achievement to determine the effectiveness of the model.

(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;

MDE will work with the LEAs to ensure that the core curriculum of the school is closely aligned with the Minnesota State Academic Content Standards through a review process of each building's operational curriculum. Curriculum audits,

mapping and alignment strategies will be part of the technical assistance delivered through the statewide system of support (SSOS). As part of the technical support provided to the district, the professional development that is identified as part of the school's standards-alignment will be provided by MDE staff or resource staff directed by MDE content staff.

Priority Schools' LEAs will also be required to audit any Pre-Kindergarten programming provided by the LEA to ensure that the instruction is high-quality and aligned with K-12 academic standards. If the LEA does not provide Pre-Kindergarten programming, it may choose to use a portion of its school improvement set-aside in order to do so. If Pre-Kindergarten programming is a strategy that fits within a Priority School's turnaround model, it would be considered an approved activity and could be funded with the funds earmarked for implementing turnaround principles.

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

The technical assistance provided through the SSOS will include the use of the state student data repository to mine, disaggregate and analyze the summative student data for the respective buildings. This data will be used to diagnose the areas of student achievement that need to be addressed as part of the needs assessment process and to set goals for student learning. Priority Schools will also be provided with value-added diagnostic tools to identify student needs, plan appropriate instruction and measure progress.

Improvement plans must identify staff who will work directly on data analysis to provide the principal and instructors with data to guide decisions on curriculum, resources and staffing. Technical assistance and training will be provided to ensure that designated staff who are working with data have the knowledge and technical capability to provide high-quality data analysis.

In addition, the PLCs will focus their work around formative data collection at the classroom level (See a. ii above). Student work will be analyzed and compared in on a regular basis to monitor individual student progress toward becoming proficient in the Minnesota State Academic Content Standards. This process of

formative assessment will be standardized through the technical assistance model of the SSOS and monitored on a regular basis by MDE and the LEA.

(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

As part of the school's needs assessment, factors impacting school safety and discipline will be analyzed to determine if the school has the structural components in place to maintain a learning environment that will encourage learning, embrace diversity and provide a nurturing environment for all students. As a result of the needs assessment, MDE will provide guidance to the LEA about what structures and/or personnel would need to be implemented in order for students to have an appropriate learning environment.

In addition to assessing the school environment, Priority Schools will also be provided with an audit of learning time missed as a result of disciplinary actions. MDE analysis has shown that low-performing schools often have higher rates of days missed as a result of student suspension. LEAs in Minnesota that have explored alternatives to suspension have seen observed gains both in academic performance and school environment indicators. Priority Schools will need to explore the viability of such options.

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

These schools must go beyond the term, "family involvement." They will need to explore and implement true engagement activities for parents and the community. Parents should be involved in the curriculum review processes, provide insight and feedback into what makes a safe school environment for their children, and assist in the classroom and at school events to become part of the school community. Schools that have difficulty engaging parents will need to develop strategies to reach out to families and meet them "on their turf" and address topics from their perspective. The Statewide System of Support (SSOS)

will provide resources and strategies to enhance the school's parent and community engagement practices.

Schools need to reach out to the greater community to engage members in school events such as inviting service clubs and businesses into the school to assist with parent nights, student sports or music and theater performances. These "points of engagement" for community members are critical. Schools with significant minority populations will need to work directly with representatives of those populations to ensure parent and community engagement. Finally, each school will be provided guidance in creating service opportunities for students within the greater community to provide relevant service and build strong bonds to community members and entities.

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 ;

At the foundation of Priority Schools' instructional programming will be CORE instruction for all students – aligned to standards and taught in a culturally responsive manner. Drawing on the expertise of the SSOS and MDE content specialists, Priority Schools will strengthen the instructional core for all teachers for equitable access. Through needs assessment and data analysis, teachers will identify exactly which standards students are having difficulty in meeting. This will be done through ongoing classroom formative assessment and subsequent analysis in the job-embedded professional learning teams where strategies are explored and subsequently implemented in the classroom and measured again for student success.

Educators need to learn to build their understanding of content knowledge, standards, and pedagogy as well as the capacity to apply evidence-based instructional practices demonstrated to be effective in increasing student achievement and functional performance for ALL students. Regional staff will work to enhance instructional leaders' capacity to support, promote, lead and sustain professional learning that improves both teaching practices and learning outcomes for ALL students with disabilities.

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

This system will be rooted in strong leadership and effective teachers as well as appropriate use of data and improved instruction and student support. The system will link classroom instruction to a cohesive support network, resulting in detectable instructional changes in every classroom and measureable teacher and student achievement growth. The plan will include:

1. Strong Leadership supported by:

- Effective strategies to recruit, replace and/or retain skilled staff
 - Turnaround leader selection processes
 - Turnaround leader competencies
- Rigorous evaluation system
- Effective evaluation/observation
- Operational flexibility
 - Provide criteria to recruit, screen, select and evaluate external providers
- Effective governance structure
 - Leadership team development

2. Effective Teachers supported by:

- Effective strategies to recruit, replace and/or retain skilled staff
 - Turnaround teacher selection processes
 - Turnaround teacher competencies
- Rigorous evaluation system
 - Effective evaluation/observation

3. Appropriate Data Use supported by:

- Continuous use of student data to improve instruction
 - Systemic needs assessment support
 - Root/cause analysis

- Setting effective SMART goals
- Focused intervention planning
- Classroom formative assessment support (provide feedback to students and teachers and increase student involvement in learning)
- Benchmark assessment support (measure student growth of the standards-based instructional program)

4. Improved Instruction supported by:

- Increased learning time
 - Maximize the effectiveness of current instructional time
Link increased time to core content
 - Extended-day learning opportunities
- Research-based, vertically-aligned MN standards-aligned instructional program
 - Standards alignment supported with rigorous instruction
 - Formative instruction support
- Professional learning communities
 - Protocols
 - Time and resources

5. Student Supports Strengthened by:

- Providing social-emotional and community-oriented services/supports
- Engaging parents and community to support student achievement

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

Priority Schools will be expected to address the needs of specific subgroups, including ELs and students with disabilities, in their improvement plans. The SSOS will work with schools to disaggregate data with the goal of identifying subgroups that need intensive academic supports.

Once particular subgroups are identified, the SSOS will assist the school and LEA in identifying strategies that have a record of success in improving the academic achievement of students in those subgroups. Schools can draw on the best practices identified at Reward Schools with similar demographics. Schools will also be expected to work with the community to identify culturally-relevant academic programming to address the needs of lower-performing subgroups. Schools with low-performing ELs and students with disabilities will review the curriculum and programming used for these students to identify flaws and steps that can be taken to address them.

ELs and Students with Disabilities

SSOS staff will work with MDE staff to tailor the technical assistance needed for teachers of ELs and students with disabilities in order to access and learn the core curriculum through the use of strategic instructional strategies introduced by MDE EL and Special education staff, and identified experts in the field of instructional strategies for classroom teachers.

These strategies could include (but are not limited to):

- Oral Language development – utilizing explicit teacher talk, dramatizing, books on tape, etc.
- Read-Alouds – carefully selecting books in a variety of genres, modeling phrasing, etc.
- Shared reading – demonstrating key concepts, following up with books made by students, etc.
- Small group reading instruction – assessing authentically and frequently, etc.
- Think-Alouds – modeling differentiated reading and writing strategies, modeling problem solving, etc.
- Shared writing – teaching explicit writing strategies, demonstrating revision, editing, and conventions,

- Process writing (Writer's Workshop) – conferencing with students individually, allowing self- selection of topics, etc.
- Independent writing,
- Phonemic awareness – providing opportunities throughout literacy practice, studying high-frequency words.

Technical assistance and support in Special Education and EL supports educators in the basic foundation of instruction by building educators' capacity in evidence-based instructional practices and leadership to meet the needs of ALL diverse learners. These students need not only access, but also attainment of the content information as delineated by state standards.

Technical assistance to support quality instruction of ELs involves providing support to educators to build capacity in evidence-based practices to meet the needs of English language learners in literacy, mathematics and other content areas. Professional learning outcomes that apply to teachers and leaders include the following:

- Apply deep understanding of Minnesota English Language arts standards including the descriptors for each of the five levels of language acquisition, and the relationship of the ELA standards to other instructional standards.
- Understand and apply effective instructional practices for ELs by gaining awareness of the difference between strategies that are effective for all learners and those differentially beneficial to ELs.
- Build support structures among teachers and leaders that enable continuous implementation of effective program models and instructional strategies for ELs.

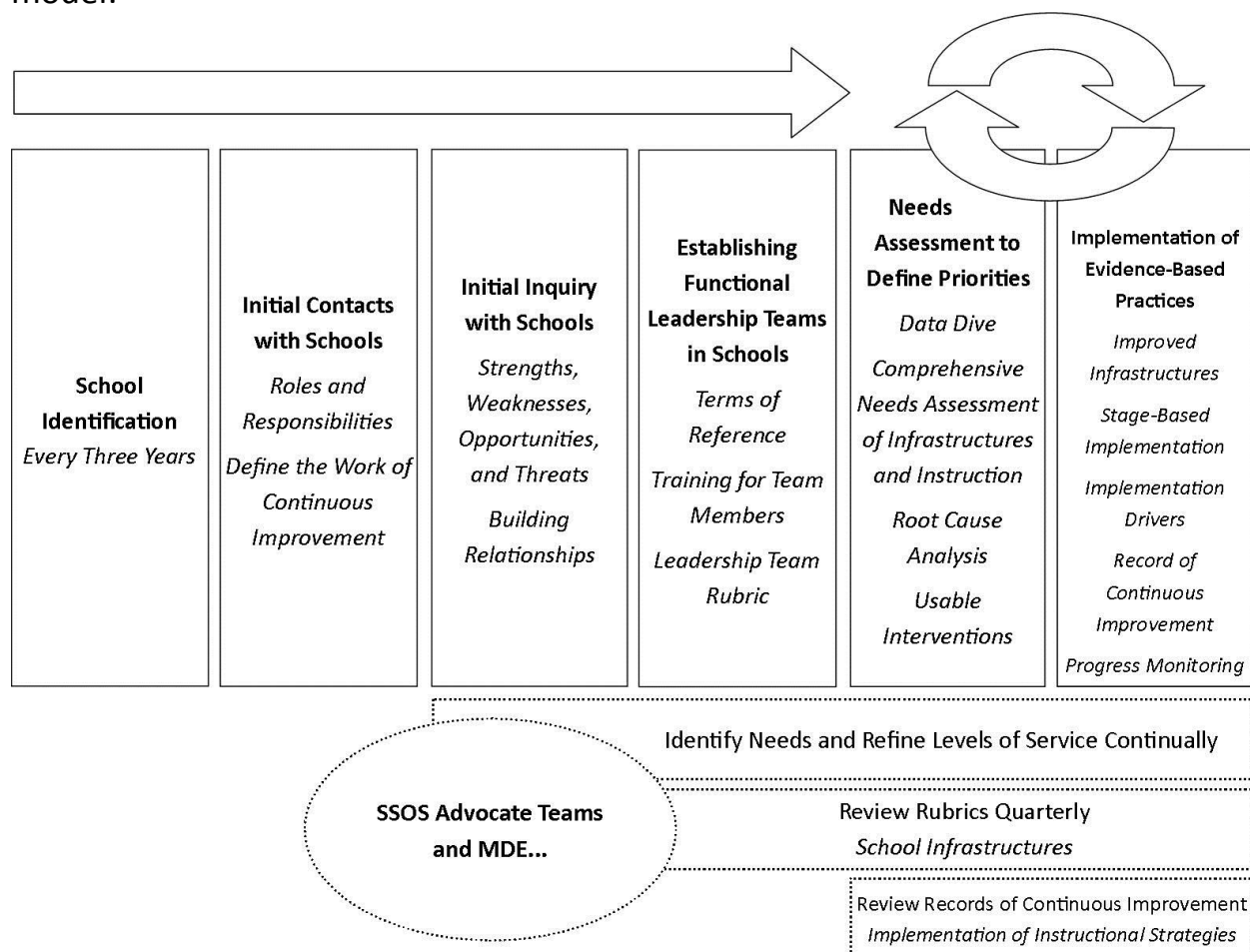
For students with disabilities, schools need to develop standards-based IEPs for special education students. The SSOS will provide teachers with support that will focus on specific strategies to address the student needs. The strategies listed above for EL students may be applicable to the needs of special education students as well, depending on their specific disability.

2015 Waiver Renewal

Minnesota identified 44 priority schools, 85 focus schools and 27 focus graduation schools in fall 2014 using data from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. As outlined in Minnesota's original waiver, priority schools represent the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools on the MMR and focus schools are the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools on the FR. Additionally, focus graduation schools are Title I high schools with six-year graduation rates, averaged over the most recent three years, below 60 percent. Attachment 4 from waiver renewal provides the lists of priority and focus schools that began implementation in 2014-2015.

Consistent with waiver requirements, all priority schools began implementation of interventions aligned with all of the turnaround principles in the 2014-2015 school year and will implement these interventions through the 2016-2017 school year. If a priority school meets exit criteria, as outlined in our original waiver request, they are eligible to exit their status.

Interventions in priority schools continue to follow the plan in our original approved Waiver request with additional interventions added according to the following model:



An initial inquiry process has been added to our support model for the new cohorts of priority schools. This process allows SEA teams of advocates in our Statewide System of Support (SSOS) to conduct a structured, facilitated audit of school structures and instructional practices to inform support and the first stages of school planning. Our new model also includes an increased emphasis and supports for standards-based educational systems. The initial model focused primarily on improving classroom instructional practices.

Initial contacts and the initial inquiry process have been completed in all schools, and schools have identified leadership teams. SEA teams through our Regional Centers of Excellence have facilitated data reviews and needs assessments, and schools have begun stage-based implementation of evidence-based instructional practices through their Records of Continuous Improvement. Records were collected in December 2014 and have been reviewed by SEA teams to inform further support and school-based implementation.

In addition, the following new processes have been planned and initial implementation has begun:

1. Leadership team training for priority and focus school leadership teams
2. Facilitated data presentations and a data review process for schools
3. Best practice rubrics in the areas of school leadership, learning teams, family engagement, and the Record of Continuous Improvement
4. A continuous improvement toolkit that warehouses and organizes school resources and tools for continuous improvement
5. A comprehensive program review of the supports offered to schools
6. The addition of equity and data specialists on SEA teams supporting schools

Support for Economically Disadvantaged Students

The continuous improvement support for priority and focus schools from the statewide system of support (SSOS) in Minnesota's Regional Centers of Excellence is rooted in data mining and needs assessment in order to craft a focused improvement plan that addresses student needs and their root causes. Part of the data mining processes and resulting root cause analysis focuses on disaggregating data in order to look at achievement gaps and the needs of groups of students.

Economically disadvantaged students are specifically identified as one group of students studied in the process. In addition, needs assessment tools available and used by schools at this step of the continuous improvement process include inventories to assess the engagement rates of economically disadvantaged students, programming and instructional time available to these students, and the equitable assignment of excellent teachers to classes and programs serving these students.

Once gaps and needs of students, including those of economically disadvantaged students, are identified the SSOS assists schools with identifying evidence-based strategies that have a record of success in improving the academic achievement of students in particular groups. Schools can draw on effective practices in research or in Minnesota reward and celebration schools that serve populations of economically disadvantaged students.

Resulting improvement plans from schools are expected to address the needs of specific groups of student, including economically disadvantaged students. The progress of these students is tracked using data identified as part of the improvement planning process to ensure that supports in the improvement plan are implemented with fidelity and are having an impact on student learning. Since SSOS teams work exclusively in Title I schools, the SSOS also works continuously with MDE's Student Support Division to assist schools with aligning their Title I funds and plans with their continuous improvement plan. Student Support staff attend SSOS trainings and meetings to ensure communications and alignment of supports and programming for schools meeting the needs of economically disadvantaged students.

Many secondary schools also utilize the Minnesota Early Indicator and Response System (MEIRS) to provide a snapshot of students in grade 6 and grade 9 who are at increased risk of not completing high school in four years. SSOS training provides information about the screening process used to identify students as being at risk; the process to access the district data; using the data to identify and engage students in school and learning; and using the data to match appropriate supports to student needs. This includes data on students who are economically disadvantaged, those having low achievement, as well as other areas.

Schools identified as Focus based on low graduation rates are engaged with MDE in focused work around better meeting the needs of the state's most challenging students and increasing the number of students receiving a high school diploma.

These schools serve high percentages of economically disadvantaged students that come with significant barriers to graduation such as student mobility, incarceration, mental health issues, special education needs, chemical dependency and homelessness. MDE is working strategically with these schools around areas that will break down barriers and put students on a path to high school graduation, including: credit recovery programming, assimilating incarcerated youth back into schools, concurrent enrollment programs, mental health supports and resources from Department of Human Services, support for homeless students, frameworks for credit transfers from these schools to other schools and transition of special education students between schools.

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

MDE will develop an ongoing system of accountability for the Priority Schools that will measure fidelity of implementation of the interventions based on the Minnesota Common Principles of Effective Practice (CPEP). In addition, MDE will engage in ongoing monitoring of the schools PLCs, the teacher observation system and the formative data gathering by the building to measure student achievement. These elements have all been incorporated into the SSOS described above.

Priority Schools will be identified for three-year periods. The period of identification is based on Minnesota's experience with turnaround models in SIG Schools. In those schools, experience and data has shown that turnaround is not a one-year process, and it is rarely a two-year process. It typically takes three years before meaningful improvements can be measured. We anticipate that the same will be true at Priority Schools. However, we have created exit criteria that would allow Priority Schools to exit their status after two years if they move out of the bottom 25 percent of schools for two consecutive years. This would represent a substantial improvement in performance, and would be indicative of a rare case in which two years was the appropriate time period for the turnaround model to be implemented.

Upon exiting Priority Status through the exit criteria, a school will continue to be monitored for the duration of the three-year period to ensure that it does not revert to lower performance. Priority Schools that have exited their status prior to

the end of the three-year period will be expected to draft and submit a school improvement plan. The SSOS will provide technical assistance and support with this improvement plan, which will need to identify interventions that could further alter the school's trajectory toward greater success. The SSOS will continue to provide technical assistance in implementing these plans, and will monitor the school for fidelity. In the event that a school regresses, the SSOS and MDE will work with the school to identify areas where improvement is needed.

Because the expectation for Priority Schools is to improve their performance within three years, those schools that are unable to do so will face stronger sanctions. In the event that a Priority School finishes its three-year period of identification only to be re-identified as a Priority School by finishing in the bottom five percent of schools, the school will be subject to restructuring. Restructuring options will be similar to those currently in place under NCLB.

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?*

MDE's support model described above will be implemented consistently across all Priority Schools to ensure that there are not discrepancies in the type and duration of interventions that schools are incorporating at any given time. Each school will go through the data analysis, goal-setting, PLCs and teacher observation system implementation, curriculum alignment, instructional time audit and determination of professional development goals and focus for each year in a systematic manner with oversight by SSOS facilitators.

By applying for the NCLB waiver in November of 2011, MDE will have ample time to lay out the expectation and processes for Priority Schools so that when the waiver is approved, the identified schools can be contacted in the spring of 2012 and planning can commence to ensure an effective and efficient implementation of the intervention in the fall of 2012. All Priority Schools will implement all of the turnaround principles by no later than the start of the 2014-15 school year.

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?

Any exit criteria for Priority Schools have to be meaningful enough to ensure that a school that exits Priority status has permanently altered its trajectory. With that standard in mind, Minnesota will only allow Priority Schools that finish outside of the bottom quartile of Title I schools statewide for two consecutive years, using performance on the MMR as the criteria.

Sufficient Time

Minnesota's experiences in working with schools in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program have shown that meaningful turnaround takes at least two years. Therefore, a school identified as one of the most-persistently low-performing in the state must work with MDE for at least two years to permanently change direction and achieve genuine success in turning around.

It is clear from the preliminary impact data that MDE has examined that the difference between the bottom five percent of performers on the MMR and those above of the bottom quartile is such that two consecutive years above the bottom quartile will be evidence of genuine improvement for a Priority School. Because the MMR is a comprehensive and robust measurement tool, in order to move up in the statewide rankings enough to move from the bottom five percent to above the bottom quartile will be an indicator that the school has made systemic improvements.

Consistency

Using this methodology provides consistency across the accountability system. The selection process for Priority Schools is normative, so it is only appropriate that the exit process should be normative as well. Schools are identified as Priority Schools based on their performance relative to other Title I schools. Similarly, Priority Schools should be exited from their status if their performance relative to other Title I schools improves substantially over the course of two years. Also, with the 25 percentile being used as an indicator for continuous

improvement, using this line as the cutoff for exiting Priority Status provide clear benchmarks for all schools.

