



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Angelica Allen-McMillan
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education
100 Riverview Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Commissioner Allen-McMillan:

I am writing in response to New Jersey's request to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). New Jersey first submitted its request on January 31, 2023, and submitted revised versions on August 11, 2023, and October 6, 2023. Prior to implementing any revisions to its approved consolidated State plan, a State must submit its proposed amendments to the Department for review and approval.

I have determined that the amendment request meets ESEA requirements; accordingly, I am approving New Jersey's amended State plan. A summary of New Jersey's amendment is enclosed. This letter, as well as New Jersey's revised ESEA consolidated State plan, will be posted on the Department's website. Any further requests to amend New Jersey's ESEA consolidated State plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval.

Please be aware that approval of this amendment is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is New Jersey's responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

Thank you for the work New Jersey has invested in its consolidated State plan under the ESEA. If you need any assistance regarding its implementation, please contact the Office of School Support and Accountability at: OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Adam Schott
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Kathleen Ehling, NJDOE

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Amendment to the New Jersey Consolidated State Plan

The following is a summary of New Jersey Department of Education’s (NJDOE) amendment request. Please refer to the Department’s website <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-consolidated-state-plans/> for New Jersey’s complete consolidated State plan.

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

- *Academic Achievement Long-Term Goals*
 - The Department acknowledges that NJDOE shifted forward its long-term goals and measurements of interim progress (MIPs) for academic achievement by two years (from 2030 to 2032), consistent with NJDOE’s previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum. NJDOE maintained its long-term goal of 80 percent of all students and each subgroup of students scoring proficient or above on the statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics.
 - NJDOE clarified that it sets unique MIPS for each school and subgroup based on school- and subgroup-specific baseline assessment data.
 - NJDOE updated its ESEA consolidated State plan to reflect its implementation of new assessments (i.e., replace PARCC assessments with NJSLA assessments) and use of a single high school end-of-course mathematics assessment for Title I purposes (i.e., Algebra I).

- *Graduation Rate Long-Term Goals*
 - The Department acknowledges that NJDOE shifted forward its long-term goals and MIPs for the four- and five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates (ACGR) by two years (from 2030 to 2032), consistent with NJDOE’s previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum.
 - In addition, NJDOE indicated that it is considering adding long-term goals for a six-year ACGR to its ESEA accountability system for future years. If NJDOE decides to add a six-year ACGR to its ESEA accountability system, it must first submit an amendment request to the Department and receive approval for the change.

- *Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency Long-Term Goals*
 - The Department acknowledges that NJDOE shifted forward its long-term goals and MIPs for progress in achieving English language proficiency (ELP) by two years (from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025), consistent with NJDOE’s previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum.
 - NJDOE revised its long-term goal and baseline data for progress in achieving ELP to reflect actual data from the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, NJDOE adjusted its MIPs for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years to account for actual student performance in the 2021-2022 school year.
 - NJDOE also added two sets of grade-span long-term goals and MIPs, along with corresponding baseline data. NJDOE now has long-term goals and MIPs for schools that have a highest grade of grade 5 and another set of long-term goals and MIPs for all other schools.

- NJDOE added a 90 percent confidence interval to how it calculates school performance for whether it met the long-term goal or MIP for progress in achieving ELP.
- *Subgroups*

NJDOE revised the racial/ethnic subgroups it defines for ESEA Title I accountability to use a single subgroup for Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander students in place of a separate Asian subgroup and a separate Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander subgroup. NJDOE made conforming changes throughout its plan.
- *Eighth Grade Mathematics Exception*

NJDOE updated its State plan to describe: (1) that a student taking a high school mathematics course and associated end-of-course assessment in grade 7 is permitted to take that assessment in place of the grade 7 assessment. This is consistent with a waiver approved by the Department on December 2, 2021, for the 2021-2022 through 2024-2025 school years; and (2) that all grade 6 grade students who take Algebra I in middle school take the grade 6 mathematics and Algebra I assessments (for which NJDOE banks the Algebra I assessment results for future ESEA accountability purposes when the students are in high school).
- *Academic Achievement Indicator*

NJDOE clarified that it will use one general high school mathematics assessment for Title I purposes (i.e., Algebra I), except as otherwise permitted (e.g., students who take advanced assessments).
- *Graduation Rate Indicator*

NJDOE clarified it will not include in the numerator for its ACGR students with disabilities who have been exempted from meeting New Jersey’s course, attendance, and/or assessment and graduation requirements per their Individualized Education Program.
- *Progress in English Language Proficiency Indicator (also applies to ELP Long Term Goals)*

NJDOE revised the criteria it uses to determine an English learner’s expected level of ELP to remove consideration of the number of years the English learner has been enrolled in the LEA. NJDOE also made this change for its Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) Long-Term Goals.
- *Alternate Methodology*

NJDOE made several revisions to its alternate methodology for annual meaningful differentiation for schools, specifically:

 - For schools in which no grade is assessed: Elementary schools will be linked to their respective receiving schools that have assessed grades; charter schools will be evaluated based on New Jersey’s Charter Performance Framework; and high schools that have graduation rate data will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) if they have four-year graduation rates below 67 percent or five-year graduation rates below 68 percent.
 - For schools that serve a mix of both elementary/middle and high school grades: Schools that have academic progress and graduation rate data will be included by redistributing

weights for indicators; in LEAs where grades 9 through 12 are split across multiple high schools, schools will be linked for accountability purposes; for schools with academic achievement data but no academic progress or graduation data available, a modified summative score using available data will be used; and charter schools that cannot be included in the regular system of annual meaningful differentiation will be evaluated based on New Jersey's Charter Performance Framework.

- Schools too small for other approaches will be evaluated through a comprehensive review using available data and accountability frameworks.
- *Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)-Lowest 5 percent*
NJDOE revised its methodology for identifying the lowest-performing Title I schools for CSI to identify schools by three grade spans (elementary/middle, high school, and mixed configuration) rather than just two grade spans (elementary/middle and high school).
- *Frequency of Identification-CSI*
The Department acknowledges that NJDOE revised the frequency with which it identifies schools for CSI due to low performance and low graduation rates to identify schools in fall 2022 and again in fall 2023, consistent with NJDOE's previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum. Thereafter, the State will identify schools for CSI every three years.
- *TSI-Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)*
The Department acknowledges that NJDOE revised the frequency with which it identifies schools for ATSI to identify schools in fall 2022 and again in fall 2023, consistent with NJDOE's previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum. Thereafter, the State will identify schools for ATSI every three years.
- *CSI Exit Criteria*
NJDOE revised its State plan to not count the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years toward the number of years in which a CSI school must meet State-defined criteria for a school to exit CSI status before the school must take more rigorous State-determined action, consistent with NJDOE's previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum.
- *ATSI Exit Criteria*
NJDOE revised its State plan to not count the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years toward the number of years in which an ATSI school must meet the State-defined criteria for a school to exit ATSI status before the school is identified for CSI, consistent with NJDOE's previously approved ESEA State Plan Addendum.