Attachment 2

Wyoming ESEA Flexibility Submission

Comments from stakeholders

From Wes Martel, Joint Tribal Business Council of the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone

Good morning. Would it be possible to get a little more of an explanation about all of this and how we can participate as the JBC? Hahou

From: **Scott James** <sjames@platte1.k12.wy.us>
Date: Wed, Feb 27, 2013 at 2:54 PM
Subject: Feedback regarding ESEA Waiver Request
To: "Robin Holbrook (robin.holbrook@wyo.gov)" <robin.holbrook@wyo.gov>

Good Afternoon,

I wanted to provide some information regarding the Federal Waiver Request.  First, personally I am supportive of submitting the request.  Secondly, I have attached a letter from the Wyoming Curriculum Directors Association.  Hearing the news of the waiver request, I did a poll of WCDA members and they are highly supportive.  The purpose of the letter is to express this support, and if needed provide documentation of stakeholder input.  Please let me know if you have any questions.  Thank you for your work in pursuit of the waiver request.

Scott James,

WCDA President

On Wed, Feb 27, 2013 at 11:43 AM, Johann Nield <johann@sheridan.k12.wy.us> wrote:

David,

    My Superintendent passed this data on to me and I must say "Thank You" I'm looking forwarded to having a Dept of ED that understands the situation our school districts are having. Together we (The school board members across the state) will be able to create the true accountability of our students needs. Please pass on our thanks to Dr. Rose on this very important first step toward our ESEA goals.

Johann K. Nield

Sheridan 1 School Trustee

**From:** Diana Clapp [mailto:dianac@fre6.k12.wy.us]
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 27, 2013 9:18 AM
**To:** 'David Holbrook'
**Cc:** Jeff Locker
**Subject:** FW: Seeking comments on waivers from US Dept of Ed

Hello David,

I received a copy of this email from Keja and provided the comment that Fremont #6 would request that Wyoming also submit for the Optional Flexibility waiver #11 allowing for use of 21st Century funds to support during the school day activities, as well as extended day.

Also, wanted to check on whether this was sent to District Supts.  I did not receive this email directly or maybe I missed a department memo?  I would appreciate knowing so I can be certain that emails are coming through to me without getting lost behind fire walls.

Thanks and have a great day,

Diana

On Thu, Feb 28, 2013 at 8:56 AM, Sherri-lyn Harrison <sharrison@acsd1.org> wrote:

Hi David,

I can't thank you, Dr. Rose, and Governor Mead enough for being willing to take this on. If the request is granted, it would help so much. A memo of support attached. Please use as needed.

Best regards,

Sherri-lyn Harrison

Title 1/Literacy Coordinator

Albany County School District 1

509 South 9th Street

Laramie, WY 82070

307.721.4456

On Thu, Feb 28, 2013 at 11:56 AM, kim west <kwest@ecdcqualitycare.org> wrote:

Mr. Hollbrook; I am writing you this email to provide information about the ESEA Waiver from one of the stakeholders in a 21st Century out of school facility.  It is my understanding that as of this moment we will not be checking Box #11 in the waiver and I wanted to express to you that I think this box should remain unchecked.   I am the executive director of two large centers in Uinta County.  I have over 100 children attending our center before and or after school.  In our center we provide a safe, academic, environment for children who are not attending our very successful after school program in the schools.  For various reason these children do not attend the school program but should be provided a quality after school experience in our center.  I served on the local school board for 0ver 16 years and I have a great partnership with our district.  We work together to provide homework help and practice activities for math, literacy and science.  We are not funded in the same manner as the district and we rely on the 21st century funds to provide a quality program taught by teachers with BA degrees.  Without these funds, we would not be able to accomplish this.  I know firsthand that our school district is provided with enough funds to provide this program right now, after school and it’s working quite well.  The school day is filled with the necessities and demands for a quality education, there really isn’t time available during the school day to deviate.  After school and before school are the perfect opportunities to give children that extra help and practice without pulling them out of class and taking them away from valuable school time.  I realize that a lot is expected of our local schools and as a community member I am more than willing to help them accomplish our goal of preparing our children for the 21st century.  It is vital to have that partnership for success. The 21CCLC box is not currently checked and I want to be on the record that I agree with keeping the box unchecked,  Thank you for allowing me to give you this input!

Kendra L. West,

Executive director Evanston Child Development Center and The Children’s Learning Foundation (Mt View)

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| **Linda Jennings** <ljennings@bresnan.net> |

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Please do not check the box.