Resources

The logic behind selecting a small group of Priority Schools is that with limited state and federal resources, the most focused attention should be paid to those schools that are truly at the bottom of the state in terms of academic performance. By allowing Priority Schools that move out of the bottom quartile of Title I schools to direct their own improvement efforts, MDE can maintain a focus on those schools that are truly most in need of support.

Meaningful

The difference between the bottom five percent of MMR performers those outside of the bottom quartile is such that two consecutive years outside the bottom quartile will be evidence of genuine improvement for a Priority School. Attachment 24 demonstrates what will be required of Priority Schools to exit their status.

Two Exceptions

Two exceptions will be made for the exit criteria. The first is directed at Priority Schools identified because of their status as SIG schools. Minnesota currently has 19 schools implementing one of the four SIG turnaround models. These schools are automatically identified as Priority Schools. However, because these schools will have been implementing the turnaround models for at least three years after the first year under the waiver, they will have the opportunity to exit Priority status if their performance on the MMR during their final year of SIG status puts them above the bottom 25 percent of Title I schools. This will allow MDE to focus resources on those schools that are most in need of support rather than to spread resources more thinly to include SIG schools that have already made real strides in changing direction.

The second exception applies to all Priority Schools. Any Priority School that attains Reward School status can immediately exit Priority status. Because the criteria for the Priority and Reward Schools is the same, moving from the bottom five percent of Title I schools to the top 15 percent would be an indication of remarkable progress. Any school that could achieve this type of progress will have

clearly made the necessary changes to alter the trajectory of the school in a way that ensures sustained improvement.

2015 Waiver Renewal

Schools that remained in priority status have been identified as schools that, after implementing interventions for three school years, have not made sufficient progress to exit priority status. The SEA has three strategies to ensure increased rigor of interventions and supports in these schools.

1. Districts must annually submit reports to the SEA under Minnesota's World's Best Workforce legislation to articulate outcomes, goals, stakeholder engagement, and supports for schools and teachers. These reports are reviewed, and LEAs that are not making progress are subject to funding being used by the SEA to support improvement.
2. An increased role by the LEA in partnership with SEA teams has been defined to monitor and provide accountability for improvement in re-identified schools.
3. The SEA has proposed and is seeking legislative funding to add positions for supporting schools and to expand the number of SEA teams in order to increase the intensity of support for re-identified schools.

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?

Philosophy of Focus School Identification

The identification of Focus Schools is meant to shine a bright light on the achievement gap while identifying Title I schools that are most in need of support in improving the academic performance of low-performing subgroups. Some of these schools will have wide within-school achievement gaps, a subgroup or subgroups that are falling behind students around the state or both.

By identifying Focus Schools based on schools' contributions to the statewide achievement gap, the state can incentivize schools to thoughtfully and aggressively address the academic performance of subgroups that have typically performed poorly on the statewide math and reading assessments. For those schools that are unable to promote higher achievement by these subgroups, the identification as a Focus School is an opportunity for the state to intervene and put practices into place that can assist the school in addressing their specific problems.

Methodology – Modified Proficiency and Growth Gap

Focus Schools are those with specific achievement gap issues. They will be identified once every three years using a modified version of the MMR called the Focus Rating centered exclusively on lower-performing subgroups. The rating will measure growth and proficiency for the following sub-groups:

- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian,
- American Indian,
- English learners
- Free/Reduced Price Lunch
- Special Education

Focus Rating- Proficiency Status

To identify Focus Schools, proficiency is calculated using the approved AYP Proficiency index model. However, unlike the proficiency index model, the focus rating will only allow schools to earn points based on the percentage of just the seven groups noted above that make AYP. This percentage is weighted based on the number of students in of each group. A more detailed discussion of this calculation can be found in Attachment 15 or in section 2.A.1.a.

Focus Rating – Growth Gap Reduction

The growth gap measure used in the Focus rating measures achievement gap reduction measurement used in the Focus Rating is the same as the achievement gap reduction domain in the MMR. A description of the methodology for calculating this domain can be found in 2.A.i.a.

Points for proficiency and growth gap reduction are summed and divided by the total possible points to generate a combined percentage of points for each school. The bottom 10 percent of Title I schools on these combined measurements that have not already been identified as Priority Schools are designated as Focus Schools. Once the list is complete, Title I schools identified as Focus Schools for graduation rate purposes are added in and an equal number of schools from the original Focus School list are removed so the resulting number of Focus Schools is equal to 10 percent of Title I schools. Based on the number of Title I schools in 2011 the attached list includes 86 Focus Schools.

Title I schools with Graduation Rates Under 60 Percent.

In addition to schools contributing to the achievement gap, Title I high schools with graduation rates of less than 60 percent will also be identified as Focus Schools. Schools that are not graduating at least 60 percent of their students need to identify the root causes of the problem and address them in ways that work for their student population. Identifying those schools with graduation rates of less than 60 percent as Focus Schools incentivizes schools with low graduation rates to address the problem and allows the state to identify schools most in need of support.

For the purposes of identifying Focus Schools due to graduation rates of 60 percent or less, Minnesota will use a six-year adjusted cohort rate methodology,

pending final federal approval of this methodology. Minnesota is currently in the process of earning final approval for this methodology from the US Department of Education. In early January 2012, Minnesota submitted revised graduation rate calculation specifications to meet the requirements of the US Department of Education. MDE anticipates approval of this latest submission in the near future. The attached list reflects the six-year adjusted cohort rate but would be altered to reflect the four-year rate if the state's six-year methodology has not been approved before the ESEA Flexibility Request is granted.

The six-year adjusted cohort rate would be used in order to generate a list of schools that are truly failing to graduate a high enough percentage of students. Minnesota is fortunate to have a number of charter schools that operate in a manner similar to Alternative Learning Programs. The charter schools work exclusively with students who at risk for dropping out. While their four-year graduation rates may not exceed 60 percent because they are working with students who are often multiple grades behind their cohort, this is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the school's success in graduating students. Using the six-year rate allows the state to avoid misidentifying schools that have unique situations.

The state also looks at three years' worth of data in determining graduation rates for the purpose of identifying Focus Schools. Only those schools with a three-year average of less than 60 percent on the six-year adjusted cohort graduation rate are identified as Focus Schools. This protects against misidentifying small schools with wide statistical variations in graduation rate from year-to-year.

This methodology for identifying Focus Schools achieves the goals of closing the achievement gap, identifying schools that are contributing to the state's achievement gap so they can work with the statewide system of supports (SSOS) to address their situation, and identifying so-called dropout factories so they can implement plans to improve their graduation rates. Using this methodology, the state can accurately diagnose problems within schools and incentivize improvement

2.E.ii Did the SEA include a list of its Focus Schools? (Table 2)

We have included a table identifying preliminary Focus Schools (Attachment 9). This list does not disclose the identity of individual schools as the computation is based on preliminary impact data runs. Upon approval of the methodology by USDOE, Minnesota will begin the standard production process to create new annual statewide accountability statistics. The IT development team will use SQL programming to pull data from production warehouse sources creating full functional documentation. Quality assurance routines will be run to verify and validate the computational results. This is the standard methodological process for releasing any statewide high stakes education statistics to ensure validity and reliability of data.

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

The attached table (Attachment 9) identifies 86 Focus Schools. This number of schools represents approximately 10 percent of the state's Title I schools. In 2010-11, Minnesota had 842 Title I schools. Some of the attached documentation reflects a lower number of Title I schools in 2011-12, which reflects Title I applications that are still being processed by the state. Historically, Minnesota has had between 835 and 845 Title I schools.

Focus Schools, like Reward and Priority Schools, were identified on a proportional basis using grade classification. This is why the table reflects a far greater number of elementary schools than any other grade classification. This decision was made to accurately reflect the universe of schools participating in Title I, and to create natural partnerships among Reward Schools and Priority and Focus Schools in order to share best practices.

Graduation Rates- Of the 85 Focus Schools, 3 schools are identified based solely on their graduation rate being below 60 percent. As stated in 2.E.i., Title I schools were identified for graduation rates below 60 percent if the three-year average of their six-year graduation rate was below 60 percent. There were 8 such schools in Minnesota with enough students included in their six-year cohorts (at least 20) to be statistically significant, 3 of which were not identified as Priority or Focus Schools based on the other criteria. The other five schools with graduation rates

below 60 percent were identified as Priority Schools. Three of these schools were identified due to their status as SIG schools, while two were identified based on their MMR.

- 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?**

As described above, the Focus Ranking and Focus graduation rate both use student data from multiple years, including proficiency on the statewide assessments. Please see Attachment 9 for a graphical summary of measures that were used to identify Focus Schools. Additionally, please see Attachment 16 for a ~~summary~~ summary of the functional requirements of calculating achievement and growth gaps. Adjustments will be made to this document to reflect changes associated with the approval of this Request.

Please note that in order to avoid unnecessary disruption in schools, identifying information about schools has been redacted from Attachment 9. Upon approval of Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility Request, MDE will perform quality assurance on the MMR computation to ensure that the lists are completely accurate. Minnesota will also perform outreach to identified schools in order to ease the transition to Priority and Focus status once the results are made public. MDE anticipates that this process of finalizing the lists and releasing them publicly will take approximately eight weeks.

The Focus Schools listed in Attachment 9 meet the Department's definition of Focus Schools as those that contribute the most to the state's achievement gap, as well as Title I high schools with graduation rates of less than 60 percent. Evidence of this can be found in the Demonstration that Minnesota's List of Schools Meets the US Department of Education's Definition of Priority, Focus and Reward Schools. (Attachment 23)

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?

The SSOS as described in the previous section (2.D.iii) will also have the responsibility of providing the technical assistance and support to the identified Focus Schools. The SSOS facilitators will work with Focus Schools and their LEAs to identify the needs of the school based on the issue that caused the school to be identified. This will involve interventions tailored to the needs of subgroups failing to meet proficiency and growth expectations, and interventions aimed at improving graduation rates. MDE will work with advocacy organizations around the state to ensure that the SSOS incorporates culturally-relevant and targeted practices. Interventions will take into consideration the cultural, social and emotional levels of the students served. To close achievement gaps and improve graduation rates, Focus Schools will be required to set aside 20 percent of their Title I funds for state-approved school improvement activities. These funds must be earmarked in a Focus School's school improvement plan to ensure that resources are being directed to the specific aspects of a school's plan. The approval of a Focus School's Title I application will be dependent on the approval of their improvement plan, and the earmarked funds within that plan. Only activities such as those outlined in this section that are tied to interventions for the subgroups for which Focus Schools were identified will be approved as uses of the 20 percent set-aside.

Because Focus Schools are identified based on the performance of subgroups, the interventions that would be incorporated would be differentiated to address the specific subgroup for which they were identified. The specific need will be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment of the school (and district) followed by an in-depth analysis of student data linked to the state standards to correctly diagnose the learning areas of concern that will then be addressed through technical assistance and professional development. This process is part of the tiered coaching model that the SSOS has in place to address the specific needs of buildings (and students) of the Focus Schools.

At the basic level of tiered assistance is a focus on the core instruction of the building. This includes a review of curriculum alignment with state standards to

endure that ALL students have access to the state standards. In addition, instructional methods are assessed and identified for intervention to the second tier if necessary. This may include technical assistance to address instructional strategies that are developmentally and culturally relevant to the identified subgroup of students to ensure that students are being taught in the appropriate methodology.

Finally, for support to teachers of unique student groups (newcomer ELs, very low-functioning special education students), support is provided to teachers in a very targeted fashion by a specialist with extensive knowledge, skills, and experience with such student groups.

As student progress is measured through formative means, the level of coaching for the building may move from more or less intensive, again, depending on the ongoing monitoring, diagnosing and assessing of the selected instructional interventions (See examples of specific strategies in previous sections).

Regional SSOS staff will work to enhance instructional leaders' capacity to support, promote, lead and sustain professional learning that improves both teaching practices and learning outcomes for ALL students.

Utilizing the data-driven decision-making model that is embedded within the SSOS, the first activity that the school will engage in is the disaggregation and analysis of the achievement data that were used as identifiers. Once causes of the achievement gap or low graduation rate are determined subsequent goals will be set. The SSOS will use the following supports to promote effective data use:

- Continuous use of student data to improve instruction
- Systemic needs assessment support
- Root/cause analysis
- Setting effective SMART goals based on the subgroup's specific needs
- Focused intervention planning by the LEA and SEA, employing resource staff versed in culture, language and environmentally specific interventions
- Classroom formative assessment support (provide feedback to students and teachers and increase student involvement in learning)

- Benchmark assessment support (measure student growth of the standards-based instructional program)

Utilizing best practices that have been identified through research and MDE's experience working with SIG Schools, the SSOS will assist Focus Schools in developing interventions that address the unique needs of the subgroup or subgroups for which they were identified. For example, experience in working with schools that have significant American Indian populations has shown that implementing culturally-specific curriculum built around the traditions of the community can yield positive results for those students.

The SSOS will assist Focus Schools that are identified due to the performance of ELs or students with disabilities in addressing the needs of those students. For ELs, the SSOS will train EL instructors on the new WIDA standards and how to use data from WIDA assessments to tailor instruction to student needs. For Focus Schools identified for the performance of students with disabilities, the SSOS will work with the school to identify the types of special education services that these students need to improve their academic performance.

Regardless of which subgroup is identified, it will be critical that the Focus School engage the parents and community members of the subgroup as it crafts a plan to improve student achievement. Interventions should reflect the expressed preferences of the parents and community so that the school has the support of these key stakeholders. If there are community-based groups that have a proven record of success in working with specific populations of students to improve academic achievement, the LEA should consider contracting with them to provide student services that complement the academic programming at the school.

For all Focus Schools, the SSOS will take advantage of the best practices identified in Priority and Celebration Schools. MDE will analyze the enrollment data from Reward and Celebration Schools (See section 2.F) to identify those schools that are having success with lower-performing subgroups. Audits of these schools will identify best practices that can then be applied at Focus Schools with similar student populations.

Priority Schools will implement turnaround plans based on the turnaround principles outlined in the ESEA Flexibility guidance. MDE will create diagnostic value-added profiles for Priority School to help identify the root causes of their performance, assess their academic needs, and monitor student improvement. Priority Schools will also have the opportunity to partner with Reward Schools to share best practices and collaborate on school improvement activities. To achieve turnaround, Priority Schools will be required to set aside 20 percent of their Title I funds for state-approved school improvement activities. The school improvement efforts of Focus Schools will be supported by MDE and the state's newly-reformed Statewide System of Support (SSOS).

These efforts will build on the improvements Minnesota has already made to its system of supports for school improvement. Striving to meet the NCLB requirements, MDE's historical role of support to AYP schools has expanded into a more proactive model of technical assistance and support at the district and school level. Historically focused on promulgating regulations, setting and developing policy, disseminating funds and collecting data, MDE is now being held to a different standard for supporting schools in the current "age of accountability." The capacity of SEAs to manage and provide compliance oversight to all schools in need of improvement has been hampered by an archaic model of oversight that has proven to be ineffective in increasing student achievement, makes incorporating change cumbersome, and has become fiscally impossible to sustain with the ever-decreasing fiscal resources at the SEA level.

The proposed system (Minnesota School Improvement and Support Model) will feature a tiered system of support to identified schools, complete with a differentiated coaching model to address specific strategies that schools should undertake to improve. Under the high-stakes accountability systems that are prevalent in education, the state's role increasingly includes direct support and technical assistance to districts and individual schools to assist them in building capacity for meaningful change that will lead to improved academic outcomes. This level of support has been evident in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program where MDE not only disseminates funds to the eligible schools but also provides oversight, monitoring and direct technical assistance to schools to implement one of the program models. With minimal resources at the agency level, MDE staff will leverage Title I resources to create regional support centers around the state that will provide the strategically targeted components of the

school improvement process for Focus Schools: a comprehensive needs assessment, data analysis to determine root causes of the school's problem, alignment of the operational curriculum with state standards, and identification of specific evidence-based instructional strategies that are learned in professional learning teams and subsequently implemented in the classroom with ongoing formative assessment to determine the extent of student learning and/or subsequent re-teaching. This is all supported with instructional leadership that is sensitive to and learned in the specific needs of the students in their school.

This is a shift in Minnesota's SSOS from the traditional organization built around categorical funding streams, content areas, monitoring and compliance, to one that is organized around school improvement and educational leadership. The SSOS is at the core of Minnesota's ESEA Flexibility proposal, and will be the driver of change in Focus Schools.

School Improvement Plans

It is the expectation that ALL schools in the state should develop an actionable school improvement plan that is based on the most recent data and implemented with fidelity under the auspices of the LEA.

In our proposed system, all Focus Schools will develop a detailed action plan for addressing the specific root causes of the school's identification, whether it is based on subgroups with low levels of proficiency, subgroups with low levels of growth, low graduation rates, or all of these issues. These plans will be submitted to MDE through the SSOS and reviewed for fidelity with an established set of action standards (see Attachment 22). Improvement plans will be the basis of the technical support and improvement efforts at the building level. The regional staff in the SSOS will provide assistance in any and all aspects of the school improvement planning process described above.

The regional staff will then work with a cross-agency MDE team comprised of MDE staff members from content standards, EL, Special Education, school improvement specialists, implementation science, Title I accountability programs, and any other necessary programmatic focuses to determine the most appropriate and impactful course of action for every Focus School that will be targeted specifically at the subgroup(s) that are of greatest need. The regional

staff will then collaborate with the LEAs to implement the plan and provide support, and resources for the work.

MDE will work with Focus Schools and their data teams to identify goals that are differentiated to their specific student needs (“contextualized goals”) identified by the student data and needs assessment. These measurements will be monitored by the Focus School’s LEA through the use of implementation rubrics based on the best practices in implementation sciences.

Building principals will be the leaders of the improvement efforts within Focus Schools. In order to improve school capacity to implement improvement plans, principals of Focus Schools will be given tools and training to monitor the progress of the work including monthly instructional leader checklists that ensure fidelity. The SSOS will work with Focus School principals on best practices for instructional strategies that have proven to be successful with targeted subgroups. LEAs will support them with resources and opportunities for growth. Another example of principal support provided by the SSOS is a professional growth rubric for principals of turnaround schools that can be referenced to target specific educational settings. (See Attachment 21)

The proposed support model will be implemented consistently across all Focus Schools to ensure that there are not discrepancies in the type or duration of interventions that schools are incorporating at any given time. Each Focus School will go through data analysis, goal-setting, development and implementation of professional learning teams, a professional development plan that is targeted to the educators working directly with the specific subgroups, (EL, Special Education, etc.), curriculum alignment of the operational curriculum, and fidelity of plan implementation.

District leadership involvement in the building leadership team planning is critical, and the action plans should speak specifically to how the LEA will oversee plan implementation. The LEAs for Focus Schools must complete an LEA-wide needs assessment to provide direction and context for the Focus School’s improvement plan. The LEA must also use the results of the needs assessment to create a plan to address any weaknesses in the district’s ability to implement improvement plans within Focus Schools. Minnesota statute requires all LEAs to have Educational Improvement Plans, which will serve as the foundation for the

process of LEA assessment and improvement planning. LEAs will be required to update their Educational Improvement Plans based on the results of the needs assessment with the goal of improving their capacity to facilitate targeted support for the Focus Schools. Title I funds will be deferred from LEAs that fail to comply with the school improvement requirements at Focus Schools until they have taken positive steps such as submitting an improvement plan, completing a Title I budget that reflects the priorities in the improvement plan, or begun implementing activities included in the improvement plan. Mandatory set-asides for state-approved district improvement activities may be put in place if LEAs with Focus Schools persistently fail to improve student achievement. These set-asides would be linked to an LEA improvement plan that could include the identification of a need for a staff member dedicated to data analysis, or the designation of an LEA-level liaison between the LEA, MDE, the SSOS and the Priority School. The nature of an LEA's plan will vary depending on their existing capacity to lead turnaround efforts and the number of Priority and Focus Schools in the LEA.

English Learners and Students with Disabilities

In Focus Schools identified for persistently low-performing ELs or Special Education students, SSOS staff will work with MDE staff to tailor the technical assistance needed for teachers of these students in order to access and learn the core curriculum through the use of strategic instructional strategies introduced by MDE EL and Special education staff, and identified experts in the field of instructional strategies for classroom teachers.

Technical assistance and support to educators is the basic foundation of instruction by building educators' capacity in evidence-based instructional practices and leadership to meet the needs of ALL diverse learners. These students need not only access, but also attainment of the content information as delineated by state standards.

Technical assistance to support quality instruction of specific groups of students involves providing support to educators to build capacity in evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all learners in literacy, mathematics and other content areas.

Educators need to learn to build their understanding of content knowledge, standards, and pedagogy as well as the capacity to apply evidence-based

instructional practices demonstrated to be effective in increasing student achievement and functional performance for ALL students. Regional staff will work to enhance instructional leaders' capacity to support, promote, lead and sustain professional learning that improves both teaching practices and learning outcomes for ALL students with disabilities.

