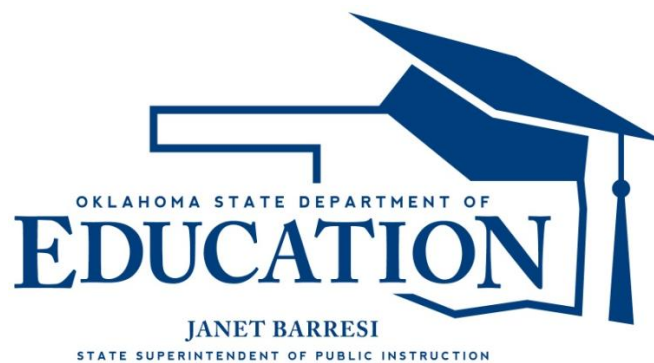


# Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request Executive Summary



Oklahoma will be C<sup>3</sup> by 2020:  
All children will graduate from high school  
College, Career, and Citizen Ready by 2020.



## OVERVIEW OF OKLAHOMA'S ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Oklahoma in 2011 has arrived at a challenging and promising crossroads for its educational system.

The challenge: Recent results indicate that Oklahoma's students have fallen behind in the global competition for excellence (one study ranked Oklahoma among the worst 10 states in producing top-achieving math students), while remediation numbers for high school graduates entering college remain high. The promise: This year, Oklahoma finally turned the corner toward positive transformation with a commitment to rethink our approach to education, to restructure outdated and inefficient systems, and to enact real reforms.

Oklahoma can be a leader in education, but only if we are committed to new fundamentals for the 21st Century – and to an unambiguous goal. Superintendent Barresi has issued a call for the State: By the year 2020, each student graduating from an Oklahoma high school must be college, career, and citizen ready.

It is called the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan**. Building on the success of a slate of reforms passed by the State Legislature and signed into law this year, the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan** sets the stage for Oklahoma to win the competition for excellence. This ESEA waiver package will provide Oklahoma with the flexibility it needs to press forward with implementation of reforms, while giving schools room to grow.

Oklahoma's reforms are briefly summarized here:

*Reforms Emphasizing Literacy, Accountability, & Choice* - State Superintendent Barresi, Governor Fallin, and Oklahoma's State Legislature advanced a bold package of legislation in the 2011 session, which included ending social promotion after the third grade for children who are not reading proficiently at grade level, the implementation of an A-F report card on individual school performance, and an expanded menu of educational choices for parents. These reforms will identify struggling schools and students in need of additional supports for continuous improvement.

*Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE)* - The Senior Class of 2012 will be the first full class of students that must demonstrate mastery in college and career preparatory courses in order to graduate. State end of instruction (EOI) tests, college entrance tests, workforce training preparedness tests, and advanced coursework validation exams, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams, serve as high school exit criteria.

*Data Drives Decisions* - The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) is beginning the process of developing a comprehensive, user-friendly, accessible, and robust longitudinal data system that will drive decision-making in classrooms, schools, districts, and the state. Bringing useful and timely student-level data into the hands of educators will allow them to be more efficient in facilitating optimal learning and better support student outcomes from Pre-K through postsecondary education and into the workforce.

*High-Quality Digital Learning* - Oklahoma is working toward fully embracing the "Ten Elements of High-Quality Digital Learning" unveiled by the bipartisan Digital Learning Council last year and expanded this year with the 72-point "Roadmap for Reform" (<http://digitalllearningnow.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Roadmap-for-Reform-.pdf>). This effort will include an expansion of the supports available to schools in order to address the unique professional development needs for educators in online and blended learning environments, as well as creating new expectations for the integration of digital tools in all Oklahoma classrooms.

*Common Core State Standards* – In 2010, Oklahoma adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and subsequently joined the governing board of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a state-led collaborative effort developing a common set of K-12 assessments in English language arts and mathematics, anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. Oklahoma

districts have embraced the CCSS and are transitioning by developing their own curricula in line with these standards. The State is on track for a full implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments over the next three years.

*Chiefs for Change* - Oklahoma is honored to be a part of the reform-minded Chiefs for Change organization. Superintendent Barresi joins other state education leaders who share a common approach toward improving the nation's education system. Chiefs for Change has already provided the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) with a Statement of Principles for Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Oklahoma looked to this document as a guide to inform development of this *ESEA Flexibility Request*. In keeping with the direction of this document, Oklahoma looks forward to the Congressional reauthorization of ESEA and offers this plan as a blueprint for consideration.

*An Effective Teacher in Every Classroom; An Effective Leader in Every School* - Oklahoma is nearing completion of the development of the State's new Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE). The TLE Commission will finish drafting rules for State Board of Education approval by December for piloting in 2012-2013 and full implementation in 2013-2014. The TLE promises to support all teachers and administrators toward continuous improvement of instructional practices and student outcomes.