We in Campbell County feel it is great that we have the flexibility to fund programs in community agencies, and would like to keep the funding as is.

Thanks,

Linda

Linda S. Jennings

Campbell County 21CCLC Project

Coordinator/Evaluator

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cell 307-689-0408

Albany County School District #1

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Title I/Literacy Coordinator

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Phone: 307.721.4456

Fax: 307.721.4444

E-mail: sharrison@acsd1.org

**To:** David Holbrook, WDE Federal Programs Division Director

**From:** Sherri-lyn Harrison, ACSD 1 Title I Coordinator

**Date:** February 27, 2013

**Subject:** Comments on WDE ED Flex Waiver Submittal

As Title I Coordinator for Albany County School District 1, I would welcome the submission, by the state of Wyoming, of a request for the ESEA Flexibility Waivers offered by the United States Department of Education.

Wyoming schools find themselves in an unfortunate position given the current escalation of AYP targets to 100 percent in the upcoming school year. The ability of Wyoming school districts to plan, budget, and utilize federal funds in the service of at-risk students has become increasingly difficult in light of continuing federal budget reductions and NCLB school improvement consequences now being applied to even high-performing schools. These same schools are labeled as failing when by any other measure; they would be labeled as effective schools.

LEA’s are currently being put in an awkward position with parents. Schools that have excellent academic achievement rates find themselves being labeled as “in their warning year” or in “School Improvement”, having not made AYP. There will always be the need to disaggregate performance data to make real gains in educating *all* students. There will always be the need to focus on continuous improvement. This is the pursuit of excellence! But leading parents to believe that these same schools are failing is wrong.

Schools need parental support and assistance to achieve educating all students to high levels. The current system leads the public to believe that Wyoming schools are performing at dismal rates. Ed Flexibility would allow our state to continue to address school accountability, set a high bar, yet tailor the system of supports and improvement efforts to fit Wyoming’s unique, educational needs. It would also allow the focus of supports to truly target schools with chronic achievement gaps, versus the current punitive structure of NCLB as we approach targets set at 100 percent.

Federal budget reductions have resulted in a drop in our district Title I allocation in the last three fiscal years. Downsizing Title I programs has been an on-going process over these years. With the specter of sequestration looming in March, an additional six percent cut to state and district Title I allocations is to be expected. These realities, coupled with NCLB set-aside requirements tied to school improvement, leave LEA’s with little funding on which to operate Title I programs in the schools! These fiscal realities translate to a conservative, projected loss of $470,000 dollars that will not be available for funding effective Title I programs in our district in the upcoming school year. Ed Flex puts $389,000 of those dollars back into the schools instead of NCLB sanctions. This would go a long way to keeping a quality Title I program functioning in the eligible schools.

For these reasons, I wish the state of Wyoming the best of luck in securing the request for the ESEA Flexibility Waivers offered by the United States Department of Education - for our students and in hopes of their bright futures.



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| **Katrina Cox** <mousecox@msn.com> |

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Good Afternoon,

Thank you for your call back regarding the flexibility waiver and how it affects the SES tutoring.  I have several, if not all, of my parents (100+) very concerned about the outcome on this and if they will be able to receive tutoring for their son or daughter in the fall of 2013. There is also concern that the announcement, dated April 11th on the WDE website, is only allowing only three days for public comment.

If I understand our conversation correctly, if the waiver is approved:

        The Districts will no longer be requid to offer the SES program as an educational choice option for their child.

         A district could still use SES as part of their Title 1 funds; but if they choose not to, then they may also refuse those outside services even if a parent requests that.

         A district will have to opt in or opt out of SES, which will affect the above.

         A liaison will be appointed to help districts meet the accountability needs. They may or may not affect the decision making process for a district opting in or out for SES.

Here are some of my continued concerns regarding the state’s decision to apply for this waiver and if it is accepted:

         Parents’ choice will have been diminished. It will have dissolved significant value in the voice and choice of our students' parents.

         Districts will not choose outside venders and will only choose their own  afterschool progams using the same strategies that have already been tried.  Many times this is an oversight of needing to think outside of the box to see what else work for improving these students scores.

         Districts will not set aside Title 1 money for parent choice.  It will already be delegated for “their” programs shortly after the funds are released from the state/federal.

         When a parent does decide to use an outside tutoring vendor, they will be declined because the districts will have not allocated money towards the program on purpose.

         Schools will not purposefully choose school choice because  they believe those extra title one funds will fix their problems in house.