- *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?*

Based on the support provided to the current SIG Schools as well as the experiences in schools that have been re-structured under NCLB that have similar achievement challenges at the subgroup level, MDE has developed a cadre of interventions that can be employed to address the specific needs of the Focus Schools. In addition to the standard resources employed by MDE, additional resources will be leveraged to assist schools in addressing subgroup achievement gaps and/or graduation rates.

Partnerships

MDE will be creating partnerships with ethnic and racial advocacy organizations, private corporations and other entities to partner in the efforts to address cultural, family and racial elements that may be contributing to the achievement gap. MDE is currently in the process of working with advocacy organizations around the state to ensure that the SSOS incorporate culturally-relevant and -specific practices. The partnerships being formed in this process will prove invaluable as MDE works with Focus Schools to address low subgroup performance.

Math and Reading Specialists

The SSOS will employ the services of math and reading specialists that will be available to work with teaching staff to implement culturally-responsive teaching strategies that will have a significantly positive impact on the instructional processes in the classroom. In addition, MDE will offer the opportunity for Focus Schools to partner with Reward Schools that have reached high levels of student achievement with similar characteristics, needs, and challenges in order to learn from their successful programs.

- *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)?*

Interventions will be determined through precise data analysis to determine root causes and subsequent interventions that address the students at their current level of learning and accelerate them to grade-level proficiency. The SSOS does will continue to provide differentiated technical support not only to schools with diverse student populations and needs but also at the appropriate grade configurations. The interventions will be not only appropriate for skill level but will also take into consideration the cultural, social and emotional level of the students served.

An example of an intervention for secondary schools will be to implement a set of diagnostics to determine the level of college- and career-readiness of students through the use of data and reports from the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT assessments to provide feedback and guidance for students and their parents in preparation for graduation and the work force. By creating opportunities for students to explore their interests and skills at an earlier age and by offering scaffolded curriculum and learning experiences to help them reach their goals, a culture of self-worth, success, and hope for their future can be fostered in middle and high school students.

The SSOS will also provide technical assistance specific to high schools with graduation rates of 60 percent or less. In recent years MDE has developed tools to improve graduation rates. One lesson that will be applied to Focus Schools is the need for early identification. Through Minnesota's Early Indicator and Response System (MEIRS), schools can identify students at-risk for dropping out and develop student-specific strategies for keeping all students on track to graduate. All Focus Schools identified for low graduation rates will be expected to utilize MEIRS.

ELs and Students with Disabilities

In Focus Schools identified for persistently low-performing ELs or Special Education students, SSOS staff will work with MDE staff to tailor the technical assistance needed for teachers of these students in order to access and learn the core curriculum through the use of strategic instructional strategies introduced by

MDE EL and Special education staff, and identified experts in the field of instructional strategies for classroom teachers.

These strategies could include (but are not limited to):

- Oral Language development – utilizing explicit teacher talk, dramatizing, books on tape, etc.
- Read-Alouds – carefully selecting books in a variety of genres, modeling phrasing, etc.
- Shared reading – demonstrating key concepts, following up with books made by students, etc.
- Small group reading instruction – assessing authentically and frequently, etc.
- Think-Alouds – modeling differentiated reading and writing strategies, modeling problem solving, etc.
- Shared writing – teaching explicit writing strategies, demonstrating revision, editing, and conventions,
- Process writing (Writer’s Workshop) – conferencing with students individually, allowing self- selection of topics, etc.
- Independent writing,
- Phonemic awareness – providing opportunities throughout literacy practice, studying high-frequency words.

Technical assistance and support in Special Education and EL supports educators in the basic foundation of instruction by building educators’ capacity in evidence-based instructional practices and leadership to meet the needs of ALL diverse learners. These students need not only access, but also attainment of the content information as delineated by state standards.

Technical assistance to support quality instruction of ELs involves providing support to educators to build capacity in evidence-based practices to meet the needs of English language learners in literacy, mathematics and other content areas. Professional learning outcomes that apply to teachers and leaders include the following:

- Apply deep understanding of Minnesota English Language arts standards including the descriptors for each of the five levels of language acquisition, and the relationship of the ELA standards to other instructional standards.
- Understand and apply effective instructional practices for ELs by gaining awareness of the difference between strategies that are effective for all learners and those differentially beneficial to ELs.
- Build support structures among teachers and leaders that enable continuous implementation of effective program models and instructional strategies for ELs.

For students with disabilities, schools need to develop standards-based IEPs for special education students. The SSOS will provide teachers with support that will focus on specific strategies to address the student needs. The strategies listed above for EL students may be applicable to the needs of special education students as well, depending on their specific disability.

Educators need to learn to build their understanding of content knowledge, standards, and pedagogy as well as the capacity to apply evidence-based instructional practices demonstrated to be effective in increasing student achievement and functional performance for ALL students. Regional staff will work to enhance instructional leaders' capacity to support, promote, lead and sustain professional learning that improves both teaching practices and learning outcomes for ALL students with disabilities.

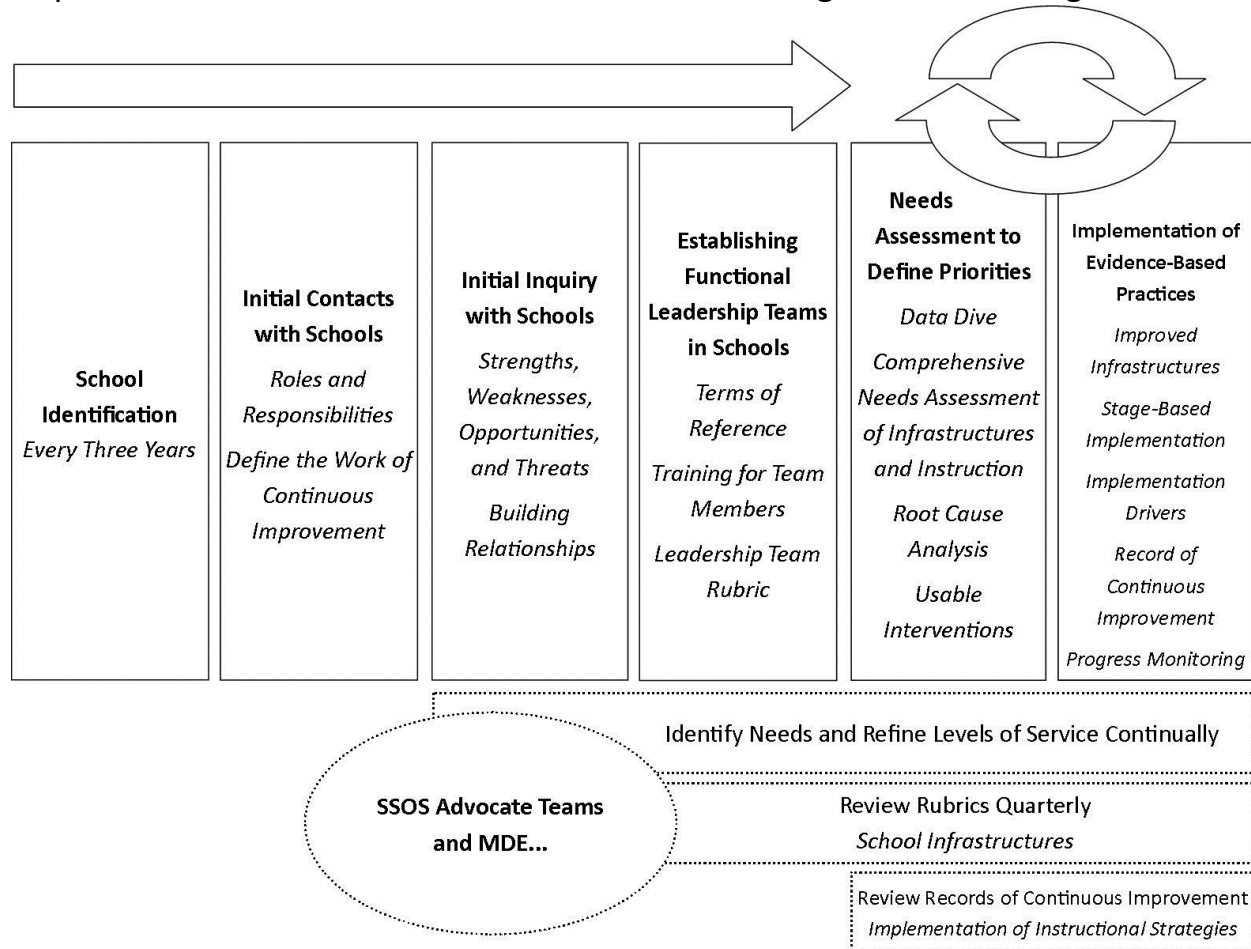
2015 Waiver Renewal

Minnesota identified 44 priority schools, 85 focus schools and 27 focus graduation schools in fall 2014 using data from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. As outlined in Minnesota's original waiver, priority schools represent the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools on the MMR and focus schools are the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools on the FR. Additionally, focus graduation schools are Title I high schools with six-year graduation rates, averaged over the most recent three years, below 60 percent. Attachment 4 from waiver renewal provides the lists of priority and focus schools that began implementation in 2014-2015.

Consistent with waiver requirements, all focus schools began implementation of

interventions targeted at the reason for identification in the 2014-2015 school year and will implement these interventions through the 2016-2017 school year. If a focus school meets exit criteria, as outlined in our original waiver request, they are eligible to exit their status.

Interventions in schools continue to follow the plan in our original approved Waiver request with additional interventions added according to the following model:



An initial inquiry process has been added to our support model for the new cohorts of focus schools. This process allows SEA teams of advocates in our Statewide System of Support (SSOS) to conduct a structured, facilitated audit of school structures and instructional practices to inform support and the first stages of school planning. Our new model also includes an increased emphasis and supports for standards-based educational systems. The initial model focused primarily on improving classroom instructional practices.

Initial contacts and the initial inquiry process have been completed in all schools, and schools have identified leadership teams. SEA teams through our Regional Centers of Excellence have facilitated data reviews and needs assessments, and

schools have begun stage-based implementation of evidence-based instructional practices through their Records of Continuous Improvement. Records were collected in December 2014 and have been reviewed by SEA teams to inform further support and school-based implementation.

In addition, the following new processes have been planned and initial implementation has begun:

1. Leadership team training for priority and focus school leadership teams
2. Facilitated data presentations and a data review process for schools
3. Best practice rubrics in the areas of school leadership, learning teams, family engagement, and the Record of Continuous Improvement
4. A continuous improvement toolkit that warehouses and organizes school resources and tools for continuous improvement
5. A comprehensive program review of the supports offered to schools
6. The addition of equity and data specialists on SEA teams supporting schools

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?**

Any exit criteria for Focus Schools has to be meaningful enough to ensure that a school that exits Focus status has permanently altered its trajectory and is on track to close, rather than expand, the achievement gap. With that standard in mind, Minnesota will only allow Focus Schools that finish above the bottom quartile of Title I schools statewide for two consecutive years, using performance on the Focus Rating as the criterion.

Focus Schools are identified based on their performance on the growth gap reduction measurement and the proficiency of their students in lower-performing subgroups, which is combined to create a Focus Rating. To exit this status, the expectation is that a school will make enough progress to finish above of the bottom quartile of Title I schools on the Focus Rating. In order to achieve this, Focus Schools will have to make significant improvement in both the proficiency and growth of their lower-performing subgroups.

Ambitious Goals for Low Achieving Students

Schools that are in the bottom ten percent of Title I schools on the Focus Rating are exhibiting extremely low levels of proficiency and student growth among their disadvantaged subgroups. To move from the bottom ten percent on the Focus Rating to outside of the bottom quartile for two consecutive years will be evidence that real progress has been made, and the trajectory of the schools has improved to the extent that they no longer need the level of support provided to Focus Schools. Schools that are able to achieve this goal will have made the kind of progress the Focus School designation is designed to prompt. Attachment 24 demonstrates what will be required of Focus Schools to exit their status.

Achievable Goals

In many schools that will be identified as Focus Schools, the group of students whose academic performance is causing the designation is small enough that smart, focused interventions can have an immediate impact on the school's performance on the Focus Rating. By setting an achievable goal, Minnesota can achieve the kind of buy-in it will need from identified Focus Schools to achieve meaningful progress in closing the achievement gap.

Resources

This standard is consistent with the logic behind identifying a manageable-sized group of Priority Schools for the SEA to support. By limiting the size of the Focus

School group to ten percent of Title I schools, MDE can efficiently direct its resources to those schools making the biggest contribution to the achievement gap. Similarly, by allowing those Focus Schools that have made major strides in closing the achievement gap to direct their own improvement activities, MDE will be able to focus resources on those Focus Schools that are most in need of support.

Graduation Rates

Some Focus Schools are identified because of their graduation rates rather than their performance on the growth gap reduction measurement. For those schools to exit Focus status, they must have a graduation rate of greater than 60 percent for two consecutive years and show at least a five percentage point improvement in graduation rate in each of those years. By setting these criteria, Minnesota ensures that schools are not only achieving a graduation rate above the level used for identification as a Focus School but also that they have an improved trajectory that will ultimately allow them to achieve a graduation well above 60 percent.

Focus School Improvement Activities Following Exit

Focus Schools will be identified for three-year periods. The period of identification is based on Minnesota's experience with SIG Schools. In those schools, experience and data has shown that dramatically improving the performance of low-performing subgroups is not a one-year process, and it is rarely a two-year process. It typically takes three years before meaningful improvements can be measured. We anticipate that the same will be true at Focus Schools. However, we have created exit criteria that would allow Focus Schools to exit their status after two years if they move out of the bottom 25 percent of schools on the Focus Rating for two consecutive years. This would represent a substantial improvement in performance, and would be indicative of a rare case in which two years was the appropriate time period for the identified improvement activities to be implemented.

Upon exiting Focus Status through the exit criteria, a school will continue to be monitored for the duration of the three-year period to ensure that it does not revert to lower performance. Focus Schools that have exited their status prior to the end of the three-year period will be expected to draft and submit a school improvement plan. The SSOS will provide technical assistance and support with this improvement plan, which will need to identify interventions that could further alter the school's trajectory toward greater success. The SSOS will

continue to provide technical assistance in implementing these plans, and will monitor the school for fidelity. Particular attention will be paid to the subgroup for which a Focus School was identified to ensure that exiting Focus Status does not lead to backsliding by the subgroup. In the event that a school regresses, the SSOS and MDE will work with the school to identify areas where improvement is needed.

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Schools that remained in focus status have been identified as schools that, after implementing interventions for three school years, have not made sufficient progress to exit focus status. The SEA has three strategies to ensure increased rigor of interventions and supports in these schools.

4. Districts must annually submit reports to the SEA under Minnesota's World's Best Workforce legislation to articulate outcomes, goals, stakeholder engagement, and supports for schools and teachers. These reports are reviewed, and LEAs that are not making progress are subject to funding being used by the SEA to support improvement.
5. An increased role by the LEA in partnership with SEA teams has been defined to monitor and provide accountability for improvement in re-identified schools.
6. The SEA has proposed and is seeking legislative funding to add positions for supporting schools and to expand the number of SEA teams in order to increase the intensity of support for re-identified schools and for all focus schools.

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?

Differentiated Recognition Accountability and Support for Title I Schools

Minnesota will use the MMR to further differentiate recognition and accountability for Title I schools. In addition to Reward, Priority and Focus schools Minnesota will identify some additional Title I schools for *Celebration* and *Continuous Improvement*.

Celebration Schools

In order to create further incentives for high-performing Title I schools, Minnesota will solicit applications from the 25 percent of schools immediately outside the top 15 percent based on the annual MMR to apply for Celebration School status. Each year, these schools may submit applications outlining the reasons they should be considered Celebration Schools.

Through the waiver extension process, a broad base of stakeholders were consulted and they provided a recommendation to ensure Celebration schools have an assessment participation rate above 95% in both math and reading. It is important to consider the validity of the results of these high-performers, and schools should only be recognized if participation rates on state assessments meet the 95% threshold. Minnesota will make certain that any school receiving the Celebration recognition meets this requirement.

The primary criteria for awarding Celebration School status will be performance on statewide assessment and graduation rates but schools may also reference more qualitative data such as rigorous course-taking data, college placement statistics and participation on the ACT, PLAN or EXPLORE tests. The SEA will review applications and interview applicants to identify an additional 10 percent of Title I schools to be identified as Celebration Schools. The application and interview process will allow applicants to examine their best practices and identify areas where they can make improvements to move into Celebration or Reward status in the future if their applications are unsuccessful.

Continuous Improvement Schools

Each year, all Title I schools with MMRs in the bottom 25 percent will be identified as Continuous Improvement School. Title I schools falling into this category that are not already Priority or Focus Schools will be expected to work with their LEA

to perform a needs assessment or self-evaluation and complete a school improvement plan. It will be the responsibility of the LEA to provide oversight, monitoring, support and resources to implement these plans. In addition, LEAs are responsible for ensuring that 20 percent of Continuous Improvement Schools' Title I funds are set aside for activities aligned to the school improvement plan.

Every year, the SEA will choose a random sample of the plans from these schools to complete and audit and site visit to provide oversight of the plan implementation. Schools that are found to not be implementing with fidelity will be identified for targeted technical assistance to successfully implement the plan. LEAs that fail to effectively implement school improvement plans in Continuous Improvement Schools could be subject to deferral of Title I funds until positive actions are taken, or in cases where the LEA is persistently low-achieving, be required to implement mandatory set-asides for state-approved LEA improvement activities. These set-asides would be linked to an LEA improvement plan that could include the identification of a need for a staff member dedicated to data analysis, or the designation of an LEA-level liaison between the LEA, MDE, the SSOS and the Priority School. The nature of an LEA's plan will vary depending on their existing capacity to lead turnaround efforts and the number of Priority and Focus Schools in the LEA.

Note: In accordance with state law (Minn. Stat. 120B.35, Subd. 2), all Title I schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years must write a school improvement plan. These schools will also continue to have access to support and technical assistance from the SEA. The SEA will audit a random 10% of improvement plans created by schools in the Continuous Improvement category and Title I schools failing to make AYP for two consecutive years to ensure fidelity with requirements. In this way, the supports, interventions, and incentives for Title I schools that don't fall into one of the identified categories are directly linked to the new AMOs. Since these AMOs are linked to the goal of reducing the achievement gap by half within six years, there is great promise for this incentive to have a positive effect on the performance of lower-performing subgroups.

School Report Cards

MDE will incentivize continuous improvement at all schools, including Title I schools, by improving both the quality and quantity of data provided on annual

school report cards. The school report card of every school in the state will display the Multiple Measurements Chart to indicate performance in each of the four domains and an overall percentage of points earned. This will supplement the

current AYP data, which will continue to be posted as part of the school report card.

The experience of No Child Left Behind has shown that even schools that have no sanctions attached to their status (namely, non-Title I schools) are just as concerned with their AYP status as those at risk of being sanctioned for their performance. We therefore believe that continuing to publish AYP results, and supplementing it with the MMR will be a strong incentive for schools to continue to improve their performance. Furthermore, by providing more data to parents and the community, we expect that these actors will play an important role in holding schools accountable. This has been the experience with non-Title I schools, and we anticipate that the MMR will make it easier for parents at all schools to identify areas of need and demand improvement from their schools.

MDE is also in the process of collecting and reporting new data as part of its longitudinal data system. MDE will soon begin reporting data on rigorous course-taking and postsecondary enrollment. This qualitative data will supplement quantitative data provided through the MMR and AMOs.

All of this data will be easily accessible through MDE's new website data center. This data center will launch in December 2011, and will allow users to compare the data sets of multiple schools. The data center is divided for easy use by three user types: parents, educators and power data users. The data center will be a crucial tool for holding schools accountable through robust reporting of student achievement data.

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The SEA has implemented a clear and rigorous process for ensuring that LEAs provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in those schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets. Interventions in schools continue to follow the plan in our original approved Waiver request with additional interventions added or intensified. Supports are primarily initiated through a series of trainings for schools which are delivered by the SEA and through the Regional Centers of Excellence.

1. Leadership team training for schools with a continuous improvement designation

2. Standards implementation training for schools with a continuous improvement designation
3. Training supporting use student growth data for teacher development and evaluation
4. Training on conducting observations and providing growth-based feedback for teacher development
5. English language development data review and response training
6. Training for the Minnesota Early Intervention Response System, which identifies students at risk of not graduating, and for interventions and supports for students at risk of not graduating

In addition, the Record of Continuous Improvement and continuous improvement tools used with priority and focus schools are provided to other Title I schools via the MDE website and the trainings outlined above.

The SEA has proposed and is seeking legislative funding to add positions for supporting schools and to expand the number of SEA teams in order to increase the intensity of support for schools with one or more subgroups missing AMOs or graduation rate targets.

Also, consistent with Minnesota's original waiver request, 10 percent of all Continuous Improvement schools are monitored annually by MDE staff. Part of this monitoring process includes an interview with LEA representatives. A monitoring report with commendations, recommendations and findings is provided to the LEA and school to support continued improvement.

