

June 24, 2013

Teaching and Learning

## TRANSITION FLEXIBILITY

On June 18, in a letter to Chief State School Officers, Secretary Duncan announced that the Department is open to providing additional flexibility for states during the transition to new assessments aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Here is a passage from the letter as provided by the U.S. Department of Education:

“In recent months, we have heard from many of you and from thousands of teachers, principals, and education advocates. While there is a broad sense that recent far-reaching changes [raising standards and upgrading curricula, developing new assessments, rebuilding accountability systems, and adopting new systems of support and evaluation for teachers and principals] carry enormous promise for schools, children, and the future of our country, there is caution that too much change all at once could undermine our collective progress.... With that in mind, the Department is open to additional flexibility for states in two critical areas.”

First, states that have received a Race to the Top grant or flexibility under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) are required to work with school districts to develop systems to evaluate and support teachers and principals based on multiple measures, including student growth.

The Department will consider requests delaying personnel consequences for teachers and principals tied to the new assessments for up to one year beyond current plans, until no later than 2016-17.

Some states are well underway and are unlikely to seek a delay. Others may want more time. Each state must have a solid plan for supporting teachers and principals as they transition to new standards, assessments, and materials.

States may request this change through the [ESEA flexibility amendment process](#) before September 30, 2013.

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