         100+ students will be out a specialized tutoring service that has helped them make significant growth not only in testing but in their other classes and grades as well.

         25+ currently employed persons in Wyoming will no longer be employed due to this cut.

My next question would be; what can be done to ensure that parents will not lose any choices that have been given to them?

         Should parents contact you to help make sure that this program will not go away?  If not, why would the state take away an option for parents for their child’s education and improvement?

         Is there wording that you can add to the documents so that parents cn receive this help from districts as the old requirement had?

         What action will be taken if public comment suggest that items in the Flexibility Waiver need to be changed?

As mentioned in your presentation this morning, changes can still be made. Please take into consideration the wording and requirements for the districts to allow parents to continue to have tutoring choices in their child's education.  This is very important to a number of families through out this state.  We will continue to serve many families, but if this waiver goes through as planned it will be a detriment to the educational development of many students, it will take away the voice of parents of choice and it will take away jobs for a number of adults in our states.

Thank you for taking time to visit with me yesterday. Please take time to reflect on the decisions that are being made that are directly impacting students, parents, business and families of Wyoming in a adverse fashion.

Sincerely,

Katrina Cox

1439 Stillwater

Cheyenne, WY 82009

Alpine Learning Services

DBA: Tutoring Club

307-745-6284

WDE spoke directly with this SES provider as well. In addition to this email from this SES provider, WDE also received comments from this SES provider and one other person in opposition to allowing SES to be optional during its April 12th online presentation to the general public regarding the details of Wyoming’s ESEA Flexibility Waivers application. Subsequently, three phone calls were also received from parents expressing concern that districts will not be required to provide SES and their choices for tutoring for their children will be left to the school districts.

Portions of this ESEA Flexibility Wavier application were sent to key Wyoming educators who came forward and offer assistance to provide feedback prior to the April 12th online presentation. The feedback of the two educators who responded is included here.

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| **Kristeen Cundall** |

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I have a couple of clarifying questions:

Are only Title I schools included? Does the waiver require a mandatory percentage of schools be identified as Priority or Focus because what if that number is not identified as Not Meeting Expectations.  \*\*\*\*

I am not sure what you meant in the email (third paragraph) WAEA requirements for achievement gap analysis.

**Data Burden Reduction Document:**

I thought the example in the third paragraph was spot on. Will the readers know what "SIF" means.  I would say that as a building principal, I definitely see a reduction in reports and time spent competing those. However, reading through some of the requirements listed in these documents appear to be necessitating additional paperwork and causing repetition.

**Wyoming AMOs for Flexibility**

Is there a particular reason for the AMO calculation?  I thought the calculation was hard to understand but maybe a verbal explanation would clear up my confusion.

Regarding the subgroups – the advisory committee recommended only reporting subgroups but not using subgroups for calculation purposes. Students would only be counted as proficient or not.

**Wyoming Transitional System for 2013-2014 Year**

I don't feel that the system as spelled out correlates with WAEA. The descriptors of the WAEA categories are given. Then the document describes how schools would be categorized as Priority, Focus and Reward. The PJP is still working on the calculations to categorize schools, but can those not be used to place into the Waiver categories? Or why not just use the WAEA categories in the first place? \*\*\*\*Question from above.

Page 4 of the document - "receive specified services and supports" What are these specified services and supports and who is doing the specifying?

Again, I am concerned about varying from the WAEA identified school categories and how those categories are calculated. The calculation process is much more complex (including other indicators than PAWS and graduation rate) than "ranking" schools. In fact, the advisory committee recommended against this practice.

Also, I again question if only Title I schools are impacted and if a certain number of schools must be identified or if the WAEA categories don't have that many schools in the lowest category.

I think the last paragraph indicates that even schools not falling in the lowest category could be identified using their Advanc-ED School Improvement plans. I would question the validity and fairness of that practice.

**Data Analysis Methodology**

In the third paragraph "Data used is from the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. I am concerned about this as one year included writing and one year didn't. Even if you are only looking at the reading scores, I think the scores are impacted because of the length of time tested is considerably different and you don't know what order tests were given.

I think the work of the PJP should be considered when computing things such as the enumerated paragraph. I don't understand the sample given in #4 – again, maybe a verbal explanation would clear that up. I am also curious if these computations have been proven to be statistically valid. Again, the work of the PJP is already going to be used and I think should be used here as well.