Waiver #13 in Waiver Renewal

Minnesota utilizes 1003(a) funds to provide a statewide system of support, delivered through the Regional Centers of Excellence, for all priority and focus schools. In the event that the state has remaining funds after sufficiently serving priority and focus schools, Minnesota would be able to utilize those funds to support other Title I schools that are missing AMOs or graduation rate targets over a number of years.

The primary use of these funds is to adequately assist priority and focus schools. MDE will ensure these schools are sufficiently supported with 1003(a) funds in order for them to implement required interventions by closely monitoring the level

of support provided by Center staff. Support efforts from the Centers are directly linked to the improvement plans priority and focus schools have in place, and these efforts, including outcomes, are tracked on a regular basis. MDE regularly tracks the progress of focus and priority schools in order to customize support, measure program effectiveness and ensure they are appropriately resourced. Should all priority and focus schools be adequately supported with 1003(a) funds to carry out interventions, MDE would then provide similar supports to other select Title I schools that are missing AMOs or graduation rates.

2.G 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?

- a. 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?**

Please refer to the explanation of the SEA's Statewide System of Support (SSOS) in the above section (section 2.D.iii.b). Minnesota's SSOS will be guided by the goal of closing the persistent achievement gap students of color and their white peers, and economically disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers. The SSOS will provide effective teacher assistance, providing a platform for disseminating and reinforcing the use of effective, research-based instructional strategies and evidence-based practices. In addition, MDE must ensure that in Priority Schools and their districts, the SSOS is supporting job-embedded professional development that increases teachers' knowledge of academic subjects they teach, provide in-depth training in math and reading (including pre-K-3 literacy) support the use of effective, research-based instructional strategies with a diverse range of students, including English Learners and students with disabilities.

Timely and Comprehensive Monitoring

Monitoring and technical assistance will be built around school improvement plans, which are required for Priority, Focus and Continuous Improvement Schools. The plans will delineate specific performance indicators in each area of improvement, including interim measures of growth throughout the school year. These measures will be the foundation for ongoing technical assistance and support conversations between MDE staff, SSOS staff in regional centers, the LEA leadership team and the building leadership team. They will be formative in nature and provide the school with timely feedback on the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

The MDE Implementation team will be comprised of staff that are content specialists in reading and math, EL specialists, program staff from special education as well as school improvement specialists that have worked with the AYP and SIG grant programs. These staff members will be responsible for providing direction and support to the regional SSOS staff in the area of identifying and measuring leading indicators for each school in their respective area of need. Indicators will be monitored by SSOS and SEA staff to ensure fidelity of implementation/compliance with waiver expectations.

Minnesota' SSOS will provide direct and effective technical assistance, thus creating a platform for disseminating and reinforcing the use of effective, research-based instructional strategies and evidence-based practices. In addition, MDE and the SSOS must ensure that these schools and districts provide job-embedded professional development that increases teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach, provide in-depth training in math and reading, (including an emphasis on PreK-3 literacy), support the use of effective, scientifically-based instructional strategies with a diverse range of students, and train teachers to analyze classroom and school-level data to inform their instruction.

- *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?*

Minnesota recognizes the need to improve achievement for all students and accelerate gains for those who lag behind. In reorganizing the technical assistance for Priority and Focus Schools to address this priority, MDE has established a tiered Statewide System of Support by providing services through partners such as higher education institutions, education districts, service cooperatives or other established providers of school improvement services in Regional Centers of Excellence supported by cross-agency implementation teams from MDE. These partners and any vendors utilized to deliver services will be vetted by the SEA program staff through application review and personal interviews. External

providers will need to meet high standards of past experience and success with turnaround schools as well as demonstrate their capacity to provide such services. All grant and contract decisions for services and facilitation of programming will be made by SEA program staff. The aims for this partnership for delivery of services will include:

- Build the capacity of instructional leadership teams in schools to successfully guide the process of continuous improvement
- Implement scientifically-based strategies that will help build sustainable capacity for dramatically improving teaching and learning in Title I schools and districts
- Provide collaborative support for Title I schools and districts to develop a framework for analyzing data, identifying underlying root causes and scaling up best instructional practices to ensure the academic achievement of all students

This tiered system of support will provide regional support to Priority and Focus Schools on an ongoing basis, delivering technical assistance through a network of content specialists, implementation facilitators and professional development providers supported by cross-agency implementation teams. The facilitators in each of the regional centers will have regular contact with the principals and LEAs leaders of the identified schools to monitor the progress towards established school goals. The SEA will utilize an online system for monitoring the progress that schools are making in the areas of educator and student performance

- b. Is the SEA's process for ensuring sufficient support for implementation in Priority Schools of meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles (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?**

Funding Options

Funding for the SSOS would utilize the small percentage of Title I funding set aside for the purpose of implementing a statewide system of support. This amount would be allocated to the regional centers of support in a formula basis based on the number of Focus and Priority schools in the region to develop a team of regional specialist in the area of math, reading, EL instruction, special education programming, and data coaching. The administrative funds from this source of funding would continue to fund two positions at MDE to facilitate the cross-agency implementation teams that will direct to the work of the regional centers. A shortage of state funds will require the SEA to reassess current staffing levels to develop cross-agency terms to integrate the talents, skills and knowledge of the SEA staff to leverage the greatest impact in their work with the regional SSOS. MDE will also continue to look for ways to better coordinate between Title I funds to support reform efforts through cross-division teams. Additionally, MDE will leverage Title III funds for improvement activities such as professional development for general education classroom teachers of ELs.

MDE will strive to leverage additional funding from federal and private sources. This may include re-purposing state Title II funds for professional development activities at the regional level, a redirecting of future SIG funds to Priority schools to incorporate professional learning teams, increased learning time opportunities for students, and professional growth opportunities for teachers in the areas of EL and special education instructional strategies, standards alignment, and data analysis.

Donations from education foundations and other private sources are being leveraged by MDE to provide benefits for the Reward Schools and incentives for other schools to initiate systemic reform efforts. A significant collaborative partner in supporting early learners is the Minnesota Reading Corps. This is a vital partnership as the Minnesota Reading Corps looks to scale up their efforts in Minnesota. The Minnesota Reading Corps is one of the largest AmeriCorps programs in the country. The program places AmeriCorps members in various sites around the state to support a research-based early-literacy effort for preschool through grade 3 students. The Minnesota Reading Corps program was established in 2003 as part of the ServeMinnesota Innovation Act (MS 124D.36), a program established to provide funding for creating public service opportunities to serve students. The program utilizes a data-based problem-solving model of

literacy instruction in helping to train local Head Start program providers, other prekindergarten program providers, and staff in schools with students in kindergarten through 3rd grade to evaluate and teach early literacy skills, including comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction to children age 3 to grade 3. Through this legislation Minnesota Reading Corps will receive \$8.25 million over the next two years to scale-up implementation statewide in partnership with MDE. Currently, Reading Corps has 785 members serving 300+ schools in over 90 districts and supports over 20, 000 students in the state. It is anticipated that by the fall of 2013 they will have well over 1,000 members in schools serving Minnesota students. This collaboration provides coherence and alignment to our state goal of “Reading Proficiently No Later Than the End of Grade 3” which seeks to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of third grade and ensures teachers provide comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction consistent with section 122A.06, subdivision 4.

Within the Minnesota Reading Corps program, members receive professional development on several research-based reading strategies and master coaches support members with ongoing data collection to monitor student progress. This is a key component to a response to intervention structure implemented by MDE and MN Reading Corps. This partnership will be utilized in promoting school improvement in Priority and Focus Schools, as well as other schools around the state.

All schools will have increased flexibility under this request due to the elimination of mandatory AYP set-asides. They will also have increased flexibility in transferring funds between certain Title funding allocations. This increased flexibility will allow schools and LEAs to better leverage their federal funds and direct them toward activities aligned with their unique school improvement needs. Priority and Focus Schools will be required to reassess the use of their Title I, II and III funds to address the specific components of their school improvement plan.

- c. 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?

LEAs will be held responsible for the implementation of the improvement plans in Priority, Focus and Continuous Improvement Schools through regular involvement of LEA leaders, required reporting of student progress and program fidelity measurements as evidenced through progress made towards both leading and eventually, lagging indicators. The SSOS will assume the role of monitoring the student progress reporting and program fidelity measurements, partnering each LEA with staff from the Regional Centers established within the SSOS. The SSOS will also provide direct assistance to LEAs in the school improvement plan development process which is current practice, however, the SSOS will also provide training for LEA leadership to build capacity for directing improvement or turnaround activities, and supporting and monitoring improvement and turnaround efforts at each building. As described in the explanation of the SSOS, with the assistance from the SSOS LEAs will have completed their own needs assessment to provide a systemic perspective to student achievement LEA-wide. LEA representation on not only the district leadership team but the individual building leadership teams is critical to the success of the planning and implementation processes. It will be suggested that each LEA with an identified school have an LEA representative assigned as a liaison to MDE and the SSOS to ensure consistent and clear communication linkages. The liaison, or other district representation is required to attend all meetings and trainings that are conducted to support the schools in the district. This is critical to an effective systemic approach to school improvement and turnaround. MDE will expect LEA representation in all aspects of the building improvement process including district personnel and school board support for the process. In the event that the school is not making progress towards their indicators, the LEA will be expected to intensify their role to intervene in the school to ensure identified strategies and interventions are adhered to.

Public Reporting

LEAs will be held accountable for their performance in much the same way that schools falling outside of the accountability categories are held accountable: through public reporting of data. LEAs will still have their AYP performance reported along with schools on an annual basis. In this way, LEAs will be held accountable for the performance of all students in the LEA. The data center on MDE's website will also allow users to sort school performance on the MMR by

district. This will allow users to identify trends in low- or high-performance within a district. The expectation is that in the case of LEAs without Priority, Focus or Continuous Improvement Schools, parents and community members will take the greatest amount of responsibility for holding LEAs accountable for their performance and demanding improvement activities. They will be able to do so using the wider array of data that will be provided under the proposed system.

Persistently Low-Performing LEAs

Departing from the current AYP system, LEAs will not be evaluated or sanctioned in the same way as schools. While LEAs will still have AYP results reported, they will not be given an MMR, and will not be subject to any sanctions based on their performance. However, in LEAs with Priority, Focus or Continuous Improvement Schools, MDE and the SSOS will monitor the performance of all the LEA's schools on the MMR, as well as the LEA's AYP results. In cases where the LEA is persistently low-achieving and is failing to affect positive change in their identified schools due to failure to develop or implement the required School Improvement Plan, the LEA might be subject to deferral of Title I funds until positive actions are taken. This is currently the practice that MDE follows with LEAs and schools that refuse to develop or implement AYP plans, although the occurrence of this has been extremely isolated. Given the new responsibility that is being given to the LEAs of Priority, Focus, and Continuous Improvement Schools, MDE will have a lower threshold for deciding whether to defer Title I funds under this proposal. The other possible consequence, as outlined in this request, is to create set-asides tied to specific LEA improvement activities for the LEAs who do not comply with the expectations of MDE in the development and implementation of school improvement plans. Minnesota is a local-control state, so MDE is limited in its authority to force activities upon LEAs, but we will use the data we have to identify LEAs that are failing to improve student performance and leverage federal funding to incentivize improvement. The leverage that will be used will include deferring Title I funds from low-performing, non-compliant LEAs, or mandatory set-asides for district improvement activities. These set-asides would be linked to an LEA improvement plan that could include the identification of a need for a staff member dedicated to data analysis, or the designation of an LEA-level liaison between the LEA, MDE, the SSOS and the Priority School. The nature of an LEA's plan will vary depending on their existing capacity to lead turnaround efforts and the number of Priority and Focus Schools in the LEA.

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LEAs are responsible for the implementation of the improvement plans in Priority, Focus and Continuous Improvement Schools. LEAs are to attend the school leadership team meetings on a regular basis, review and oversee the improvement plans and regularly schedule progress reports to the school board. Statewide system of support (SSOS) regional advocates have regular contact with Priority and Focus schools that includes support for the LEA in implementing similar improvement strategies across the school system. The Record of Continuous Improvement, the improvement plan used with Priority and Focus schools, also serves as the Schoolwide Title Plan requiring LEA-level involvement in the planning and use of the required 20 percent set-aside of Title funds at these sites.

Priority schools with School Improvement Grants (SIG) and 10 percent of all Continuous Improvement schools are monitored annually by MDE staff. Part of this monitoring process includes an interview with LEA representatives. A monitoring report with commendations, recommendations and findings is provided to the LEA and school to support continued improvement.

Since receiving initial approval of ESEA Flexibility, Minnesota has passed unprecedented state legislation that establishes a district accountability system for the state that aligns with our federal efforts under the waiver. This is a state model for accountability that is developed and owned locally by districts, developed with parent and community input and gives the state authority for involvement in school improvement planning and support.

The World's Best Workforce (WBWF) bill was passed in 2013 to ensure every school district in Minnesota is making strides to increase student performance. Under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11, school districts are to develop a plan that addresses the following five goals:

- All children are ready for school.
- All third-graders can read at grade level.
- All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- All students are ready for career and college.
- All students graduate from high school.

This accountability system aligns district efforts, resources and programs. School boards are to adopt a plan to support and improve teaching and learning that includes:

- Clearly defined student achievement goals and benchmarks for all student groups
- A process to evaluate each student's progress toward meeting the state and local academic standards
- A system to review and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum
- Practices that integrate high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, instructional technology, and collaborative professional culture that supports teacher quality, performance and effectiveness
- Evidence-based strategies for improving effective classroom instruction, an articulated curriculum and use of student achievement results to drive instruction
- An annual budget for implementation and sustainability of the district plan

Districts are to hold an annual public meeting and publish a report each year on district results and progress toward student achievement goals. A summary of the annual report is to be submitted to the Commissioner that documents the WBWF student achievement goals, the strategies and initiatives that the district engaged in to meet the goals, and the subsequent progress made on those goals. Progress is measured by considering overall student performance and gap closure using results on the school readiness assessments, state accountability assessments, college entrance exams and graduation rates.

Minnesota's Commissioner of Education has the authority to identify those districts in any three-year period that are not making sufficient progress. Subsequently, the Commissioner has the authority to require a district to use up to two percent of its general education revenue per fiscal year to implement targeted strategies and practices.

Minnesota believes that school districts can improve with the right technical and strategic support, professional development, rich data dives and greater attention to results through transparent accountability. MDE does not do the work for the districts, but instead works alongside them to build capacity, keeping the responsibility squarely upon the district for their selected improvement strategies and results.

The WBWF legislation is the state's first step in creating a system of accountability

at the state level that aligns with Minnesota's federal waiver accountability. With this new system, MDE is able to better support districts in the continuous school improvement planning process and hold them accountable for results.

In addition, Minnesota remains focused on its goal to reduce achievement gaps for all student groups by 50 percent by 2017 and is committed to transparency of district results toward the 2017 goal. The Commissioner has been successful in keeping progress data toward the 2017 goal on the radar of district superintendents, charter school directors and the public. These results are publicly reported on MDE's Data Center. More importantly, each district and charter school receives annual data from the Commissioner indicating whether they are on track or off track to reach the goal. The data provides them with the number of students they need to get to proficiency in order to be considered on track. There is a new sense of urgency around using the data for goal setting and improvement planning.

*Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership***3. A. Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems****Educator Evaluation Guidelines and Explanation of How These Guidelines Will Lead to the Development of Evaluation and Support Systems That Will Improve Student Achievement and the Quality of Instruction for Students**

During the 2011 Minnesota Legislative Session laws were enacted that provided specific parameters and guidelines for the adoption of teacher and principal evaluation systems (Minn. Laws 2011 SS Chap. 11). Statute directs MDE, in consultation with stakeholders, to create and publish new teacher and principal evaluation processes and requires LEAs to implement both. Stakeholder workgroups were established to respond to evaluation guidelines and to develop implementation processes and LEA expectations for adopting the state model or developing locally-developed models that meet state requirements for principal and teacher evaluation and support systems.

Five statutes provide guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. MS 122A.60 defines the role of the staff development committee and lists requirements for plans, outcomes focused on continuous improvement, and effective SD activities. MS 122A.40 and MS 122A.41 define guidelines for the annual teacher evaluation and peer review process for all teachers and the use of the evaluation process for personnel decisions. MS 123B.147 defines guidelines for the annual performance-based principal evaluation system. MS 123B.143 defines the responsibility of the superintendent to annually evaluate each school principal. Attachment 10 to Minnesota's approved waiver request included these five statutes.

Principal Evaluation and Support

The following table aligns Minnesota guidelines for principal evaluation established in statute to waiver criteria as evidence of how they will lead to evaluation and support systems that will improve instruction, school leadership, and student achievement. Additional elaboration is provided based on the work of the stakeholder group established to support implementation of guidelines and principal evaluation and support systems

Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Principal Evaluation Guidelines
Continual improvement of instruction	(b) To enhance a principal's leadership skills and support and improve teaching practices, school performance, and student achievement, a district must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district. The evaluation must be designed to improve

Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Principal Evaluation Guidelines
	<p>teaching and learning by supporting the principal in shaping the school's professional environment and developing teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness. The annual evaluation must:</p> <p>(1) support and improve a principal's instructional leadership, organizational management, and professional development, and strengthen the principal's capacity in the areas of instruction, supervision, evaluation, and teacher development;</p> <p>(3) be consistent with a principal's job description, a district's long-term plans and goals, and the principal's own professional multiyear growth plans and goals, all of which must support the principal's leadership behaviors and practices, rigorous curriculum, school performance, and high-quality instruction;</p> <p>(7) be linked to professional development that emphasizes improved teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student learning, and a collaborative professional culture;</p>
Differentiated performance using at least three performance levels	See below
Multiple valid measures for determining performance levels, including data on student growth for all students as a significant factor	<p>(b) To enhance a principal's leadership skills and support and improve teaching practices, school performance, and student achievement, a district must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district. The evaluation must be designed to improve teaching and learning by supporting the principal in shaping the school's professional environment and developing teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness. The annual evaluation must:</p> <p>(2) include formative and summative evaluations;</p> <p>(4) include on-the-job observations and previous evaluations;</p> <p>(5) allow surveys to help identify a principal's effectiveness, leadership skills and processes, and strengths and weaknesses in exercising leadership in pursuit of school success;</p> <p>(6) use longitudinal data on student academic growth as 35% of the evaluation and incorporate district achievement goals and targets;</p>
Evaluation of teachers and principals on a regular basis	<p>(b) To enhance a principal's leadership skills and support and improve teaching practices, school performance, and student achievement, a district must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school</p>

Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Principal Evaluation Guidelines
	principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district.
Clear, useful, and timely feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development	<p>(b) To enhance a principal's leadership skills and support and improve teaching practices, school performance, and student achievement, a district must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district. The evaluation must be designed to improve teaching and learning by supporting the principal in shaping the school's professional environment and developing teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness. The annual evaluation must:</p> <p>(2) include formative and summative evaluations;</p> <p>(3) be consistent with a principal's job description, a district's long-term plans and goals, and the principal's own professional multiyear growth plans and goals, all of which must support the principal's leadership behaviors and practices, rigorous curriculum, school performance, and high-quality instruction;</p> <p>(7) be linked to professional development that emphasizes improved teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student learning, and a collaborative professional culture; and</p> <p>(8) for principals not meeting standards of professional practice or other criteria under this subdivision, implement a plan to improve the principal's performance and specify the procedure and consequence if the principal's performance is not improved.</p>
Use to inform personnel decisions	<p>(b) To enhance a principal's leadership skills and support and improve teaching practices, school performance, and student achievement, a district must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district. The evaluation must be designed to improve teaching and learning by supporting the principal in shaping the school's professional environment and developing teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness. The annual evaluation must:</p> <p>(8) for principals not meeting standards of professional practice or other criteria under this subdivision, implement a plan to improve the principal's performance and specify the procedure and consequence if the principal's performance is not improved.</p>

Minnesota statute does not define the number of differentiated performance levels that must be implemented in evaluation and support models. In the Minnesota state model for principal evaluation and support, a performance level is assigned using one of the following categories:

1. Distinguished: Consistently exceeds standards of performance.
2. Accomplished: Consistently meets standards of performance.
3. Satisfactory: Demonstrates satisfactory competence on standards of performance.
4. Unsatisfactory: Does not meet acceptable standards of performance.

The designation of *Developing* may be added to one of the above ratings in the model where a limited number of performance items are targeted and where one of the following conditions exists:

1. Principal is a probationary principal,
2. Principal assumed a new assignment,
3. A significant change has occurred in district goals, curricula, leadership, or strategic vision during the year.

