

## News Release

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### DPI seeks comments on draft NCLB waiver request

MADISON — Wisconsin’s request for waivers from several provisions of federal education law creates the expectation that every child will graduate ready for college and careers by setting higher standards for students, educators, and schools.

“Education for today’s world requires increased rigor and higher expectations,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has shackled schools by being overly prescriptive and prohibiting creative reforms that would help more students gain the skills needed for further education and the workforce. Wisconsin’s request for flexibility from NCLB is driven by the belief that increasing rigor across the standards, assessment, and accountability system will result in improved instruction and improved student outcomes.”

To receive waivers, state education agencies must demonstrate how they will use flexibility from NCLB requirements to address four principles: transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness; and reducing duplication. The Department of Public Instruction has posted its draft waiver request online and is asking for public comment through a survey. After the two-week comment period, the agency will revise the waiver request and submit it to the U.S. Department of Education by Feb. 21.

#### **College and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students**

Major provisions of the plan have been in progress through collaborative work throughout Wisconsin and with other states. Wisconsin, as part of several consortia projects, is developing new assessments to replace the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE), the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD), and the assessment for students who are learning English. The new assessments will be aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Wisconsin’s approach to standards implementation, which sets it apart from other states, includes an added focus on literacy in all subjects. Educators in science, social studies, history, and technical subjects will work as part of the state’s comprehensive literacy efforts to enrich students’ learning in all content areas.

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The draft waiver request calls for higher expectations for student achievement by using proficiency levels based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for new cut scores on statewide tests. This will provide an important transition to the higher expectations of the new assessment system. Results from the NAEP cut score evaluation will inform new baseline accountability measures and will be used for reporting student performance and school accountability in 2012-13.

“Increasing our expectations of what students need to know and be able to do, to match the reality of the 21st century, will not be easy,” Evers said. “Students who were proficient on the WKCE may no longer be proficient on the new assessment system as new, more important skills are measured. Schools that were making AYP under NCLB may no longer meet the expectations of our next generation accountability system. Also, schools growing student achievement will be recognized by this new system in ways that never happened with NCLB.”

To ensure that students will meet graduation requirements and be ready for postsecondary studies, the Department of Public Instruction will recommend the use of the assessments from ACT (EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, and WorkKeys) and will again request funding in the 2013-15 biennial budget to support statewide administration. The agency also will seek an increase in graduation standards to include a minimum of three years of mathematics and three years of science, engineering, or technology coursework. Currently, graduates must have two credits each in mathematics and science.

### **Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

The draft waiver request incorporates work by the School and District Accountability Design Team to help Wisconsin establish accountability measures that 1) are fair; 2) raise expectations; and 3) provide meaningful measures to inform differentiated recognition, intervention, and support. Furthermore, the design team felt that any new system should not narrow options for students. As a result, the state will continue to find ways to place a value on important electives such as art, music, world languages, and physical education.

Wisconsin’s draft waiver request calls for schools to be held accountable for: student attainment, growth in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and on-track to graduation and postsecondary readiness. An index system that uses multiple measures to classify schools along a continuum of performance and a new school report card will be developed. The state’s lowest performing schools and those with the largest achievement gaps will be identified. Interventions in identified schools will be based on a diagnostic review to improve core instruction. The state’s Response to Intervention Center (RtI) as well as a Statewide System of Support, which will be developed, will be entry points for school improvement and district reform.

New procedures for identifying schools and districts will replace the current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determination and will establish recognition for high performing schools. The department intends to seek

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authority to include all publicly funded schools in its accountability and support efforts. Under NCLB, only Schools Identified for Improvement (SIFI) that receive Title I funding must implement reforms.

“We are changing these systems to support struggling schools and to share what works,” Evers said. “Taxpayers rightly want to know that their education tax dollars are producing results. Our waiver request will improve accountability for publicly funded education in Wisconsin.”

### **Support for Effective Instruction and Leadership**

Teachers and principals will be evaluated on their professional practice and student achievement in an educator evaluation framework that is part of the state’s waiver request. Evaluations will include multiple measures, with half based on educator practice and half on student outcomes. Evaluations will link to each educator’s professional development plan. Provisions in the draft waiver request are based on recommendations from the State Superintendent’s Educator Effectiveness Design Team.

“Centered on student learning, fair, valid, and reliable — these are core principles for our educator effectiveness framework,” Evers said. “Our performance-based evaluation system will support teachers and principals in their job of educating students and help our educators improve throughout their careers.”

### **Reduce Duplication and Unnecessary Burden**

The department has been working on a Longitudinal Data System to reduce duplication and burden in school district reporting. Methods of collecting district data are changing as a result of the transition to a statewide student information system (SSIS). Additionally, methods of making data available directly to districts as well as to the public will be more timely through the SSIS and a new reporting system called the Wisconsin Information System for Education dashboard (WISEdash). WISEdash, a single reporting system for school and district accountability reporting, will be released initially in a secure format. WISEdash eventually will replace the DPI’s current data reporting systems.

“Wisconsin’s waiver request brings together a number of initiatives that have been in the works for some time. We are seeking public input on our draft waiver plan now so we can refine our reform efforts and ensure Wisconsin’s public education system is responsive to our citizens,” Evers concluded.

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**NOTE:** The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s ESEA Flexibility Request is posted online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/esea/index.html>. This page includes a link to a summary of the major provisions in the draft request and the public response survey. The survey will be open from Jan. 23 to Feb. 3. All responses will be kept confidential. This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012\\_15.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_15.pdf).