**2.D.iii**

Do these steps align with the steps laid out in WAEA? Who would be making these decisions? (I am not taking a pot-shot at the department, but I have heard over and over again from the groups I represent that they are not comfortable with those decisions and support coming from the department. Also, is it good practice for the support and decisions to be coming from the same entity? ) I know the  [Ad-Hoc Committee on Statewide System of Support](http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LegislatorSummary/InterimComm.aspx?strCommitteeID=Z02)  (part of the Advisory Committee) is working on these issues. I think there is support around the state that currently nowhere in the state has the capacity to do this work well.

Obviously, I would have issues with removing the principal if that person had not been allowed time to implement some of the suggestions listed after that step.

I think there needs to be assurances of research validation before any of these steps were implemented.

I don't think the worst performing schools should be permitted to do a "self assessment" Truly, they have been doing this all along with Advanc-ED and at this level, probably need to do that in a structured format with assistance.

Second page, third paragraph "the school will also be responsible for providing goals and its own evaluation process" Again, this seems out of whack if they are in the category as Priority. It should be an external assessment.

Last paragraph – Again, are only Title 1 schools impacted? What are other possible funding sources if Title 1 funds are not available, competitive grants not received or possible drastic reductions in Title 1 funding?

**2.C.iii**

Why are only Title 1 schools eligible? What if none of the schools in Exceeds Expectations are Title 1 schools? Would it be possible to recognize all Exceeds Expectations schools.

**2.D.iv**

When is the waiver expected to be approved? We are already 1/3 through April so I think the projected timeline is already  behind schedule. Considering that the WAEA is not yet fully operational and the PJP has work yet to do in determining the status of schools, school year 2013-2014 seems premature. The data would be derived from tests that have drastically changed (and will change even more drastically going into common core). Growth will be nearly impossible to achieve when comparing two different tests.

I think the turnaround principles need to be more completed defined and feedback on these gathered from stakeholders. Who would provide this training and what coaching support is going to be provided during the school year.

Where will the Priority school coaches come from? Again, what if the Priority school doesn't receive a competitive grant.

The timeline seems disjointed and very ambitious – when will the self-assessment (if that is allowed) be completed. When will the decision be made (and who will make it) as to what interventions will be implemented at the Priority school.  Training needs and facilitators would need to be evaluated and planned.

The projected timeline doesn't appear to be in alignment with the dates in the bolded title.

**Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership**

I believe the focus of the evaluation system is teachers, principals and district leaders.

I hope this is helpful. I think my biggest concerns were that I don't think the documents are aligned clearly to the WAEA categories for identifying schools. It seems redundant to have the WAEA system and additionally, the WDE system for the waiver. Also, I don't feel that all the work has been done yet for the WAEA and these documents make suppositions about how some of that will transpire or look like.  Also, I have great concerns (including for WAEA) with the knowledge that we will be moving from our state standards based PAWS assessment to an assessment based on CCSS.

Feel free to contact me to clarify any points or to discuss anything I have. I will be in Cheyenne next Wed and Thursday and would be more than willing to meet face to face if that would help.

Kris Cundall, Principal

Walnut Elementary
Sweetwater #1

WAEMSP State Representative
(307) 352-3225

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WOW, what a ton of work!! I am not sure I was able to truly grasp / wrap my mind around this but I do want to give you a little feedback from someone that is “in  the trenches” and not completely up to speed on the WAEA requirements as of yet.  Since this is going to the federal boys I am assuming this waiver does apply only to Title 1 schools.

**Wyoming AMOs for Flexibility**

This section is a bit confusing when just read but as I reread it I do believe I understand the process, I do worry about the baseline levels being set so high especially since we will be seeing a major change in the rigor of the assessment (or at least I would guess it will increase) due to the adoption of the common core.

**Wyoming Transitional System**

As I mentioned above I am not confident in my knowledge of the new WAEA so I am assuming the process you have within this document aligns with the WAEA.  The one term I really don’t like in all of this is “ranking.”  If I remember correctly the purpose of the state assessment was to improve teaching and learning not rank schools – makes me wonder how many more Atlanta’s we will see as the pressure to rank highest increases.

**Data Burden Reduction**

Any steps taken to lighten the reporting load is much appreciated!  I liked this part .\

**Data Analysis Methodology**

I somewhat understand the reasoning for the controlling for grade in school and proficiency index to make sure all schools are measured in an equal, for lack of a better term, fashion.  I did get a little lost when you got to the frequency distribution table that looks at both achievement and progress to identify schools.  I would have to listen to that explanation rather than just reading it.  And of course the R word!