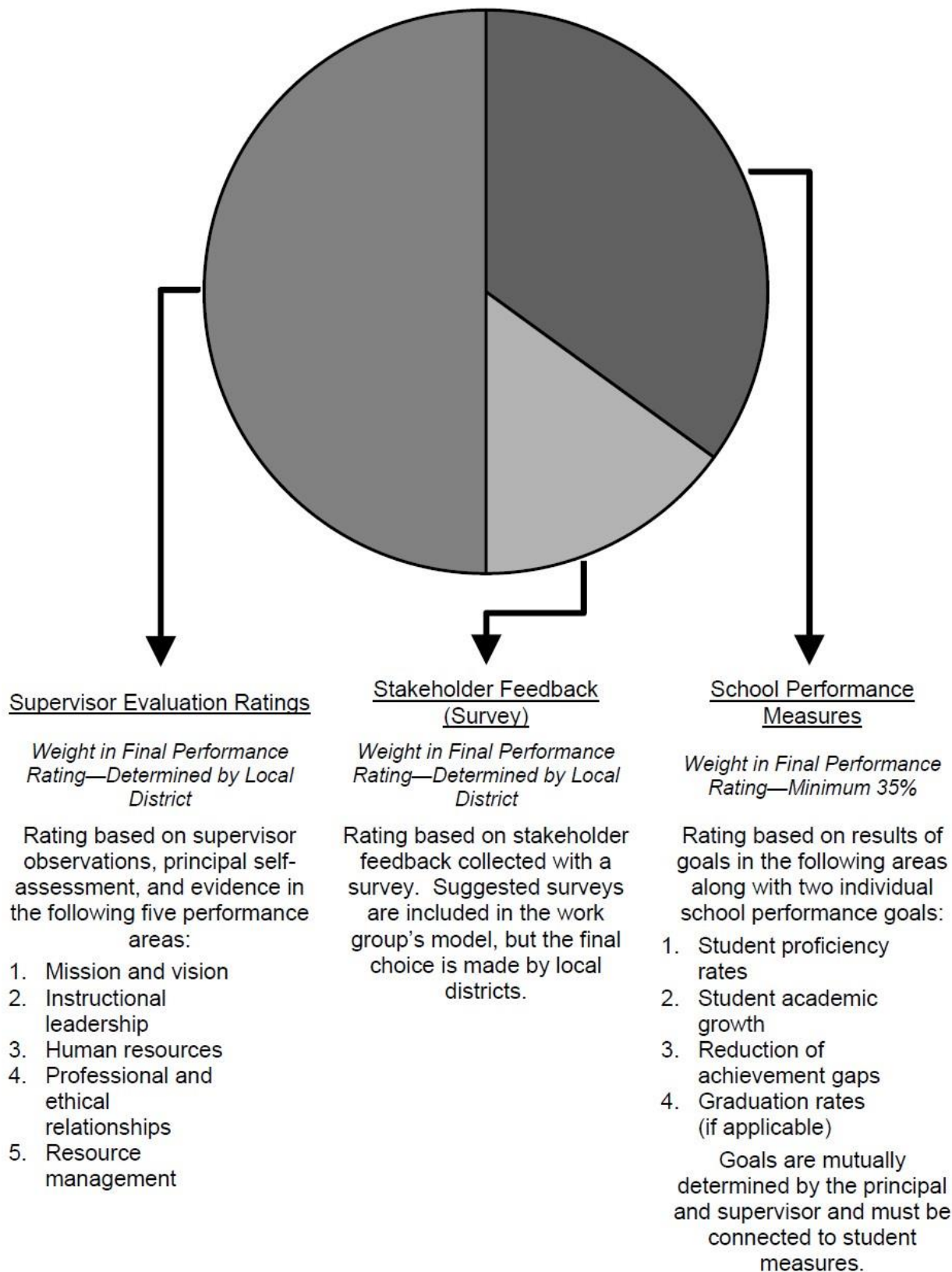
In support of principle three elements, locally developed models must differentiate principal performance using at least three performance levels to be approved when reviewed through the process for ensuring that each local district develops, adopts, and implements systems outlined in section 3.B. below.

Minnesota State Model for Principal Evaluation and Support

A state model for principal support and evaluation has been developed by a stakeholder work group to clarify these guidelines and to offer local districts guidance in the design of their own models. The pilot for the model will take place in school year 2012-2013. Districts must evaluate principals as outlined in the guidelines beginning in school year 2013-2014 and may adopt their own local models reflecting guidelines or may adopt the state model.

The state model is comprised of three components as shown in the following graphic:

Minnesota Principal Growth and Evaluation Model Components



Supervisor Evaluation Ratings

The supervisor assessment is based on the following performance measures and indicators and is to be conducted in accordance with the timeline outlined below. Together, the performance measures offer a definition of effective school leaders. A rubric for each indicator has been developed and is included as part of the model. The rubrics are designed to provide detailed guidance for making fair, accurate, and consistent judgments about performance. Using the rubrics to establish a common understanding of expectations contributes to quality assurance in the process for both the evaluator and the principal. The template can also serve as the basis for an ongoing dialogue about results, as a tool for systemic feedback, and as guidance for developing growth plans.

Performance Measure #1: Establishes a Vision and Mission Focused on Shared Goals and High Expectations

Indicators:

- A. Engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning, a strong organizational mission, and high, measureable goals that prepare every student to succeed in post-secondary learning and to become responsible and contributing citizens.
- B. Articulates a vision and develops implementation strategies for change that results in measurable achievement gains for all students including closing achievement gaps.
- C. Fosters a shared commitment to high expectations for student achievement, high standards of teaching and learning, and a culturally competent environment where diversity is valued.
- D. Establishes rigorous, measureable goals for instructional program decisions and staff learning experiences that are consistent with school's mission, vision, and core beliefs.
- E. Builds a strong and positive sense of community in the school by honoring the important roles of race and culture, its traditions, artifacts, symbols, values, and norms, as a contributor to student and school success.
- F. Additional indicator as locally determined

Performance Measure #2: Provides Instructional Leadership for High Student Academic Performance

Indicators:

- A. Facilitates the development and communication of a shared vision and school culture of effective teaching and instructional practices that reflect high expectations, engage all students, and accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.
- B. Provides the structure and opportunity for the development, alignment, implementation, and evaluation of relevant and rigorous curricula tied to state academic and college and career readiness standards.
- C. Collaborates with teachers to examine student and school data to measure student

learning and growth, identify achievement gaps, and develop strategic interventions that improve learning and close identified gaps.

- D. Facilitates reflective practice, inquiry, and action research to identify and monitor the impact of interventions and determine high-yield instructional strategies that improve student learning.
- E. Supports the need for quality, collaborative staff learning experiences that are guided by data and research, planned by staff, are job embedded, and based on the school's learning needs.
- F. Additional indicator as locally determined

Performance Measure #3: Manages Human Resources for Quality Instruction and Professional Growth

Indicators:

- A. Develops a strategic action plan with staff that includes targets to improve student achievement school wide and close achievement gaps with low performing student groups.
- B. Provides timely, appropriate, quality professional development and facilitates learning teams that gather information, analyze data, examine issues, and develop new approaches to improve teaching and learning.
- C. Implements a cohesive approach to recruitment, placement, induction, and retention of a highly qualified and effective staff.
- D. Routinely observes instruction and provides ongoing feedback and coaching to teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner in order to support professional growth.
- E. Provides effective and timely supervision and evaluation aligned with local district goals, state regulations, and contract provisions and uses these processes to facilitate development, remediation, and/or removal of underperforming staff members.
- F. Additional indicator as locally determined

Performance Measure #4: Builds Professional & Ethical Relationships through Collaboration and Effective Communication

Indicators:

- A. Demonstrates and communicates values, beliefs, and attitudes that make the well-being and academic success of all students the basis for all decision making.
- B. Models appropriate personal, professional, and ethical behavior that is respectful and fair, enhances the image of the school and the profession, and inspires others to higher levels of leadership and performance.
- C. Employs conflict resolution and proactive problem-solving strategies in a wide variety of situations and circumstances.
- D. Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills and facilitates groups effectively.
- E. Welcomes and honors families and stakeholders by engaging them in a meaningful

dialogue regarding student learning, the work of the school, and its needs and accomplishments.

- F. Ensures that the school is in compliance with local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations as well as local district and school policies.
- G. Additional indicator as locally determined

Performance Measure #5: Strategically Manages Resources for Systemic Performance Accountability

Indicators:

- A. Distributes leadership responsibilities, shares decision making, and supervises daily ongoing management structures and practices to enhance teaching and learning.
- B. Improves organizational performance by making appropriate and sound use of time, technology, management strategies, and accountability measures, including assessments, to achieve the district and school's vision, mission, and goals.
- C. Maintains a safe environment by addressing real and potential challenges to the physical and emotional safety and security of students and staff that interfere with teaching and learning
- D. Manages the organization, operations, and resources to promote student success and maintain a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- E. Develops and implements a budget process that manages fiscal expenditures consistent with district and school goals, policies, and available resources that is focused on and results in improved student achievement.
- F. Additional indicator as locally determined

Stakeholder Feedback

Multiple measures that seek information from students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors are used to inform a principal's evaluation in the state model. A variety of methodologies that incorporate different types of evidence from these stakeholders should be used to address the range of expectations outlined in the core competencies and indicators to provide a thorough assessment of the principal's performance.

One of the most commonly used methods is a survey. There are two approaches that have been used in doing this. One is to develop an in-house model and the second is to certify an external instrument or instruments that are to be used by all districts. Certification has usually been done by the state agency or other empowered entity.

An integral part of this model is the use of surveys to obtain feedback from those who interact with the principal on a regular basis. At a minimum this model requires feedback from teachers. This model leaves the decision as to how to do this to the local district. It also leaves the decisions as to which other stakeholders are surveyed to the districts but recommends the inclusion of other administrators, parents, and students. A portion of the summative evaluation

must include external feedback from stakeholders.

Examples of surveys that have been developed by states, local districts, or universities to be used for this purpose and examples of commercially prepared surveys are provided with the model. In addition, as part of the model's pilot, these surveys are being aligned with the models performance standards and used by districts so that additional guidance can be provided to districts as they select surveys and implement this component of the state model.

School Performance Measures

The process of setting learning goals, monitoring progress, and assessing the results is central to a quality evaluation process. School level performance data tied to established goals related to student outcomes are part of the state evaluation model. This component is designed to implement the requirement in statute specifying the use of longitudinal data on student academic growth as an evaluation component incorporating district achievement goals and targets.

Student achievement and school outcome goals are to be developed by the principal in collaboration with school and grade-level teams and/or content specific teachers and aligned to district goals. Goals in this area may be subject and subgroup specific.

Decisions of effectiveness in this component should not be determined based on a single assessment or source of evidence but should rely on multiple measures.

In collaboration with the evaluator, a principal will set student achievement goals in a SMART goals format based on NCLB waiver areas—proficiency, growth, graduation rates (if applicable), and achievement gap reduction. Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound. Results would be based on state assessment scores from the Minnesota Department of Education. When state assessment scores are released, the principal and evaluator assess the attainment of goals against a rubric like the one provided below.

State Level Measures - MCA Goals Rubric			
Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Exceeded <i>proficiency goals</i> for math and reading proficiency.	Met <i>proficiency goals</i> for math and reading proficiency.	Met <i>proficiency goal</i> for either math or reading proficiency.	Did not meet <i>proficiency goal</i> for either math or reading proficiency.
Exceeded academic <i>growth goals</i> for math and reading proficiency.	Met academic <i>growth goals</i> for math and reading proficiency.	Met academic <i>growth goal</i> for either math or reading proficiency.	Did not meet academic <i>growth goal</i> for either math or reading proficiency.

Exceeded <i>achievement gap reduction goals</i> for math and reading proficiency.	Met <i>achievement gap reduction goals</i> for math and reading proficiency.	Met <i>achievement gap reduction goal</i> for either math or reading proficiency.	Did not meet <i>achievement gap reduction goal</i> for either math or reading
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			proficiency.
If applicable, exceeded <i>graduation rates goal</i> .	If applicable, met <i>graduation rates goal</i> .	If applicable, did not meet <i>graduation rates goal</i> , and school graduation rates did not decrease.	If applicable, did not meet <i>graduation rates goal</i> , and school graduation rates decreased.
<i>Note: Evaluators will have a +/- 1 percentage point window. For example, the proficiency goal for math was to increase the percentage of students who are proficient or exceeding from 53% to 58%. Results at the end of the year show that 57% of students are proficient or exceeding. The evaluator can still grant credit for achieving the goal based on the principal's implementation of strategies supporting the goal.</i>			

In collaboration with the evaluator, a principal will select two additional goal areas to reflect the unique circumstances of a school or district and to reinforce accountability and focus on school and district initiatives.

Examples of goals:

1. Areas specific to one grade level or one sub-group of students;
2. Enrollment in rigorous courses;
3. Referrals for SPED services;
4. Student suspensions or disciplinary referrals;
5. Attendance;
6. Grade promotion;
7. MAP scores;
8. Student participation in activities

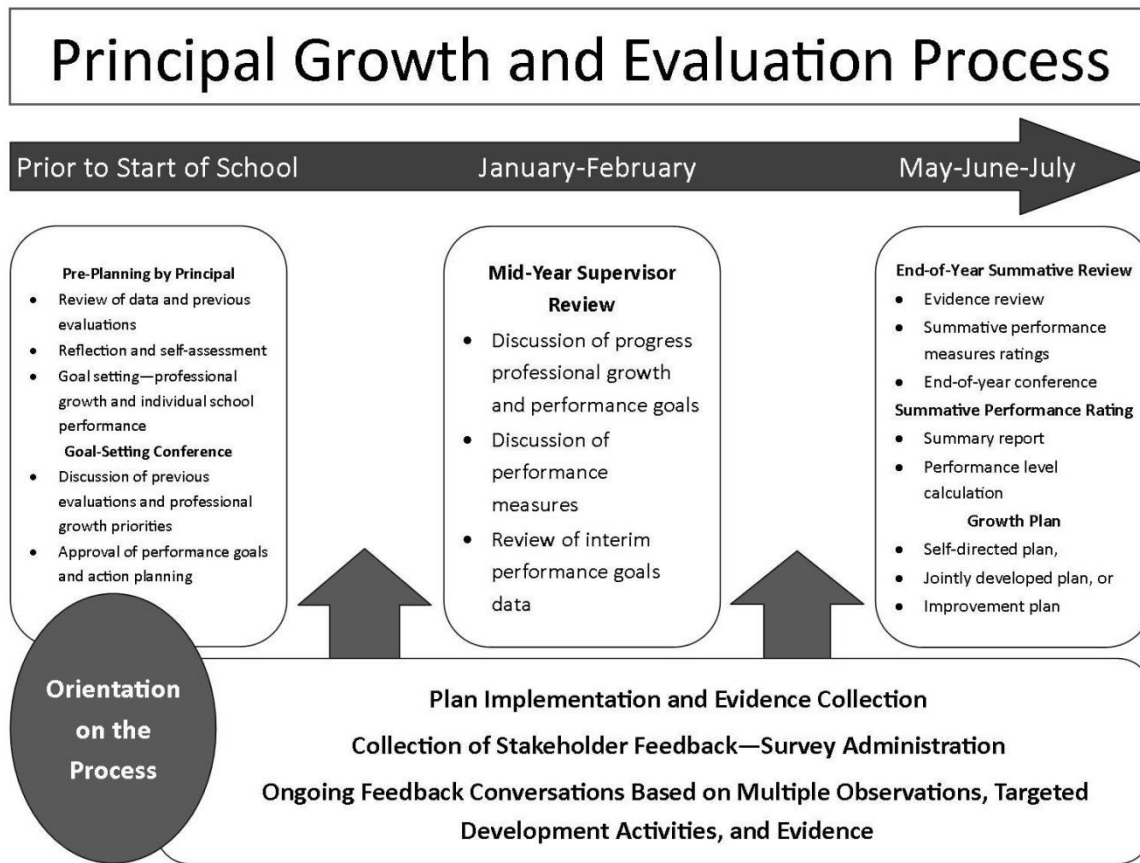
Individual goals will be attached to a data point that connects directly to students and student learning. Minnesota is currently piloting the principal model including the use of the additional goal areas reflecting areas beyond state accountability areas and assessments. Results of the pilot of the model will let us know what areas principals and evaluators used for these goals, whether these areas were valid measures, what supports are needed, and what guidance is needed by districts and evaluators to ensure that measures in the two additional goal areas are valid. In this we will attempt to balance the need for valid measures with the need for flexibility to focus on school and district context and initiatives. When goal attainment can be assessed based on the principal's goals and action plan, the principal and evaluator assess the attainment of goals against a rubric like the one provided below.

Individual School Performance Goals Rubric			
Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Exceeded both <i>individual goals</i> .	Met both <i>individual goals</i> .	Met one of the <i>individual goals</i> .	Did not meet either of the <i>individual goals</i> .

Based on assessment of goal attainment, the evaluator will assign the principal a score of 1-4 for both MCA goals and individual goals to be incorporated with scores from the leadership competencies rubric and from survey data. Scores from all elements are weighted in order to provide an overall evaluation of performance.

Annual Implementation Timeline

The three components of the state model for principal evaluation and support are implemented according to the following timeline of activities:

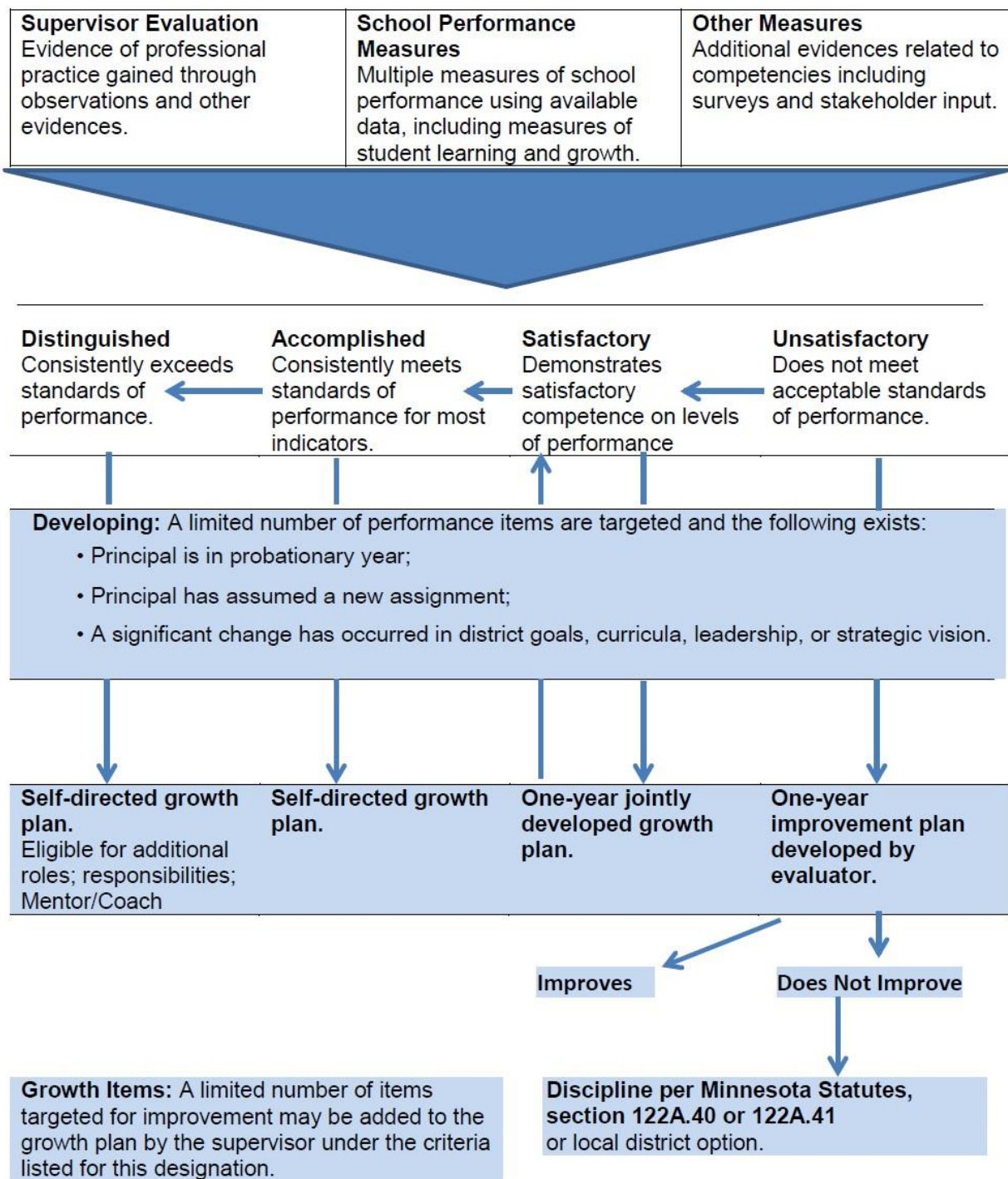


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Professional Growth Planning and Continuous Improvement

Finally, the state model incorporates a continuous cycle of professional development and improvement through evaluation activities and three types of annual growth plans. The type of individual growth plan is based on a principal's final performance rating as outlined in the following flowchart summarizing the model:

Summative Evaluation Performance Results



Throughout the process, both formative and summative evaluations are required elements. Principals begin the process with a required annual self-assessment based on the model performance measures (shared earlier) that focus on educational leadership and improvement of instruction. Based on self-assessment, principals formulate professional growth goals that support

continued development as instructional leaders. In formative evaluation conferences, principals share their self-assessment results and professional growth goals with evaluators, receive feedback, modify goals, and receive approval for goals and aligned growth activities from evaluators. Throughout the annual cycle, principals implement their plans for professional growth and receive continual feedback from evaluators, including required mid-year conferences. The summative, end-of-year conference includes a review of the original self-assessment, professional growth, and a summative evaluation of a principal's progress and current performance as a school instructional leader.

