



# Wyoming Department of Education

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Wyoming granted extension for ESEA Waiver application

CHEYENNE - The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) has been granted an extension on its application for a flexibility waiver from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act.

The extension allows the WDE to submit a revised flexibility waiver request to the US Department of Education by April 15, 2013. The US Department of Education informed the WDE that it had granted the extension in a letter from Assistant Secretary Deborah Delisle to WDE Interim Director Dr. Jim Rose on March 7.

“This gives us a significant amount of time to flesh out and draft a more comprehensive response that is substantially more approvable,” said Wyoming Department of Education Federal Programs Unit Director Dr. David Holbrook. “It also allows more time for our stakeholders in Wyoming to offer their comments and suggestions for the process.”

The flexibility waiver requests relief from provisions of the ESEA also known as the No Child Left Behind Act. Almost every other state in the country has already been granted a waiver. Without a waiver, every single student in Wyoming would have to score at the proficient level or higher in 2014. Schools could face budget restrictions if every student does not meet these standards.

With this extension, WDE has been granted additional time to prepare and submit a request that will allow Wyoming school districts the flexibility to use their Title I funding to target the greatest needs in their schools and district.

If a school fails to make AYP for two consecutive years, the district can go into “improvement,” status, which compromises the ability of local districts to spend some federal education money in ways they see as beneficial. Instead, the United States Department of Education requires those

districts to spend portions of their federal dollars in specific areas eliminating some local control over school budgets.

“We have a federal accountability system that doesn’t necessarily reflect the needs of districts and schools in Wyoming,” Holbrook said. “This will allow us to use the State Accountability system developed by the Wyoming Legislature to report to both state and federal systems. This will cut down on the bureaucracy.”

The components of the legislation that has been passed into law by the Wyoming Legislature in the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA), are well-aligned to the federal priorities outlined in the ESEA Flexibility Waivers.

Without the waivers, Wyoming’s highest performing schools will be categorized under the Wyoming system as “Exceeding Expectations,” while under the federal ESEA system, in 2014, will very likely be categorized as failing schools because they would not be able to meet AYP targets of 100 percent proficiency for all students and all subgroups of students.

After submission of the waiver and a time of negotiation and assurance between the US Department of Education and the WDE, it is hoped that the waiver request decision will come in time for the 2013-14 school year.

Comments from Wyoming stakeholders may be included in the submission if received before noon, April 15. They can be directed to Dr. David Holbrook, Federal Programs Unit Leader at 307-777-6260 or [david.holbrook@wyo.gov](mailto:david.holbrook@wyo.gov).