**Turn Around Principles**

I think I would be remise if I didn’t state first that the removal of the principal as a first step to turning around a school is wrong – I would even suggest looking at schools that have gone down this road and measure their success rate.  I do feel the 10 indicators are the key components to an effective and efficient school however I wonder about an underperforming school completing a self-assessment.  Given our NCA process (although most if not all districts have gone to district accreditation) each building should be already doing a self-evaluation – sometimes folks can’t see the forest because of the trees.  I understand it needs to be turned in for review but I still think an onsite review would result in a better review from the WDE.  I feel the financial support area is weak, especially in light of Title 1 budgets already being reduced and then the idea of having to compete for grants seems a little out there to me.  If a school needs the money, get them the money.

**Rewards**

As a school that was just rewarded (Blue Ribbon School 2012) I can tell you that sharing your best practices and completing application processes didn’t, at times, seem much like a reward.  A real reward would be a little cash that schools could use for any identified need without a bunch of strings attached.  Just don’t make the “reward” an extra work burden for a school.

**Timeline**

I just wonder how schools will be identified this month as focus or priority school.  Timeline seems a little lofty.

Thanks for allowing me to share/vent and sorry that it has taken me so long to get back to you.  I am hoping I will understand this more after I listen to the webinar in the morning.  Thanks for all of your hard work on this David!

Kenny Jones

Principal

Parkside Elementary School

During the drafting of the ESEA Flexibility Wavier, WDE held two meetings with the Title I Committee of Practitioners to discuss aspects of the Flexibility Waiver application and receive feedback. The composition of the Title I Committee of Practitioners is outlined in ESEA statute, (section 1903(b)) and includes teachers as well as other stakeholders. The feedback received from the Title I Committee of Practitioners was supportive of the various elements of the Flexibility Wavier application. They were especially pleased with the potential to use the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA) accountability system for both state and federal accountability reporting.

Alternative Schools

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| **Ursula Harrison** <ursula@acsd1.org> |

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Dear Mr. Holbrook,

As I read through the waiver that Wyoming has applied for, I am troubled about the requirements that a school has to meet. I spoke with Mike Helenbolt at Triumph and he is the same predicament as myself.

As alternative schools we have a problem meeting the graduation requirements of 4 years. Many of our students have dropped out and return to the alternative schools, to get them to graduate on time is nearly impossible. Many times their graduation year has already passed by. Many times they have so few credits that we may be able to graduate them before they turn 21. But I think you know most of that. There are some other concerns as well.

So where do we fit (alternative schools) in the new formula for the waiver?

Would you have time to meet with Mike and I this week?

Thanks

Ursula

Ursula M. Harrison

Principal

Whiting High School

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(307)721-4519 fax

Graduation Rate and Alternative Schools

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| **Helenbolt, Michael** |

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Dear Mike and Chelcie –

I would like to provide some input into the how accountability legislation impacts a local high school culture.  I am principal of Triumph High School in Cheyenne and am now completing my fourth year in this position.  Triumph is an alternative high school that accepts students formally every quarter and during the summer school session.  Our students come from every school in the city of Cheyenne and are comprised to a great extent of students who have not realized their potential in other schools for a plethora of reasons.  We also enroll students who just want something different, or smaller, than what they have known at the larger comprehensive high schools in town.  We also readily take students from various placements outside of Cheyenne including but not limited to Wyoming Boys School, Normative Services, Wyoming Behavioral Institute and many others.  Once students enroll oftentimes life circumstances prevent them from taking a linear path to graduation.  Some of the most common detours include pregnancies, criminal sentences, treatment, and family mobility issues or needing to work to support family.

Students who come to us may have dropped out of school for a semester, a year or much longer.  Student often enroll and drop and re-enroll several times enroute to earning their diplomas.  We assess their needs and see how we can give them the opportunity to graduate before they turn 21. I have also had students stay beyond 21 years of age to earn their diploma, which requires some adjustments from our accounting people so that we no longer receive funding for these students.  Because most all of our students have either dropped out for a period or failed classes, for them to graduate on time (in 4 years) is problematic. Most will graduate and some actually do so early but a large proportion of our students require time beyond 4 years to earn enough credits to graduate.  But the most important thing is that we get them to graduation and allow them the opportunity for higher education or to take a skill into the workforce in order to become productive citizens. Without our intervention our students would many times be destined for a life of minimum wage jobs and probable poverty.