The full model can be found online at

http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=041370&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.

Teacher Evaluation and Support

The following table aligns Minnesota guidelines for teacher evaluation established in statute to waiver criteria as evidence of how they will lead to evaluation and support systems that will improve instruction and student achievement. Additional elaboration is provided based on the work of the stakeholder group established to support implementation of guidelines and teacher evaluation and support systems.

Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Teacher Evaluation Guidelines
Continual improvement of instruction	<p>(a) To improve student learning and success, a school board and an exclusive representative of the teachers in the district, consistent with paragraph (b), may develop a teacher evaluation and peer review process for probationary and continuing contract teachers through joint agreement. If a school board and the exclusive representative of the teachers do not agree to an annual teacher evaluation and peer review process, then the school board and the exclusive representative of the teachers must implement the plan for evaluation and review under paragraph (c). The process must include having trained observers serve as peer coaches or having teachers participate in professional learning communities, consistent with paragraph (b).</p> <p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community under</p>

	paragraph (a), and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a
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Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Teacher Evaluation Guidelines
	<p>school administrator. For the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluator, the teacher must be evaluated by a peer review;</p> <p>(3) must be based on professional teaching standards established in rule;</p>
Differentiated performance using at least three performance levels	See below
Multiple valid measures for determining performance levels, including data on student growth for all students as a significant factor	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community under paragraph (a), and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator. For the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluator, the teacher must be evaluated by a peer review;</p> <p>(7) must include an option for teachers to develop and present a portfolio demonstrating evidence of reflection and professional growth, consistent with section 122A.18, subdivision 4, paragraph (b), and include teachers' own performance assessment based on student work samples and examples of teachers' work, which may include video among other activities for the summative evaluation;</p> <p>(8) must use data from valid and reliable assessments aligned to state and local academic standards and must use state and local measures of student growth that may include value-added models or student learning goals to determine 35 percent of teacher evaluation results</p> <p>(9) must use longitudinal data on student engagement and connection, and other student outcome measures explicitly aligned with the elements of curriculum for which teachers are responsible;</p>

Evaluation of teachers and principals on a regular basis	<p><i>Probationary Teachers:</i></p> <p>Subd. 5. Probationary period. (a) The first three consecutive years of a teacher's first teaching experience in Minnesota in a single district is deemed to be a probationary period of employment, and, the probationary period in each district in which the teacher is thereafter employed shall be one year. The school board must adopt a plan for written evaluation of</p>
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Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Teacher Evaluation Guidelines
	<p>teachers during the probationary period that is consistent with subdivision 8. Evaluation must occur at least three times periodically throughout each school year for a teacher performing services during that school year; the first evaluation must occur within the first 90 days of teaching service.</p> <p><i>Continuing Contract Teachers:</i></p> <p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(1) must, for probationary teachers, provide for all evaluations required under subdivision 5;</p> <p>(2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community under paragraph (a), and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator. For the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluator, the teacher must be evaluated by a peer review;</p>
Clear, useful, and timely feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community under paragraph (a), and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator. For the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluator, the teacher must be evaluated by a peer review;</p> <p>(4) must coordinate staff development activities under sections 122A.60 and 122A.61 with this evaluation process and teachers' evaluation outcomes;</p> <p>(5) may provide time during the school day and school year for peer coaching and teacher collaboration;</p> <p>(6) may include mentoring and induction programs;</p> <p>(11) must give teachers not meeting professional teaching standards under clauses (3) through (10) support to improve through a teacher improvement process that includes</p>

Principle Three Elements	Minnesota Teacher Evaluation Guidelines
	established goals and timelines;
Use to inform personnel decisions	(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers: (11) must give teachers not meeting professional teaching standards under clauses (3) through (10) support to improve through a teacher improvement process that includes established goals and timelines; and (12) must discipline a teacher for not making adequate progress in the teacher improvement process under clause (11) that may include a last chance warning, termination, discharge, nonrenewal, transfer to a different position, a leave of absence, or other discipline a school administrator determines is appropriate.

Minnesota statute does not define the number of differentiated performance levels that must be implemented in evaluation and support models. The Minnesota state model for teacher evaluation and support is being developed with four performance levels.

Performance Rating 4: Exemplary Evidence of exceptional performance exists. The teacher exceeds performance standards and shows leadership, initiative, and the ability to model and mentor colleagues

Performance Rating 3: Effective Evidence of strong performance at a rigorous level exists. The teacher integrates knowledge, is collaborative, and consistently meets performance standards

Performance Rating 2: Development Needed Limited evidence of satisfactory performance exists. Development is needed in some performance areas. Improvement is expected

Performance Rating 1: Unsatisfactory Evidence exists that performance is consistently below standards. Assistance and significant improvement are required.

In support of principle three elements, locally developed models must differentiate teacher performance using at least three performance levels to be approved when reviewed through the process for ensuring that each local district develops, adopts, and implements systems outlined in section 3.B. below.

Teacher Evaluation Work Group

Minnesota statute mandates full implementation of teacher evaluation and support systems one year after implementation of principal systems. As a result, the state teacher evaluation and support model will be completed in December 2012 with the pilot taking place in school year 2013-2014, one year after the pilot for the principal model.

A teacher evaluation work group was established in the fall of 2011. This stakeholder group consists of parents, teachers and administrators appointed by their respective representative organizations, including the Board of Teaching, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota School Boards Association, the Minnesota Elementary and Secondary Principals Associations, Education Minnesota, and representatives of the Minnesota Assessment Group, the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and Minnesota postsecondary institutions with research expertise in teacher evaluation. The stakeholder group has been charged with developing the Minnesota state model for teacher evaluation and support. This model will serve as an example process that meets all of the guidelines outlined above by Minnesota statute. Human resources from the Minnesota Department of Education have been assigned to subcommittees to lend expertise and support the model's development.

The following schedule of meetings overviews the group's work to date and outlines the work group's time line for development of model components:

Date	Outcomes
Tuesday, December 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Charge to the group • Review of legislation • Review of information at federal level (NCLB Legislation) • Prepare questions for January meeting on assessment, longitudinal data, etc. • Set calendar and adjust agendas for upcoming meetings
Thursday, January 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint meeting with principal evaluation working group for presentation from MDE on what assessment, value-added, longitudinal data is available. • Discussion of information from presentation • Set calendar and adjust agendas for upcoming meetings
Thursday, February 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of co-chairs • Review of Board of Teaching professional teaching standards established in rule • Review of Q-Comp, TAP and SIG evaluation models • Review principal evaluation model and relationship to teacher evaluation • Set calendar and adjust agendas for upcoming meetings
Wednesday, March 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting back • Measuring Effective Teaching (MET) presentation (Gates Foundation) • District Management Council presentation: Steps to developing a model

Date	Outcomes
Wednesday, May 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation: TRIPOD (Survey instruments) ● Vision for the teacher growth and evaluation model ● National perspective: What other states are doing ● Determine major components of model—What are they?—and needed terms and terminology ● Establish sub-groups for committee work on components
Thursday, May 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of model—Subcommittee discussions, defining their tasks ● Issues: Performance categories—Number of categories, category names ● Review current models developed by Minnesota districts ● Issues: Definition of terms and agreement on terminology
June 19 & 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of model—Subcommittee working meetings, developing and refining model components ● Issues: Performance categories—Category descriptors ● Subcommittee presentation—Professional development (teacher induction) ● Subcommittee presentation—Performance standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Core competencies for evaluation or strands ○ Indicators for core competencies ○ Rubrics for indicators
July 10 & 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of model—Subcommittee working meetings, developing and refining model components ● Subcommittee presentation—Student achievement data--VARC ● Subcommittee presentation—Growth and evaluation cycle and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issues: The process— 3-year cycle, timelines, forms, etc. ○ Individual growth plans ○ Peer review design ○ Portfolio review ● Subcommittee presentation—Professional development (Issues: Evaluator training)
August 13 & 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of model—Subcommittee working meetings, developing and refining model components ● Subcommittee presentation—Student engagement data (Use of longitudinal data/ student engagement) ● Subcommittee presentation—Student achievement data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issues: Teacher value-added assessment components ○ Non-tested areas

Date	Outcomes
Thursday, September 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of model—Subcommittee working meetings, developing and refining model components • Subcommittee presentation—Growth and evaluation cycle and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issues: The process— 3-year cycle, timelines, forms, etc. ○ Individual growth plans ○ Peer review design ○ Portfolio review • Remediation and discipline components, legal implications, consequences for failure to meet acceptable performance standards • Weights of measures in overall teacher ratings
Thursday, October 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of model—Subcommittee working meetings, developing and refining model components • Subcommittee presentation—Professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issues: Other requirements in statute ○ Role of professional learning communities ○ Coordination with staff development
Thursday, November 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of outline of draft model--Discussion and revisions • Final decisions • Assessment of the model—Outcomes, processes
Thursday, December 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of final teacher growth and evaluation model • Presentation of model to Commissioner for final approval
January 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan—Communicating requirements and details of model • Subcommittee presentation—Implementation and LEA support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher orientation and training ○ Approval processes for LEA-developed/adopted models ○ Implementation rubric for LEA use ○ LEA assurances
February 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation details (Evaluator training; non-tested subjects; peer review components; portfolio structures) • Subcommittee presentation—Professional development

The work group has currently been divided into six subcommittees to complete the model and, as outlined in the approved Minnesota waiver application, submit the model for approval by December 2012. The following table overviews the six subcommittees and their areas of responsibility:

Sub-Committee	Related Statutory Language	Considerations/Key Decisions/Products
1. Growth and	(b) To develop, improve, and	1. The other 65%

Sub-Committee	Related Statutory Language	Considerations/Key Decisions/Products
Evaluation Cycle and Activities	<p>support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(1) must, for probationary teachers, provide for all evaluations required under subdivision 5;</p> <p>(2) must establish a three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community under paragraph (a), and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator;</p> <p>(7) must include an option for teachers to develop and present a portfolio demonstrating evidence of reflection and professional growth, consistent with section 122A.18, subdivision 4, paragraph (b), and include teachers' own performance assessment based on student work samples and examples of teachers' work, which may include video among other activities for the summative evaluation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Annual evaluation process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Professional review cycle for probationary teachers b. Professional review cycle for continuing contract teachers c. Other licensed teachers 3. Evaluation tools that are deemed fair, transparent, rigorous, and valid 4. Peer review 5. CCSS and content standards 6. Equity for all sizes/shapes/types of districts
2. Performance Standards	(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and	1. Core competencies (quality standards for teacher assessment)

Sub-Committee	Related Statutory Language	Considerations/Key Decisions/Products
	<p>effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(3) must be based on professional teaching standards established in rule</p>	<p>a. Classroom teachers b. Other licensed teachers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. CCSS and content standards 3. Criteria used to differentiate between performance standards that include categories (i.e. highly effective, effective, ineffective) 4. Evaluation rubrics that are deemed fair, transparent, rigorous, and valid
3. Student Achievement Data	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(8) must use an agreed upon teacher value-added assessment model for the grade levels and subject areas for which value-added data are available and establish state or local measures of student growth for the grade levels and subject areas for which value-added data are not available as a basis for 35 percent of teacher evaluation results</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meaning of value-added 2. Value-Added Research Center; University of Wisconsin 3. Shared goals (individual versus site—35%) 4. CCSS and content standards and implications for the 35% 5. Tested grades and subject areas 6. Non-tested grades and subject areas 7. Teachers of EL students and students with special needs
4. Student Engagement Data	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(9) must use longitudinal data on student engagement and connection and other student outcome measures explicitly aligned with the elements of</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student connectedness 2. Feedback and surveys (identify/develop survey(s), implementation recommendations)

Sub-Committee	Related Statutory Language	Considerations/Key Decisions/Products
	curriculum for which teachers are responsible	
5. Implementation and LEA Support	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(10) must require qualified and trained evaluators such as school administrators to perform summative evaluations;</p> <p>(WAIVER—Approval process for LEA’s teacher evaluation and support systems)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Five-year implementation timeline including model development, model refinement, pilot year, full implementation, and implementation refinement 2. Ongoing training to ensure full understanding of the system and its implementation 3. Trained evaluators (what and when no trained evaluator exists) 4. Adequate training to ensure teachers fully understand student academic growth data 5. Funding and projected costs associated with implementation plan 6. Recommendations for policy changes that will support the evaluation system (i.e. licensure, compensation, promotion) 7. Approval process for LEA teacher evaluation and support systems to ensure they are consistent with guidelines and result in successful implementation 8. Timelines for districts to determine their evaluation model 9. MDE-developed implementation rubric for LEA use including the types of evaluation tools (surveys, observation tools, student growth models, professional growth plans, etc.), requirements ensure inter-rater reliability training for evaluators, and training of educators in the evaluation model 10. LEA assurances that all evaluators are adequately trained to demonstrate the ability to make accurate judgments and that their evaluation model is

Sub-Committee	Related Statutory Language	Considerations/Key Decisions/Products
		implemented with fidelity
6. Professional Development	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(4) must coordinate staff development activities under sections 122A.60 and 122A.61 with this evaluation process and teachers' evaluation outcomes;</p> <p>(5) may provide time during the school day and school year for peer coaching and teacher collaboration;</p> <p>(6) may include mentoring and induction programs;</p> <p>(11) must give teachers not meeting professional teaching standards under clauses (3) through (10) support to improve through a teacher improvement process that includes established goals and timelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data to be collected, disseminated, used for PD planning 2. Adequate training to ensure teachers fully understand student academic growth data 3. Recommendations for the development and implementation of a continuous improvement process supported by the new evaluation system 4. Alignment with teacher preparation
TBD Based on Developed Model and/or Work Group Decision	<p>(b) To develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success, the annual evaluation process for teachers:</p> <p>(12) must discipline a teacher for not making adequate progress in the teacher improvement process under clause (11) that may include a last chance warning,</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process by which a teacher may appeal his or her rating of "ineffective" 2. Recommendations for policy changes that will support the evaluation system (i.e. retention, removal)

Sub-Committee	Related Statutory Language	Considerations/Key Decisions/Products
	termination, discharge, nonrenewal, transfer to a different position, a leave of absence, or other discipline a school administrator determines is appropriate.	

The Three-Year Review Cycle and Continuous Feedback

Based on workgroup recommendations and Minnesota guidelines, the final teacher evaluation model will differentiate between new and experienced teachers, contain common elements for all teachers, and have the option for alternative measures for teacher performance.

Probationary teachers are defined as those in their first three years of teaching and who do not have a continuing contract. Their model will

- Require at least three formal observations periodically throughout each school year with the first evaluation occurring within the first 90 days of teaching service
- Promote continuous improvement and collaboration with professional colleagues by having trained peer observers serve as mentors or coaches, and by encouraging participation in professional learning communities to develop, improve, and support effective teaching practices
- Include peer review, self-assessment, and review of student impact data annually in the current state model

Tenured or continuing contract teachers are defined as teachers having successfully completed their three-year probationary period. Their model will require

- A three-year professional review cycle for each teacher that includes a peer review process (The current state model will include peer review, self-assessment, and review of student impact data annually.)
- At least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator
- Peer review in the years when a tenured teacher is not evaluated by a qualified and trained evaluator

The annual peer review process is required in statutory guidelines and has a central role in the state model as developed by the work group. As with points of contact and classroom observations with the summative evaluator, a teacher defines points of contact with the peer reviewer throughout the three-year cycle. Each point of contact must be documented and include face-to-face feedback on teacher practice and impact on students. Annually a teacher reviews self-assessment results with the peer reviewer and receives overall feedback on practice, student learning impact, student engagement impact, and growth. The peer reviewer assists the teacher annually with revising an individual growth and development plan based on review results.

The Workgroup will provide guidance in specifying the frequency of formative observations and various forms of feedback (e.g., coaching, self-assessments, formal and informal walkthroughs, and parent and student surveys) that occur throughout the three-year professional review cycle. Throughout the three-year cycle teachers will receive continuous feedback to improve instruction through activities required by Statute—a growth and development plan, peer review, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community, and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained summative evaluator such as a school administrator.

In addition, the current default model being developed by the Workgroup defines a specified minimum number of and types of “points of contact” that must take place each year of the three-year cycle. Points of contact describe the defined opportunities for a *qualified and trained summative evaluator such as a school administrator* to provide feedback to a teacher for continual improvement of instruction. During the first two years of the three year cycle, all required points of contact are directed by the teacher. During the summative year, some points of contact are selected by the teacher and some are selected by the evaluator. All points of contact must be

- Face to face
- Documented
- Grounded in a teacher’s growth and development plan and/or Minnesota’s professional teaching standards

Support with established goals and time lines for teachers not meeting professional teaching standards is required by Statute. Teachers with a summative rating of “Unsatisfactory” are defined as not meeting standards under the state model. Disciplinary action for teachers who do not adequately improve is also required. The Workgroup’s subcommittee dedicated to professional development has developed a teacher assistance and support process for these teachers. There are three phases in the process: 1) awareness, 2) assistance, and 3) discipline. Each phase has specific procedures and types of support grounded in a professional development plan specific to teacher’s needs as determined by the evaluation process. The process is intentionally set up to enter the teacher at the awareness phase. Teachers are entered into the process in phase 2 or phase 3. The Discipline Phase of the process is the final stage for issues related lack of improvement and issues related to instructional performance aligned with district standards and expectations. The discipline phase is guided by specific outcomes in the teacher’s areas needing improvement and by specific timelines for improvement. A teacher remains in the process until performance is judged by the district to be satisfactory in all domains of the standards and expectations of performance or until the district concludes that a teacher has had sufficient time and resources to improve to a satisfactory level and has not done so. In the case of improved performance, the teacher is removed from of the process and the regular three-year cycle of development and evaluation. In the case of no improvement, the teacher is subject to employee discipline, including but not limited to termination of employment. No specific disciplinary actions are mandated in statutory guidelines.

Through continuous feedback from required activities, the points of contact, and required support for underperforming teachers, teachers will develop individual learning plans that improve instruction and guide their professional development.

The work group's model will be based on the definition of effective instruction as outlined in Minnesota's professional teaching standards. The standards define effective teachers in the areas of subject matter knowledge; student learning; diverse learners; instructional strategies; learning environment; communication; planning instruction; assessment; reflection and professional development; and collaboration, ethics, and relationships.

The model will include an option for teachers present a portfolio demonstrating evidence of reflection and professional growth, including the teachers' own performance assessment based on student work samples and examples of teachers' work. It may also include video among other activities for the summative evaluation. Measures of teacher performance via portfolio captures the many facets of effective teaching beyond evidence collected during a teacher observation process (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality Research to Practice Brief, 2011).

Measures of Student Growth

Statutory guidelines require that 35% of teacher evaluations be based state and local measures of student growth from valid and reliable assessments aligned with academic standards. A subcommittee has been established on the teacher evaluation work group to specifically address this requirement for the state model, which is the state's guidance for districts. The subcommittee's recommendation, which is currently being piloted, utilizes combinations of value-added data and student learning goals as measures of student growth. Teachers in tested areas utilize both value-added measures and student learning goals; teachers in untested areas use only student learning goals.

Value-added would be calculated based on multiple assessments of student learning. First, assessments from the state accountability system will be used. These assessments meet requirements that assessments are aligned to the most recent Minnesota academic standards and take place (1) in math annually in grades 3-8 and once in high school; (2) in reading annually in grades 3-8 and once in high school; (3) in science once in elementary school, once in middle school, and once in high school; and (4) for English learners in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Graduation tests in reading, math, and writing are also required. The current system includes Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), language proficiency tests (ACCESS for ELLs), and Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD).

