



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

August 2, 2017

The Honorable Hanseul Kang
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
810 1st Street NE, Ninth Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Superintendent Kang:

Thank you for submitting the District of Columbia's consolidated State plan to implement requirements of covered programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and of the amended McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act).

I am writing to provide feedback based on the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) review of your consolidated State plan. As you know, the Department also conducted, as required by the statute, a peer review of the portions of your State plan related to ESEA Title I, Part A, ESEA Title III, Part A, and the McKinney-Vento Act using the Department's *State Plan Peer Review Criteria* released on March 28, 2017. Peer reviewers examined these sections of the consolidated State plan in their totality, while respecting State and local judgments. The goal of the peer review was to support State- and local-led innovation by providing objective feedback on the technical, educational, and overall quality of a State plan and to advise the Department on the ultimate approval of the plan. I am enclosing a copy of the peer review notes for your consideration. Please note that the Department's feedback may differ from the peer notes.

Based on the Department's review of all programs submitted under the District of Columbia's consolidated State plan, including those programs subject to peer review, the Department is requesting clarifying or additional information to ensure the State's plan has met requisite statutory and regulatory requirements, as detailed in the enclosed table. Each State has flexibility in how it meets the statutory and regulatory requirements. I encourage you to read the full peer notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your consolidated State plan.

ESEA section 8451 requires the Department to issue a written determination within 120 days of a State's submission of its consolidated State plan. Given this statutory requirement, I ask that you revise the District of Columbia's consolidated State plan and resubmit it through OMB Max within 15 days from August 1, 2017. If you need more time than this to resubmit your consolidated State plan, please contact your Office of State Support Program Officer, who will work with you in establishing a new submission date. Please recognize that if we accommodate

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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.

your request for additional time, we may be unable to issue a written determination on your plan within the 120-day review period.

Department staff are available to support the District of Columbia in addressing the items enclosed with this letter. If you have any immediate questions or need additional information, I encourage you to contact your Program Officer for the specific Department program.

Please note that the Department only reviewed information provided in the District of Columbia's consolidated State plan that was responsive to the Revised Template for the Consolidated State Plan that was issued on March 13, 2017. Each State is responsible for administering all programs included in its consolidated State plan consistent with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Department can only review and approve complete information. If the District of Columbia indicated that any aspect of its plan may change or is still under development, the District of Columbia may include updated or additional information in its resubmission the District of Columbia may also propose an amendment to its approved plan when additional data or information are available consistent with ESEA section 1111(a)(6)(B). The Department cannot approve incomplete details within the State plan until the State provides sufficient information.

Thank you for the important work that you and your staff are doing to support the transition to the ESSA. The Department looks forward to working with you to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jason Botel
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Governor
State Title I Director
State Title II Director
State Title III Director
State Title IV Director
State Title V Director
State 21st Century Community Learning Center Director
State Director for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program

Items That Require Additional Information or Revision in the District of Columbia’s Consolidated State Plan

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies	
A.4.iv.a: Academic Achievement Indicator	The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) proposes to include in the Academic Achievement indicator performance on assessments other than the assessments used to meet the requirements in 1111(b)(2)(B), including the SAT or ACT, which OSSE requires for all students in public schools; participation in at least one Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) course; and performance on AP and IB assessments. The ESEA requires that the Academic Achievement indicator (ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i)(I)) only include proficiency on the annual assessments required under ESEA subsection (b)(2)(B)(v)(I) (i.e., reading/language arts and mathematics); OSSE may include the other measures in the School Quality or Student Success indicator.
A.4.iv.c: Graduation Rate Indicator	OSSE proposes to include an alternate graduation rate calculation in its Graduation Rate indicator. Under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(B)(iii), the Graduation Rate indicator may only include measures based on State-designed long term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation and, at the State’s discretion, one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates. An alternate graduation rate calculation may be included as a School Quality or Student Success indicator, if desired, provided it meets all applicable requirements for School Quality or Student Success indicators (i.e., it is valid, reliable, comparable, used statewide in all schools, and allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance).
A.4.v.c: If Applicable, Different Methodology for Annual Meaningful Differentiation	The ESEA requires a State to include <u>all</u> public schools in its system of annual meaningful differentiation and to describe that system in its State plan. OSSE indicates that it will develop a methodology for identifying schools with variant grade configurations but does not describe the methodology in its plan. Because OSSE does not describe the different methodology it will use for schools with variant grade configurations or how the methodology will be used to identify such schools for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, it is unclear whether OSSE meets the statutory requirements.
A.4.vi.b: Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools—Low Graduation Rates	The ESEA requires that a State to describe its methodology to identify for comprehensive support and improvement all public high schools that fail to graduate one-third or more of their students. In its plan, OSSE indicates that it will use the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to identify schools for comprehensive support and improvement. However, OSSE includes a note in its State plan stating that it will use an alternative framework when applicable but does not provide information on that alternative framework or when it would apply and does not specify that the

	alternate framework would result in identification of any high school with a graduation rate below 67 percent. It is therefore unclear whether OSSE meets the statutory requirements.
A.4.vi.e: Targeted Support and Improvement Schools— “Consistently Underperforming” Subgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESEA requires a State to describe in its State plan its methodology for annually identifying schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups as determined by the State, if any. In its State plan, OSSE discusses the identification of schools with consistently underperforming subgroups but, because it does not include a definition of “consistently underperforming,” it is unclear whether OSSE meets the statutory requirements. • Additionally, OSSE indicates that it will identify schools every three years. A State may define “consistently underperforming” as underperforming over three years. However, the ESEA requires a State to annually identify schools with one or more “consistently underperforming” subgroups of students, if any.
A.4.vi.f: Targeted Support and Improvement Schools— Additional Targeted Support	The ESEA requires that a State describe its methodology for identifying schools in which any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State’s methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D). While OSSE includes some description of its methodology, because it does not include a complete description, stating only that it will identify a school that “repeatedly falls below the threshold” without describing that threshold, OSSE has not fully described its methodology for identifying these schools.
A.4.viii.a: Exit Criteria for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools	OSSE describes in its State plan exit criteria that only require that schools no longer meet the criteria for identification. The ESEA requires a State to establish and describe exit criteria that ensure continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success in the State. Specifically, OSSE’s proposed exit criteria permit a school to exit based on the decline in the performance of other schools, which does not ensure continued progress in improved student academic achievement and school success.