I was in a collaborative meeting of several alternative school principals in the state when a letter indicating that they would lose their jobs due to poor four year graduation rates and low assessment scores.  The reaction to this news was palpable and discouraging to say the least.  The new assessment system that includes Explore, PLAN, ACT and Compass is better than the former suite of PAWS, and WyCas before that, because it is less disruptive to the culture of our school because of less time commitment required and fewer testing days.  Students had absolutely no genuine motivation to do well with the PAWS and at least the ACT has the potential for Hathaway scholarship attached which seemed to have a positive impact on motivation this year.   With any testing, it is crucial to understand that in some cases students have joined us only a few weeks before the examinations and that the educational history of many of these testers is quite checkered.  We are realizing another phenomena relative to MAP testing which tests growth and is an adaptive test.  We have noticed that this test reveals more about student learning but is still not highly motivating for students namely due to the fact that we have so few students who experience uninterrupted enrollment from spring to spring.

My work with my students and staff is very rewarding but also very emotionally draining.  To use the same measures of effectiveness as more traditional schools seems like an insurmountable challenge.  Surely the graduation rate should be adjusted to include 5th, 6th and 7th year graduates.  Our students are typically behind in basic foundational aspects of learning and have many gaps in their preparation.  In a majority of cases we work to reengage students in education and more often than you might realize rebuild basic confidences that have been eroded for many years and for many reasons.    I would invite you to visit any alternative school in the region to witness the things that I have described and to further discuss ideas that might benefit our at-promise young people.

Thank you for your time and please call at any time at the number below.

***Mike Helenbolt***

Principal

**Triumph High School**

1250 West College Dr.

Cheyenne, WY  82007

**307.771.2500 x23091**



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| **Michael Flicek** |

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Hi Mike,

It was nice to hear from you. It's been several years since our paths last crossed.I was not aware that you are now working in Cheyenne at the alternative high school.

Thank you for the thoughtful message. There are many in the state, myself included, who understand the nature of alternative high schools and the services that they provide to a very unique student population. The advisory committee to the select committee on school accountability is planning to specifically formulate recommendations for accountability at alternative high schools. Chris Domaleski, one of the consultants to the select committee, has worked on this issue in other states and has a strong background in the issues involved and possible approaches for moving forward. You may have an interest in attending or listening in on some of the committee deliberations on this topic. The advisory committee meeting schedule and agenda's are routinely posted on the Legislative Service Office (LSO) website.

--Mike

Michael Flicek, Ed.D., Owner

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| **Suzanne Martin** |

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**David,**

**Sorry it took me so long to provide feedback on the percentages for the set aside for focus and priority schools under the ESEA Flexibility Waiver. I wanted to run specific numbers for our district before I shared my thoughts.**

**If I understand the formula, to calculate the set aside for our district, I took the total number of students at Desert View and Overland (our focus schools) and divided by the total number of students in our district.  So 748/5405=.14       That would put us in the range to set aside 12%, which would be $230,358 for school improvement activities.  That seems appropriate since it would replace both the current 10% set aside for school improvement and the 20% set aside for SES.  Would this be like the 20% SES set aside where we can release any funds that aren't used by the end of the year, or will it be like the 10% school improvement set aside that has to be used in its entirety?**

**Let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything else I can do to help. I haven't forgotten about providing feedback on the waiver—I just have to find some uninterrupted time when I can look at it, which has been impossible with the school year wrapping up. I'm hoping that I might be able to look at it next week.**

**Thanks for providing the Blackboard session last week.  It was extremely helpful!**

**Suzanne**

**Suzanne Martin**

***Title I Coordinator***

***Sweetwater County School District #1***

***PO Box 1089***

***Rock Springs, WY  82902***

***(307) 352-3400, ext. 1240***

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| **David Holbrook <david.holbrook@wyo.gov>** |

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**Hi Suzanne,**

**Thanks for your email. I appreciate the comments about the set aside. We have not made a final determination if it will be like the SES or PD set aside. Which do you think makes most sense. While I want districts to make sure that they are doing something for the schools that need it, if a district is able to do all that is needed using less than what is set aside, I'm not sure that I would want to require them to spend it anyway.**

**I would really like to hear which option you prefer, which you think will be best for the state.**

**We heard from USED on the Flex waiver and have until June 14 to respond (2 and a half pages of changes), so if you can get your comments in before then, that would be great.**