In alignment with state statute, it is the subcommittee's recommendation that other local assessments could be used in addition to state assessments in value-added calculations if they meet the following four criteria:

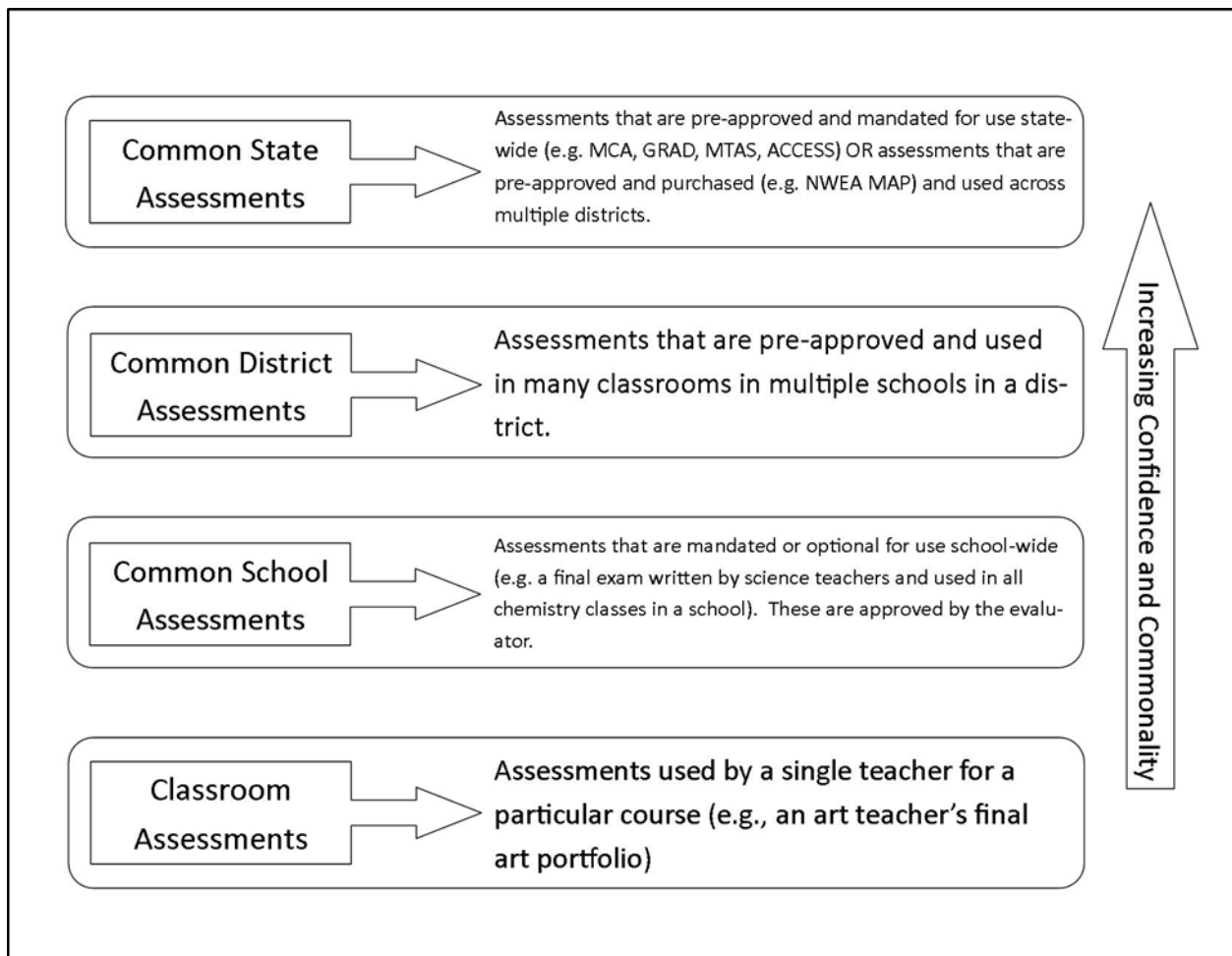
1. Classification accuracy (the extent to which a tool is able to accurately classify students into categories)
2. Generalizability (the extent to which results generated from one population can be applied to another population)
3. Reliability (the extent to which a tool classifies students from one administration to the

next)

4. Validity (the extent to which a tool accurately measures the underlying construct that it is intended to measure)

For teachers in untested areas—areas not covered by the state accountability system or other assessments meeting the four criteria above—for all or part of the day, a student learning goals

process would be used. It is the recommendation that teachers will use two types of student learning goals—class goals and targeted goals. A class goal is a long-term academic goal covering a significant population with which the teacher works and covering the curriculum for which the teacher is responsible with those students. A targeted goal is a long-term academic goal covering a group of students at a low level of preparedness and covering a specific curriculum area selected based on student needs. Student learning goals results must be based on assessments with the highest levels of confidence and commonality—state assessments then district-level assessment then school-wide or grade-level common assessments then classroom assessments—but specific measures are not required. The following graphic represents levels of confidence and commonality in the state model’s process:



In addition, a measure of shared performance would be used for 5% of all teacher evaluations. This measure would be based on school-wide results on goals for school improvement as measured by assessments from the state accountability system or other assessments that meet the criteria established above.

No value-added model has been recommended by the subcommittee. Minnesota is currently

piloting a value-added model and the student learning goals process in school year 2013-2014 and will make final decisions based on pilot results. The pilot will inform decisions regarding the “weighting” guidance offered to districts through the state model (i.e., how are different measures reflected in a teacher’s summative evaluation and the level of significance of state and local measures). Districts that adopt the state model will use the guidance provided to make decisions about “weighting” value-added measures, student learning goals, and measures of shared performance as well as decisions about “weighting” state assessments and local assessments.

If districts develop their own local models rather than adopting the state model, Minnesota Statute allows districts to determine local assessments used with state assessments to measure student growth. Districts must use state measures per statute. MDE has considered how it plans to approach the problem of how heavily the state MCA assessment should be weighted in locally developed models and how it plans to determine whether or not the state MCA assessment is considered to a “significant” degree in the local system. Minnesota will offer guidance as stated above but has no statutory authority compelling districts to use state MCA assessments in a significant manner for teacher evaluation.

All model development is research-based. Guidance has been provided from experts within the workgroup as well external technical assistance from Education Counsel and New Teachers and New Leaders to develop valid and reliable evaluation measures and ensure consistent application across LEAs. Our key sources are noted below.

- *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems* (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, available at: <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/practicalGuideEvalSystems.pdf>).
- *Great Teachers and Leaders: State Considerations on Building Systems of Educator Effectiveness* (Reform Support Network, available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/great-teachers.doc>).
- *Guide to Teacher Evaluation Products* (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, available at: <http://www3.learningpt.org/tqsource/GEP>).
- *Getting It Right: A Comprehensive Guide to Developing and Sustaining Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems* (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, available at: http://www.nbpts.org/userfiles/file/NBPTS_Getting-It-Right.pdf).
- *Measuring Student Growth for Teachers in Non-Tested Grades and Subjects: A Primer* (Reform Support Network, available at: http://www.swcompcenter.org/educator_effectiveness2/NTS_PRIMER_FINAL.pdf).
- *Alternative Measures of Teacher Performance* (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, available at: http://www.tqsource.org/pdfs/TQ_Policy-to-PracticeBriefAlternativeMeasures.pdf).
- *Measuring Teachers Contributions to Student Learning Growth for Non- tested Grades and Subjects* (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, available at: <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/MeasuringTeachersContributions.pdf>.)

Workgroup membership includes teachers of English learners and teachers of students with disabilities. As their teaching situations are often qualitatively different from their full-time general education colleagues, it is critical to ensure their unique perspectives are taken into consideration. They frequently teach general education students part of the time and specialized groups part of the time or in combination, teach multiple classes, or serve as consulting teachers.

Meeting notes, meeting materials and resources, presentations, and further information for the teacher evaluation work group can be found online at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/TeacEvalWorkGrp/index.html>.

Evidence of the Adoption of Guidelines

Guidelines for Minnesota principal and teacher evaluation and support are articulated in statute. Five statutes provide guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. MS 122A.60 defines the role of the staff development committee and lists requirements for plans, outcomes focused on continuous improvement, and effective SD activities. MS 122A.40 and MS 122A.41 define guidelines for the annual teacher evaluation and peer review process for all teachers and the use of the evaluation process for personnel decisions. MS 123B.147 defines guidelines for the annual performance-based principal evaluation system. MS 123B.143 defines the responsibility of the superintendent to annually evaluate each school principal. Attachment 10 to Minnesota's approved waiver request included these five statutes.

Minnesota does not operate under a State Board of Education. The Commissioner of Education has authority to enforce mandates in state statute.

Description of the Process Used to Involve Teachers and Principals in the Development of Guidelines

Development of Principal Evaluation Guidelines

Minnesota adopted legislation provided specific parameters and guidelines regarding principal evaluation. The Department of Education is required to consult with stakeholders to create and publish a principal evaluation process. Local districts are required to either implement the state-developed model or a locally-developed model that meets state criteria.

The principal evaluation work group was convened in October 2011 and completed the principal evaluation and support model outlined above and report to the legislature in February 2012. A list of required stakeholder membership, meeting schedule, and agenda items was submitted as Attachment 18 of Minnesota's approved Waiver Request Application. Workgroup members included the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals. Additionally a group of recognized and qualified experts and interested stakeholders, including principals, superintendents, teachers, school board members, and parents, among other stakeholders, were appointed to the work group.

In addition, the Department partnered with the VIVA Project, the Joyce Foundation, and the Bush

Foundation in a project designed to elicit teacher feedback into the core competencies and process for the principal evaluation model. VIVA utilized social media to connect teachers across the state on a topic—in our case principal and teacher evaluation. VIVA led a moderated discussion on competencies, evaluation tools, and elements needed to have an effective evaluation system. Teachers themselves wrote a final report that was presented to the task force, the legislature, and the Commissioner. The process began in the fall of 2011 with the written report being received by the principal evaluation work group in February 2012, and will continue into 2012 as the principal model is implemented, providing ongoing feedback about the new system, its effectiveness, and the impact of the competencies on their success as instructional leaders.

Meeting notes, meeting materials and resources, presentations, and further information for the teacher evaluation work group can be found online at

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/PrincEvalWorkGroup/index.html>.

Development of Teacher Evaluation Guidelines

The teacher evaluation workgroup, which convened in December 2011, includes a broad base representation of Minnesota stakeholders—parents, teachers and administrators appointed by their respective representative organizations, including the Board of Teaching, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota School Boards Association, the Minnesota Elementary and Secondary Principals Associations, Education Minnesota, and representatives of the Minnesota Assessment Group, the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and Minnesota postsecondary institutions with research expertise in teacher evaluation.

As outlined above, the work group is in the process of developing an evaluation model and support system designed to improve student learning and success. The model will be based on the 2011 Minnesota teacher evaluation legislation, ESEA waiver expectations, and recommendations from the New Teacher Project, 2009. Together they will provide tools that:

- Occur frequently
- Focus on teaching and learning
- Differentiate by years of teaching and area of teaching
- Provide a foundation for teacher development and improvement
- Play an important role in employment decisions

In addition, the Department is partnering with the VIVA Project, the Joyce Foundation, and the Bush Foundation to replicate the project used to elicit teacher feedback for the design of the principal evaluation process. VIVA will utilize social media to connect teachers across the state on a topic—in this case teacher evaluation. VIVA will led a moderated discussion on competencies, evaluation tools, and elements needed to have an effective evaluation system. Teachers

themselves will write a final report that will be presented to the task force, the legislature, and the Commissioner. The process will begin in July 2012 with the written report being received by the work group in October 2012.

As stipulated in Minnesota statute, local districts will be required to implement either the state model or a locally-developed system for teacher evaluation and support that meets state guidelines.

Meeting notes, meeting materials and resources, presentations, and further information for the teacher evaluation work group can be found online at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/TeacEvalWorkGrp/index.html>.

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

Process for Ensuring That Each Local District Develops, Adopts, Pilots, and Implements, with the Involvement of Teachers and Principals, Evaluation and Support Systems Consistent with Adopted Guidelines

Principal Evaluation and Support Models

Minnesota has a decade of history leading the effort to establish principal evaluations. Three important principal effectiveness initiatives informed and provided the foundation for the development and implementation of the statewide principal evaluation and support.

1. *The Minnesota Principal Academy.* This group was established in collaboration with the National Institute of School Leadership. The academy's purpose is to ensure school leaders have the knowledge, skills and tools to offer direction to teachers and design an efficient organization, which helps improve student achievement in low-performing schools or lead good schools to great performance.
2. *SIG Principal Evaluations.* Minnesota's School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools are implementing rigorous, transparent, and equitable principal evaluation systems that take into account student growth and are aligned to professional development.
3. *K-12 Principal Competency Evaluations.* Four Minnesota professional organizations collaboratively developed a principal evaluation process that emphasized accountability and was framed around continuous improvement and aligned to Minnesota's K-12 Principal Competencies.

The principal evaluation workgroup, as outlined above, collaborated with MDE to create and publish a principal evaluation model that complies with guidelines established in statute. The law requires MDE to:

- Develop a performance-based system model for annually evaluating school principals
- Consider how principals develop and maintain high standards for student performance, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, a culture of learning and professional behavior, connections to external communities, systemic performance accountability, and leadership behaviors that create effective schools and improve school performance
- Consider whether to establish a multi-tiered evaluation system that supports newly-licensed principals in becoming highly-skilled school leaders and provide opportunities for advanced learning for experienced school leaders

A carefully-articulated implementation timeline is established that outlines activities over a five-year period and includes a phased approach as set forth in MS 122A.41. The five phases are summarized below.

1. *2011-2012 Model Development.* Develop core competencies, specify evaluator training requirements, enhance data systems, and determine approval process of local district models.
2. *2012-2013 Pilot Year.* Select districts will participate in the new evaluation process including evaluator training. Revise model based on pilot feedback. Monitor initial fidelity of implementation.
3. *2013-2014 Full Implementation.* All LEAs statewide will implement principal evaluation and support models.
4. *2014-2015 Implementation Refinement.* Continue monitoring evaluation system for continuous improvement. Provide ongoing professional development.
5. *2015-2016 Monitor for Fidelity of Implementation.* Continue monitoring evaluation system for continuous improvement. Provide ongoing professional development.

Teacher Evaluation and Support Models

Minnesota has been a leader in teacher effectiveness over the past decade. Five important statewide initiatives lay the groundwork for the development of the statewide Minnesota teacher evaluation and support model.

1. *Q Comp* – This program is aimed at improving teaching and learning through job-embedded professional development. It connects the dots between teacher observation, professional growth, professional development, and student achievement.
2. *School Improvement Planning.* Minnesota's School Improvement Grant Schools are required to implement rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluations systems for teachers that take into account student growth and are aligned to professional development.
3. *Teacher Support Partnership (TSP).* Through this effort new teacher induction guidelines have been developed to assist LEAs in implementing comprehensive new teacher programs focused on standards-based observations, mentoring, coaching, professional development and teacher growth.
4. *Teacher Performance Assessment.* Minnesota's teacher preparation institutions have piloted and are now implementing the Teacher Performance Assessment which measures pre-service teachers' ability to support and advance student achievement.
5. *Professional Development Plans.* MS 122A.41 requires LEAs to create and implement plans for professional development that support stable and productive professional communities through ongoing and school-wide progress and growth in teacher practice. Plans must emphasize coaching, professional learning communities, classroom action research, and other job-embedded models. They must maintain a strong subject matter focus premised on students' learning goals. Plans must ensure specialized preparation and learning issues related to teaching students with special needs and limited English proficiency and English Learners and reinforce national and state standards of effective teaching practices.

Minnesota is extending the lessons learned from current practices and initiatives into a widely-

accepted, effective teacher evaluation model. A carefully articulated implementation timeline is established that outlines activities over a five-year period and includes a phased approach is attached as set forth in MS 122A.41. The five phases are summarized below.

1. *2011-2012, 2012-2013 Model Development.* Develop core competencies, state model, and training requirements. Design evaluator training, enhance state data systems, and determine SEA approval process of LEA models
2. *2013-2014 Pilot Year.* Select schools will participate in the new evaluation process including evaluator training. Model revision based on pilot feedback. Monitor initial fidelity of implementation
3. *2014-2015 Full Implementation.* All LEAs statewide will implement teacher evaluation and support models. Provide ongoing professional development.
4. *2015-2016 Implementation Refinement.* Adjustments will be made to the model and implementation strategies based on lessons learned. Provide ongoing professional development.

Implementation Work Plan and Time Line

The following work plan provides more detail for implementation of Minnesota's principal and teacher evaluation and support systems. This plan ensures that local districts meet the timeline requirements by either 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 implementing systems no later than the 2013-2014 school year. The work plan demonstrates Minnesota's understanding of the necessary steps and sequencing of those steps to implement educator evaluation and support systems.

Project Activities and Milestones	Completed	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012-2013	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013-2014	Spring/Summer 2014	Fall/Winter 2014	Spring/Summer 2015	Fall/Winter 2015	Spring/Summer 2016	Fall/Winter 2016
Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership															
3.A Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems															
<i>Outcome: Guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation systems developed and adopted.</i>															
Enact guidelines for adoption of teacher and principal evaluation systems per 2011 MN Legislative Session laws		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Determine teacher evaluation work group	X														

Determine principal evaluation work group	X														
Notify members of teacher	X														

Project Activities and Milestones	Completed	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012-2013	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013-2014	Spring/Summer 2014	Fall/Winter 2014	Spring/Summer 2015	Fall/Winter 2015	Spring/Summer 2016	Fall/Winter 2016
evaluation work group															
Notify members of principal evaluation work group	X														
Convene teacher evaluation work group	X														
Develop teacher evaluation model and support system		X	X	X	X										
Develop principal evaluation model that will support principals in shaping school's professional environment and developing teacher quality, performance and effectiveness	X														
Submit teacher evaluation guidelines to be adopted by end of 2011-2012 school year	X														
Submit principal evaluation guidelines to be adopted by end of 2011-2012 school year	X														
Review recommendations, revise, and resubmit			X												
3.B Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems <i>Outcome: Quality of teacher and principal performance is high level as reflected in increases in student performance and closing the achievement gap in Minnesota.</i>															
TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM															
Complete development of core competencies for Teacher Evaluation			X	X	X										
Present recommendations to the legislature						X									
Gather state model instruments	X														
Select/adapt/develop state model instruments			X	X	X										
Design evaluator training based on state model					X	X				X					
Enhance current state's data systems to share state-level student outcomes information with LEAs							X	X	X	X					

Project Activities and Milestones	Completed	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012-2013	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013-2014	Spring/Summer 2014	Fall/Winter 2014	Spring/Summer 2015	Fall/Winter 2015	Spring/Summer 2016	Fall/Winter 2016
Determine SEA approval process for LEAs seeking to implement their own model									X						
Select/adapt/develop state model instruments			X	X	X										
Implement a statewide pilot that includes student outcome measures and require SIG schools to participate						X	X	X	X	X					
Select LEAs to pilot all state instruments and revise as needed					X	X				X					
Conduct evaluator training and revise as needed										X	X			X	X
Design process to monitor fidelity of implementation										X					
Monitor evaluation system as basis for continuous improvement											X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing professional development and resources										X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing training on implementation of the state model										X	X	X	X	X	X
Review, refine and revise evaluation model										X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to monitor evaluation system as basis for continuous improvement										X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing professional development and training										X	X	X	X	X	X
PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM															
Complete development of core competencies for Principal Evaluation	X														
Present recommendations to the legislature	X														
Gather state model instruments	X														

Select/adapt/develop state model instruments	X														
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Project Activities and Milestones	Completed	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012-2013	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013-2014	Spring/Summer 2014	Fall/Winter 2014	Spring/Summer 2015	Fall/Winter 2015	Spring/Summer 2016	Fall/Winter 2016
Design evaluator training based on state model		X				X	X								
Enhance current state's data systems to share state-level student outcomes information with LEAs			X	X	X	X	X								
Determine SEA approval process for LEAs seeking to implement their own model				X	X	X									
Implement a statewide pilot that includes student outcome measures			X	X	X	X	X								
Select LEAs to pilot all state instruments and revise as needed	X														
Conduct evaluator training and revise as needed						X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Design process to monitor fidelity of implementation			X	X	X										
Monitor evaluation system as basis for continuous improvement							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing professional development and resources							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing training on implementation of the state model							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review, refine and revise evaluation model							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to monitor evaluation system as basis for continuous improvement							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide ongoing professional development and training							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Principal and Teacher Evaluation and Support Models Pilots

Minnesota's state principal evaluation model will be piloted during school year 2012-2013. Pilot outcomes are to

1. Support pilot districts' implementations of the principal evaluation and support model.

2. Identify and provide professional development for pilot district principals supporting model activities (e.g., goal setting, coaching).
3. Gather usable feedback for model revision and implementation from principals and evaluators regarding the model in the areas of performance standards, process and activities, supporting resources and materials, and support strategies.
4. Revise the model based on participant feedback to align the model to the outcomes of professional growth and performance assessment.
5. Gather information from pilot evaluators and principals regarding stakeholder surveys' alignment to the model, usefulness, and relevance to professional growth.
6. Reinforce the dual roles of professional development and performance assessment for the model.
7. Facilitate collaboration among participants and meaningful growth for evaluators and principals.