*REACH Network* - To implement its broad slate of reforms, to introduce the new TLE system, and to assist schools with the transition to the CCSS, the OSDE has also created a grassroots network called Regional Educators Advancing College, Career, and Citizen Readiness Higher (*REACH*) utilizing volunteer coordinating districts to work with other districts to disseminate information, share best practices, offer training, and more.

Oklahoma's reform movement, in short, is an empowerment agenda. We are empowering students by preparing them to be successful and informed citizens in the real world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are empowering parents by providing them with easy-to-understand information about schools, by utilizing data to drive decisions, and by expanding choice. And we are empowering educators through reforms like our new TLE system – encouraging teachers and administrators to reach their full potential.

Oklahoma's *ESEA Flexibility Request* reflects the intersection of the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan**, diverse constituencies across the State, and the four waiver principles. The time is urgent. Oklahoma can turn its crisis into an opportunity. With the flexibility provided by this ESEA waiver package, the State can usher in this transformation all the more rapidly.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF OKLAHOMA'S ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Oklahoma sets the reform agenda known as the **C<sup>3</sup> Plan** as the foundation for this *ESEA Flexibility Request*, and the State acknowledges that any relaxation of its commitment to these reforms would risk denial of the ESEA waiver package.

The reforms outlined in the *ESEA Flexibility Request* have widespread support of a variety of stakeholders, indicating that the reforms are likely to be implemented with fidelity and fervor across the State. The beliefs, suggestions, and innovations of Oklahoma teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders have shaped Oklahoma's commitment to college- and career-ready expectations for all students (Principle 1), as well as accountability, recognition, and support systems for teachers, leaders, schools, and districts (Principles 2 and 3).

Oklahoma knows that college-, career-, and citizen-ready (C<sup>3</sup>) expectations must be set for all students; that all students must be given access and supports in order to achieve C<sup>3</sup> expectations; and that high-quality assessments must measure each student's progress toward meeting C<sup>3</sup> expectations. Oklahoma is committed to full implementation of the CCSS and other college and career ready standards, PARCC and other college and career ready assessments, and an array of student supports, especially for those students who traditionally are underserved in advanced courses and college and career preparatory programs.

## **TEACHER AND LEADER EFFECTIVENESS**

Oklahoma is poised for implementation of a Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE) that will encourage continuous improvement of all educators so that all teachers and leaders will have the opportunity to become effective, highly effective, or superior.

The Oklahoma TLE is designed to be an integral part of the entire school improvement process. The evaluation of teachers and leaders will once again have meaning since the results of evaluations will be used for all varieties of data-based decisions at the classroom, building, district, and state levels.

## **DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY & SUPPORT SYSTEM**

Oklahoma's Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System will provide a coherent approach to continuous school improvement by holding schools accountable to preparing all students for college, career, and citizen readiness (C<sup>3</sup>); by encouraging higher levels of growth each year; by integrating federally-required annual measurable objectives (AMOs) and reporting for all student groups with the school-wide performance indicators of the State's newly adopted A-F School Grading System; and by honoring both high achievement and significant progress of students, teachers, and schools.

Oklahoma's Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System provides a comprehensive framework for all schools to show continuous improvement regardless of the school's current level of student achievement, graduation rate, or school success components.

Oklahoma's Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System hinges on the State's newly adopted A-F School Grading System, which will be implemented in 2012. The purpose of the A-F School Grading System is to provide incentives to schools for challenging all students to reach high levels of college and career readiness.

Although statewide proficiency rates have increased at the same time that higher expectations are being implemented for all students, Oklahoma is not complacent. Oklahomans expect that our students will perform among the best in the nation, so the OSDE is setting ambitious AMOs for the "all students" group and each subgroup of students. Striving to meet the new AMOs and attain higher grades through the A-F School Grading System, schools and districts will push for higher rates of Proficient/Satisfactory and Advanced on all state assessments.

Oklahoma's new AMOs set achievable and ambitious goals for the State's districts and sites for the "all students" group and all subgroups. Since the AMOs are integrated into the State's Differentiated

Recognition, Accountability, and Support System, the AMOs will provide information for the state, districts, and schools to provide targeted interventions while pushing for continuous growth of all students.

Incentives for school improvement are as equally important as consequences for lack of school improvement. OSDE seeks to identify and provide meaningful rewards to schools that are reaching goals for student performance and student growth. Meaningful rewards will be selected based on their likelihood to encourage other schools to work toward obtaining Reward School status.

Failure is no longer an option in Oklahoma schools. In order to preserve and protect the futures of all Oklahoma children, Turnaround Principles and drastic improvement will be required of the State's lowest performing schools. These schools will be known as Priority Schools.

Closing achievement gaps and raising student performance or graduation rate of particular subgroups will require targeted interventions specific to the needs of each subgroup. Significant commitments of financial resources and professional development will be needed to close these gaps in Focus Schools.

The OSDE provides significant resources for capacity building at the state, district, and school site levels. All capacity building efforts will be enhanced as the OSDE provides targeted interventions to schools based on the Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support System, including the A-F School Grading System.