**Thanks,**

**David**

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| **Suzanne Martin** |

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**Hi, David,**

**I prefer the option where you can release any funds that are unused.  For example, last year the district invested in intensive professional development to improve reading instruction in the classroom.  They also put into place consistent reading interventions throughout the district, which included year-long professional development in all schools.  With all of the professional development provided by the district, it has been more difficult to use our school improvement funds in a way that makes sense.  In other years where the district's professional development was not focused on reading or math instruction, we easily used all of the school improvement funds to provide high quality, year-long professional development.  I can see the same thing occurring with the funds for focus and priority schools.  Depending on what districts are focusing on, there may be different needs from year to year.  I'm like you, I hate to try to spend money just to finish out funds.  I would much rather have the flexibility to use them where they make the most sense once the original intent of the funds have been met.**

**I'll try to have comments on the waiver posted by next Monday.  Good luck!  I do think the waiver makes so much more sense than NCLB at this point.**

**Suzanne**

a few more questions

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| **Angela Hensley** |

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Hi David and Beth,

As always, I am writing with a number of questions -

* Feedback on % to be set aside for Focus Schools - NCSD supports the figures indicated on the bottom table in which districts that have up to 3.6% of the students in Focus or Priority Schools would be required to set aside 5%.  Given the size of allocation in relation to number of students served, we believe we will be able to provide significant support for our two focus schools.  We also believe that setting aside a higher percentage would limit all Title I schools.  Our hope is to be as proactive as possible with this fiscal responsibility.
* Indistar - We heard during the presentation that a Principal could download from Indistar to AdvancEd.  Is it possible to download what is currently in the AdvancEd system to Indistar to help a Principal get started?
* Frontier Middle School's SIG - Frontier Middle School received a 1003(a) SIG this year.  Are we able to carry these funds over throughout the 2013-2014 school year?  If we are able to carry them over, are we able to amend the grant?  We will have a new Principal at FMS.  I believe the grant still has $200,000 remaining to be spent.  It would be great for the new Principal to be able to use these funds to further the school's improvement efforts.  If these funds cannot be carried over at the district level, we will need to return them to the State.  I apologize.  What is the process for returning funds?
* Biannual Letter - Do all folks who are paid entirely from federal funds need to sign the biannual letter, or is it just those in Targeted Assistance schools?  I thought that it was only in TA schools because of Title I funds losing identity in schoolwides.  I know David talked with us about this in March, but I cannot find those notes.
* Changes in Natrona - There will be a few changes in Natrona.  I will no longer be the Title I Director nor the Consolidated Grant Manager.   My new title will be Director of School Improvement.  Mike Bond will take on the responsibilities of Title I Director, and Jeff Brewster will take the responsibilities of Consolidated Grant Manager.  These changes are effective July 1, 2013.  Thank you so much for all of your help!  It has been a pleasure working with you.  :)

Have a great week,

Angela Hensley

Title I Director

Natrona County School District

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Sherri-lyn Harrison** <sharrison@acsd1.org>
Date: Thu, Jun 6, 2013 at 3:26 PM
Subject: RE: ESEA Waiver Update
To: Jennifer Peterson <jennifer.peterson@wyo.gov>
Cc: Suzanne Perry <sperry@acsd1.org>

Hi Jennifer,

This is great news! Our district supports the WDE work on the Flexibility Waiver, having submitted a letter in support during the initial application phase, February 2013. It would be our hope that approval of the waiver would be secured for the 2013-2014 school year. I would reiterate that sequestration coupled with ESEA NCLB AYP sanctions leaves little funding for the support of quality Title I programs in the schools. In essence, large portions of the LEA allocations for the 13-14 SY would flow straight to NCLB sanctions, with districts and schools falling short of the fast approaching, 100 percent proficiency mark; high-performing schools and districts labeled as failing.

Please continue to pursue a single system of accountability that meets both state and federal expectations for public education. Thank you for your work towards that end.

Sincerely,

Sherri-lyn Harrison

Title 1/Literacy Coordinator

Albany County School District 1

509 South 9th Street

Laramie, WY 82070

307.721.4456

WAPSD Feedback

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| **Tiffany Dobler** |

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Good Evening David,

On June 6th and 7th, the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities (WAPSD) met.  One of the topics discussed during this face-to-face meeting was the development of the ESEA flex waiver.  Specifically, I explained to panel members where WDE is currently positioned in the approval process.  We had an in-depth dialogue regarding the differences between our current processes and newly proposed processes outlined in the waiver.  We discussed the growth model and how it might impact students with disabilities.  I let panel members know that we are currently working on a response to the department of education and that their feedback is welcome.  It is purely my impression that the panel approves of the decision to apply for a flexibility waiver, and are very interested to see how implementation will work and the ways in which the waiver will ultimately impact students with disabilities and special education teachers and service providers.