A variety of districts were selected to participate in the pilot in order to gain sufficient feedback from a variety of types of educators, schools, and geographical areas to inform full implementation in school year 2013-2014. Selection criteria included size of districts, types of district (e.g. urban, suburban or rural), geographical location, existing resources supporting principal evaluation and support, and AYP status. The following Minnesota districts are participating in the pilot:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Austin Public Schools | • Montevideo Public Schools |
| • Morris Area Public Schools | • Brooklyn Center Community Schools |
| • Northfield Public Schools | • St. Peter School District |
| • Waseca School District | • East Central Schools |
| • Farmington Area Public Schools | • Ogilvie Public School District |
| • Lakeville Area Public Schools | • Roseville Area Schools |
| • South St. Paul Public Schools | • Red Lake Public School District |
| Braham Area Schools | Waubun-Ogema-White Earth School District |
| Cass Lake-Bena Schools | |

A detailed plan for the pilot program has been established by a leadership group comprised of MDE personnel and representatives from Board of School Administrators, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota School Boards Association, and the Minnesota elementary and secondary principals associations.

Pilot District Supports

1. An initial model overview and planning meeting with participating districts' leadership including an overview of readiness activities to be completed and local decisions to be made.
2. One-on-one technical assistance with implementation planning—readiness activities, local decisions, survey selection, etc.

3. Professional development for pilot evaluators covering the pilot outcomes and feedback strategies, vision for the model, performance standards, model resources and activities, and coaching and feedback strategies. (One full day)

4. Orientation for pilot principals covering pilot outcomes and feedback strategies, vision for the model, performance standards, model resources and activities, and support strategies. (Half-day)
5. Conference calls/webinars to reinforce model activities, the vision for the model, and coaching and feedback strategies after the fall goal-setting conference, in the middle of the school year, before the summative conference, and after the summative conference. (60-90 minutes)
6. Ongoing professional development from professional organizations for pilot district principals supporting model activities (e.g., goal setting, coaching).
7. Ongoing technical assistance for pilot evaluators and principals as needed.

Feedback Systems

1. Feedback gathered as part of the evaluation of all support activities—professional development activities, conference calls/webinars, orientation sessions.
2. Focus groups (live and/or via technology) (for evaluators and principals) after the fall goal-setting conference, mid-year, and after the pilot concludes. (Focus groups with both evaluators and principals and focus groups separating evaluators and principals will be utilized.) (60-90 minutes)

Implementation Timeline Overview

Spring 2012

- Develop recruitment resources.
- Recruit and select participating districts.
- Hold initial overview and planning meeting.
- Provide technical assistance with implementation planning.
- Select stakeholder surveys to be used.

Summer 2012

- Continue technical assistance with implementation planning.
- Design feedback processes and instruments.
- Hold professional development sessions for evaluators and orientations for principals.

Fall 2012

- Hold evaluator conference call/webinar.
- Gather feedback through support activities and focus group, and plan model revisions.
- Offer technical support to participating districts for goal-setting conferences and survey implementation.

Winter 2012-2013

- Hold evaluator conference call/webinar.
- Gather feedback through support activities and focus groups, and plan model

revisions.

- Offer technical support to participating districts for ongoing conferences and survey implementation.

Spring 2013

- Hold evaluator conference call/webinar.

- Gather feedback through support activities and focus groups, and plan model revisions.
- Offer technical support to participating districts for summative conferences and survey implementation.

The state teacher evaluation and support model will be piloted in school year 2013-2014 using a similar process. The following research questions have been developed by the work group and are guiding the teacher pilot:

Outcome

The pilot and its evaluation will provide us with:

- Revisions or changes need to be made to the Model
- Strategies to implement teacher models, including training and ongoing support
- Unintended consequences or results of activities

The initial findings and final report should be focused on these areas using data from the research questions that follow.

Whole Model Pilot Research Questions

Note: These five questions apply both to the whole model pilots as well as the various focused pilots below.

- What was the impact on the students, teachers, and school communities?
- What measures and activities most accurately and fairly identify effective teachers and teachers needing support?
- Does the summative scoring model (i.e. component weights, numerical process, performance levels, score bands for performance levels) accurately identify effective teachers and teachers needing support?
- What resources (time, money, personnel) were associated with the implementation of the Model? Did the impact match the resources?
- Was the Model understandable, usable, and effective? What recommendations do you have for revising the model to increase efficiency and effectiveness?
- What selection, training, and ongoing support is needed for implementation? Was the training and ongoing support from MDE sufficient? From the district? Other resources?
- What external and internal systems are needed for implementation? How were documentation, analysis, data storage, and management handled in your district? In what ways did documentation help or hinder the work?

Teacher Practice Pilot

- How have the Model's resources (rubrics, definitions, forms) contributed to teachers' development and evaluation?

- How have the Model's activities (peer review, points of contact, portfolio) contributed to teachers' development and evaluation? What barriers and opportunities were discovered when implemented?
- Were the resources and activities sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of all teaching assignments (specialists and generalists) as well as all career stages (new/probationary teachers, mid-career, late-career)? Were there misunderstandings about using resources and activities?
- Did the Model's resources and activities generate sufficient, meaningful, accurate evidence? How were the resources and activities used to generate fair summative evaluations, make personnel decisions, and plan ongoing professional development?
- How will or could the Model's resources and activities be used in the future?

Student Engagement Pilot

Survey validation will be separate from this evaluation.

- What value did teachers find in student engagement evidence? Will evidence collected impact their practice and future professional learning? How did teachers use (or how do they plan to use) student engagement evidence?
- What logistical and technical support was needed to utilize the survey? How were students surveyed in different grade levels and content areas? For which teachers did the survey apply?
- How were teachers and evaluators supported to understand and interpret the survey results for use in development and evaluation conversations? Did they find value in support?
- What methods were used to define, observe, and collect "other measures" of student engagement?
- Did teachers feel evidence was accurate, fair, and meaningful? How did teachers feel about student engagement measures before implementation? Did those feelings change at the end of the process?

Student Learning Goals Pilot

- Did the SLG process align with district or building curricular, assessment, or staff development goals?
- How did the district (evaluators) ensure consistency (across evaluators and school sites) in expectations, rigor, and relevance in the SLG process?
- How were student starting points (levels of preparedness) established? Learning goals based on starting points?
- How were end-of-term assessments selected and mastery scores established? If none existed previously, how were assessments developed and approved? What kinds of assessments were used?

- How did teachers and evaluators determine a performance rating using the goals teachers set at the beginning of the year and the results from the end-of-course assessment? How did they interpret the results to have conversations about teacher development and evaluation? Did they find value in those conversations?

Value-Added Model Pilot

- Do individual districts have the capacity and resources to develop, interpret, and report value-added data?
- What supports are needed at the individual, school, and district level to implement a value-added model for improvement planning and teacher evaluation?
- How will value-added data be collected, analyzed, and interpreted for individual teacher evaluation results? What strategies create meaningful, accurate results?

Process for Reviewing and Approving Local Districts' Principal and Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems

Local districts may adopt the state evaluation and support models for principals and teachers. State models comply with the adopted guidelines for evaluation and support.

The Minnesota Department of Education expects to play a monitoring and support role in the implementation of educator evaluation systems to ensure that educators receive feedback and professional development support to improve practice.

MDE will not collect and approve locally developed models. MDE is monitoring district models and implementation through an assurances process annually. Assurances will be submitted by the superintendent and local school board for districts. Assurances inform MDE that

- Timelines in statute and the waiver have been met
- Districts are implementing the state models, or local developed or purchased models
- Locally developed models meet statutory requirements and evaluation guidelines in this Waiver
- Performance standards for teacher evaluation align with Minnesota's professional teaching standards
- Adequate training has been provided for teacher evaluators
- Evaluation data is being used to guide improvement and professional development planning and to inform personnel decisions
- For teacher evaluation, the district is implementing a model that has been jointly agreed upon with teachers

Each workgroup has defined evaluation criteria and develop a rubric for local district and MDE use to determine if locally developed or purchased models and local implementation plans meet state

guidelines. These tools have been distributed to districts through a series of work sessions and posted on the Department website for district access.

The state model implementation resources include types of evaluation tools (e.g. surveys, observation tools, student growth models, professional growth plans) that can be used to meet requirements, requirements to ensure inter-rater reliability training for evaluators, and training of educators in the evaluation model including timelines and processes. These planning resources for the state

models and for district planning have been developed and shared with districts through a series of work sessions to ~~will~~ support local implementation plans that meet state guidelines.

Training modules for the state model and implementation handbooks are also being developed and will be available to districts starting in summer 2014 to further support implementation of the state model and/or local-developed models.

MDE will update state models for evaluation and support, all assurance processes, and supporting resources and training tools regularly to reflect new knowledge from the field—both nationally and statewide. The process and frequency of review of MDE’s models will be based on recommendations from the workgroups. Implementation timelines for both the teacher and principal evaluation include specific phases and activities intended to refine the existing models and monitor the fidelity of implementation.

Process for Ensuring That Local Districts Develop, Adopt, Pilot, and Implement Evaluation and Support Systems with the Involvement of Teachers and Principals

Upon full implementation, this will be a key part of the monitoring process outlined above.

Involvement of teachers, principals, and other stakeholders is a key to successful implementation of evaluation and support models. Each workgroup will define evaluation criteria and develop a rubric that includes stakeholder involvement for local district and MDE use to determine if locally developed or purchased models and local implementation plans meet state guidelines. Planning resources and training modules for the state models and for district planning are being developed that will support local implementation plans that meet state guidelines.

Evaluation models must have capacity for individual input and personal decisions to fully garner support of teachers and principals. Minnesota has taken on the task of developing evaluation guidelines and models that involve collective bargaining organizations, incorporate professional growth, and align with personnel decisions of individuals being evaluated. Details regarding the roles of professional development and personnel decisions in Minnesota’s guidelines appear in section 3.A.

Role of Collective Bargaining

During the 2011 Minnesota Special Legislative Session, a major shift occurred regarding teacher and principal evaluation requirements. New laws require all districts to be held to the same standard of annual evaluations for teachers and principals. The teacher evaluation legislation requires districts to develop a teacher evaluation process through joint agreement (collective bargaining). If the district does not develop a teacher evaluation model by school year 2014-2015, then the district must adopt the state model. Statutes pertaining to district requirements for principal evaluation are not linked to collective bargaining.

Process for Ensuring That All Measures Used in Local Districts’ Evaluation and Support Systems Are Valid and Are Implemented in a Consistent and High-Quality Manner across Schools within a Local District

Upon full implementation, this will be a key part of the monitoring process outlined above.

Local districts may adopt the state evaluation and support models for principals and teachers. State models comply with the adopted guidelines for evaluation and support and contain measures that are valid, meaning that they are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance. Based on pilots of the state models, measures and processes will be refined to increase validity, and models will be continuously reviewed and improved.

Minnesota's guidelines for evaluation and support establish multiple valid measures that must be present in models implemented in local districts. Each workgroup will define evaluation criteria and develop a rubric that includes valid measures and consistent, high-quality implementation for local district and MDE use to determine if locally developed or purchased models and local implementation plans meet state guidelines. Planning resources and training modules for the state models and for district planning are being developed that will support local implementation plans that meet state guidelines.

As part of model pilots, and on a periodic basis thereafter, feedback from educators regarding (1) evaluation measures as related to improved practice and professional growth, (2) implementation of evaluation and support activities, and (3) consistency of implementation will be collected using surveys and focus groups. This will provide input regarding local implementation and consistency as well as inform revisions for state models.

Finally, support for the state model will include ongoing evaluator training and support resources. Legislation requires that teachers be evaluated by qualified and trained evaluators. Training for evaluators will reinforce models' practices to ensure consistent implementation. Classroom observation training for will be a mandatory component of initial evaluator training supporting the state teacher evaluation and support model, and recertification for evaluators who conduct classroom observations will be required annually. Evaluator training activities will include

- Orientation to the evaluation model, controlling for bias, understanding the observation instrument, applying the rubrics to observation and document review, scoring practice, exemplars, etc.
- Training sessions focused on the specifics of the evaluation system, including sessions on student learning, professional growth plans, observations and feedback, and conferencing.
- Training venues provided by MDE and conducted regionally as well as web-based.
- Communication tools for administrators to share directly with teachers and/or administrators in their districts to ensure educators receive information about the model.

Plan for Providing Guidance and Technical Assistance to Local Districts in Developing and Implementing Evaluation and Support Systems

A primary support is that state models for both principal and teacher evaluation and support will be available for districts to adopt or to use as exemplars for developing their own systems. State

models will be piloted and refined and based on Minnesota's guidelines. Local districts may adopt the state evaluation and support models for principals and teachers.

Support to LEAs will be provided through regional networks and accessed through webinars or e-learning opportunities. Regional networks will offer facilitated planning during school year 2012-2013 to provide guidance and technical assistance to local districts as they develop evaluation and support systems or adopt the state models, plan for implementation, and pilot models. Districts will be invited to bring teams consisting of district leadership, principals, teachers, and union leadership. The planning series of work sessions will include the following key topics:

1. The need for educator evaluation
2. Minnesota's educator evaluation and support guidelines
3. Research-based measures for evaluation
4. Minnesota's models for principal and teacher evaluation and support
5. The connection between evaluation and continuous professional growth
6. Minnesota's monitoring criteria and model rubric (See below.)
7. Establishing a vision for educator evaluation and support
8. Value-added assessment models, measures of student growth, and the development and use of student learning objectives
9. State resources and training opportunities
10. Implementation planning based on Minnesota's model implementation plan (See below.)

Support for LEA implementation of the state models will include ongoing evaluator training and support resources. Legislation requires that teachers be evaluated by qualified and trained evaluators. Training for evaluators will reinforce models' practices to ensure consistent implementation. Classroom observation training for will be a mandatory component of initial evaluator training supporting the state teacher evaluation and support model, and recertification for evaluators who conduct classroom observations will be required annually. Evaluator training activities will include

- Orientation to the evaluation model, controlling for bias, understanding the observation instrument, applying the rubrics to observation and document review, scoring practice, exemplars, etc.
- Training sessions focused on the specifics of the evaluation system, including sessions on student learning, professional growth plans, observations and feedback, and conferencing.
- Training venues provided by MDE and conducted regionally as well as web-based.

- Communication tools for administrators to share directly with teachers and/or administrators in their districts to ensure educators receive information about the model.

In addition, planning resources and training modules for the state models and for district planning are being developed that will support local implementation plans that meet state guidelines. The principal and teacher evaluation work groups will develop a model implementation plan for local districts that reflects a clear understanding of what steps will be necessary and a logical sequencing and spacing of the key steps necessary to implement evaluation and support systems consistent with the required timelines. The design of the implementation plan will be informed by the National Center for State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP). In developing a plan needed attention will be given to

- Understanding educational practices and developing the capacity to support those practices system-wide (Fixsen, Blase, Horner & Sugai, 2009).
- Awareness that implementation occurs in stages underscores an understanding that change is a process (not an event). By attending to each of the stages of implementation, we will increase the likelihood of sustained implementation of the evaluation model.
- Training in core implementation components for improving and ensuring competence and confidence of individuals (e.g., teachers, coaches, administrators) and for aligning and improving organizational and systems support (e.g., school, district, state policies, regulations, funding).
- Use of competency drivers to systematically attend to professional development to build competence and confidence and include: staff selection, training, consultation and coaching, and evaluation of staff related to implementation of the educational practice to ensure fidelity.
- Use of Organization drivers to promote hospitable environments for evidence-based educational programs and innovations and include data- based decision-making, which includes collecting and using reliable and valid process data (fidelity) and outcome data (student academic and behavioral outcomes) to make decisions; facilitative administration to create policies and procedures at the school and district level that promote high-fidelity implementation; and systems intervention processes to create a hospitable state education system (e.g. policies, procedures, and funding streams) designed to support, improve and sustain the literacy programs and practices.

MDE will be taking advantage of our partnership with SISEP for the next two years as we continue to build knowledge and work to develop a thoughtful plan for implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation models.

Implementation resources will be required to promote successful use of meaningful evaluation systems. Resources will be available to districts during implementation in an online resource bank that will support implementation of state models and/or development of local evaluation and support models. MDE will seek ongoing feedback from local districts and stakeholders to ensure that the resources are meeting user needs and update resources as necessary based on feedback. Features of the state resources will include

- Contract language describing process, timelines, and collection of evidence

- Rubric for standards, indicators, and/or competencies that describe performance vividly and clearly for at least three levels of performance
- Templates for self-assessments, growth plans, classroom observation feedback, and other model activities
- Guidelines for developing and using measures of student learning and growth, including student learning objectives
- Examples of ways to collect and use student, staff, and parent feedback

Future MDE support and technical assistance will be driven by feedback from pilot sites and from local districts during the first year of implementation.

Waiver Renewal 2015 Update

Monitoring and Supporting Compliance with Principal and Teacher Evaluation Requirements

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is committed to supporting districts as they implement principal and teacher development and evaluation models that comply with Minnesota statutory requirements and the guidelines in the state's approved ESEA Waiver. Our vision is that the most effective way to impact teachers and districts through educator evaluation is to support them in implementation that complies with requirements while reflecting best practices. Our strategy is to monitor by engaging in the work with districts. MDE has intentionally networked and created partnerships with regional partners and state organizations such as Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association, Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, Minnesota Association of School Administrators, Education Minnesota, and Minnesota School Boards Association to monitor and support local implementation. MDE is supporting districts and monitoring their implementation using the following strategies:

1. Minnesota statute requires design and implementation of principal and teacher evaluation models that comply with the state's guidelines as submitted in Principle 3 of our ESEA Waiver.
2. MDE annually collects assurances from districts and charter schools that their models comply with statutory requirements and that they are being implemented in alignment with statutory requirements for the development of teachers and to support increased student learning.
3. State models and implementation tools are provided to districts. The state models were developed by a committee of stakeholders and meet statutory requirements. Training and technical assistance has been provided to districts using state models.

4. MDE offers technical assistance to districts upon demand and based on referral, including the review of locally-developed models, planning assistance, and intervention for aspects of local models that are not in compliance with requirements.
5. MDE plans and facilitates regional, ongoing training and onsite technical assistance for districts to monitor and support local implementation. Although this strategy will continue and be responsive to local and state needs, the following past areas have been (and will continue to be) supported:
 - MDE facilitated a series of work sessions for districts in 2012 and 2013 that focused on requirements for principal and teacher evaluation, design of local models compliant with requirements, the state models, and implementation. More than 35 work sessions were facilitated across the state. More than 85% of districts participated in the series.
 - In partnership with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives, MDE is currently facilitating 5 regional communities of practice that meet 3-5 times this year. These communities are focused on implementation of educator evaluation models and using models to support educator development. Communities facilitate planning and implementation using a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle. MDE's partnership in the communities has allowed us to monitor and support teacher evaluation at a meaningful level in participating districts. 57 districts are participating this year.
 - MDE convened a project team of stakeholders and national experts (from Center for Great Teachers and Leaders and NGA) to develop tools and training specific to using student growth measures as 35% of teachers' summative evaluations. Tools included a needs assessment that districts used to assess and develop processes to meet this requirement in statute. Training was a five-day series that included on-site technical assistance and monitoring as follow up for participating districts. 55 districts participated this year. Content was also replicated with a series of 10 webinars for districts that did not participate in face-to-face trainings.
 - MDE convened a project team of stakeholders and national experts (from Education Counsel and NTC) to develop tools and training specific to collecting evidence based on performance standards and providing growth-based feedback. Tools included a needs assessment that districts used to assess and develop local processes to meet the requirement for peer review and classroom observations in statute. Training was a five-day series that included on-site technical assistance and monitoring as follow up for participating districts. 48 districts participated this year. Content was also replicated with a series of 8 webinars for districts that did not participate in face-to-face trainings.

Additional areas for training and professional development are planned for the future based on local and state needs.

6. Teacher evaluation plans and student growth goals in districts participating in Minnesota's Alternative Teacher Performance Pay System are reviewed in the

program's application and annual program review processes. 24% of districts and 44% of charter schools participate in the program, covering 49% of the state's students.

7. MDE has developed or is developing tools that can be used by districts to ensure that their models are in compliance with requirements and that models are being implemented with fidelity. Tools included a compliance checklist, an implementation readiness checklist, and tools to use during the school year to monitor effort and fidelity of implementation.
8. MDE is partnering with the Midwest Comprehensive Center to construct a series of state surveys to monitor implementation of teacher development and evaluation models. The series will have teacher, evaluator, and superintendent surveys. The surveys will be piloted to collect data on implementation in school year 2014-2015. The survey will be available for state-wide use for school year 2015-2016. Districts will also have access to survey results to monitor and refine local model implementation.