Please let me know if you have additional questions or need further detail.

Sincerely,

Tiffany

Input on ESEA waiver application

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| **KScheurman@nea.org** |

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Dear David and Dr. Rose,

Per our conversation at our initial meeting on 6/10/13 the Wyoming ESEA Flexibility/Waiver application and our subsequent review of the application, the Wyoming Education Association offers the following input:

1)      It is commendable that WDE is applying for this waiver and is working for congruency between the state statutory requirements and those of the federal government. The less duplication of effort, the better!

2)      The assumption that the UW College of Education’s awareness of CCSS is “leading to a shift in teacher/principal preparation programs” may or may not be a valid assumption. That said, we understand that the Department of Education in Wyoming has absolutely no control over higher education institutions or their curriculum. We would hope, however, that an earnest conversation has been or will be had with the Dean and faculty of the College so there is clear communication and understanding of the needs of both organizations and their respective students and faculties.

3)      Regarding the definitions used to identify Priority and Focus Schools, we must express our concern that the criteria seem to be leading to an over-identification of alternative schools, as is evidenced in the initial list of identified schools. Alternative high schools, by their very nature, focus on students who may not fit the traditional “mold”: many are working part- or often full-time to support families, and frequently they face other obstacles that have resulted in a slower accumulation of credits toward graduation. To penalize a school for its efforts to nonetheless persevere and graduate these young adults, whether in the traditional four years or in most cases five or six, seems contrary to our goal of moving all students to readiness for college or career. It matters not that it takes a longer time to get to the same end, but rather that they do in fact graduate ready to be productive members of our society. Our concerns in this regard extend not only to the Department’s waiver application and the Federal requirement that stipulates this rule, but also to the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act passed by our legislature; we are hopeful that the legislature will in its next session see fit to make changes to the law in order to remediate this situation.

4)      A certificate or a plaque seems little reward for the exemplary progress made by Reward Schools. Might there be some more substantive incentive, such as less regulation by the State over certain activities or requirements, less frequent monitoring (indeed, Priority and Focus Schools will have much more frequent monitoring of their Federal Consolidated Grant funds, according to the application, so why not the opposite for schools on the opposite end of the spectrum?), or perhaps more freedom in the use of their funding?

5)      On pg. 31 of the application, immediately following the bulleted section, the paragraph begins with what seems to be but half a sentence/half a formula. This was probably due to a simple typographical error, but is confusing nonetheless and probably should be corrected for clarity.

6)      In the very last bullet at the bottom of pg. 44, we would like more detail as to how you plan to increase Hathaway scholarship eligibility requirements, please—in what specific ways would you increase the requirements? In addition, that would seem to be beyond the purview of the WDE, and instead be an action that can be taken only by the legislature.

7)      Teacher and leader evaluation: It is critical that not only the evaluators be trained prior to doing evaluations, but also those being evaluated. We would urge you to include that expectation of districts.

8)      We realize that the following is a Federal requirement, but we disagree strongly with defining the ELL subgroup as only those students who are currently ELL or have attained English proficiency within the last two years. What a sad situation that schools are penalized instead of congratulated for successfully exiting former ELL students and eventually graduating them. Why not give credit to the school for achieving success with that group of students?!

9)      The requirement that Focus and Priority Schools continue to offer Choice, but not SES, seems rather questionable, since in Wyoming there is very little opportunity in most communities for choice to occur (i.e., there is often no other school, particularly at the secondary level, within a reasonable distance that could be a realistic choice for most families). Though the provision of SES is also rather limited in some locations in our frontier state, there is probably a better chance of an SES opportunity than of choice. Either way, though, it’s good to see a  requirement for only one or the other, as opposed to both.

10)   We applaud your intention to build a “thoroughly developed plan for the inclusion of teachers and principals in all phases of the educator evaluation and accountability system.” It is indeed crucial to include those voices from the outset!

Thank you for affording us the opportunity to provide feedback on this application. We hope to continue this collaboration as we all work for the improvement of our state’s education system and student outcomes in Wyoming.

Kathy

Sincerely,

Kathy Scheurman, Professional Issues and UniServ Director

Wyoming Education Association

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