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# ESEA FLEXIBILITY: NCLB WAIVER DISCUSSION

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# USDE OFFERS FLEXIBILITY

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The ESEA waiver offers the **opportunity** to request flexibility on behalf of the State, Districts, and Schools to better focus on

*improving educational outcomes,  
closing achievement gaps, and  
increasing the quality of instruction.*

This flexibility will build on and support the significant State and District **reform efforts** already underway.



# Principles of the Waiver Application

An SEA must submit a request that addresses each of the following:

✓ Principle 1:  
College- and Career-Ready Expectations

Principle 2:  
Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, And Support

✓ Principle 3:  
Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

✓ Principle 4:  
Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden



# And then

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The Administration will waive key accountability provisions of NCLB, including

- Current AYP goals (100% by 2014)
- Required school improvement activities (identification/notification, choice, SES, restructuring, etc.)
- Required district improvement activities including identification/notification



# Principle 1: Standards and Assessments

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Implement college and career-ready standards in at least ELA and math by 2013-14

- Common Core, or
- Standards that have been validated by state institutions of higher education as meeting the requirements for entry into credit-bearing, non-remedial entry-level coursework

Implement assessments aligned with those standards by 2014-15

- Assessment Consortia (PARCC or SBAC), or
- State-developed assessments



## Principle 2: Accountability

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**By 2012-13, implement a statewide system of differentiated accountability that includes:**

1. New goals for student performance on college and career-ready standards for all districts, schools, and groups

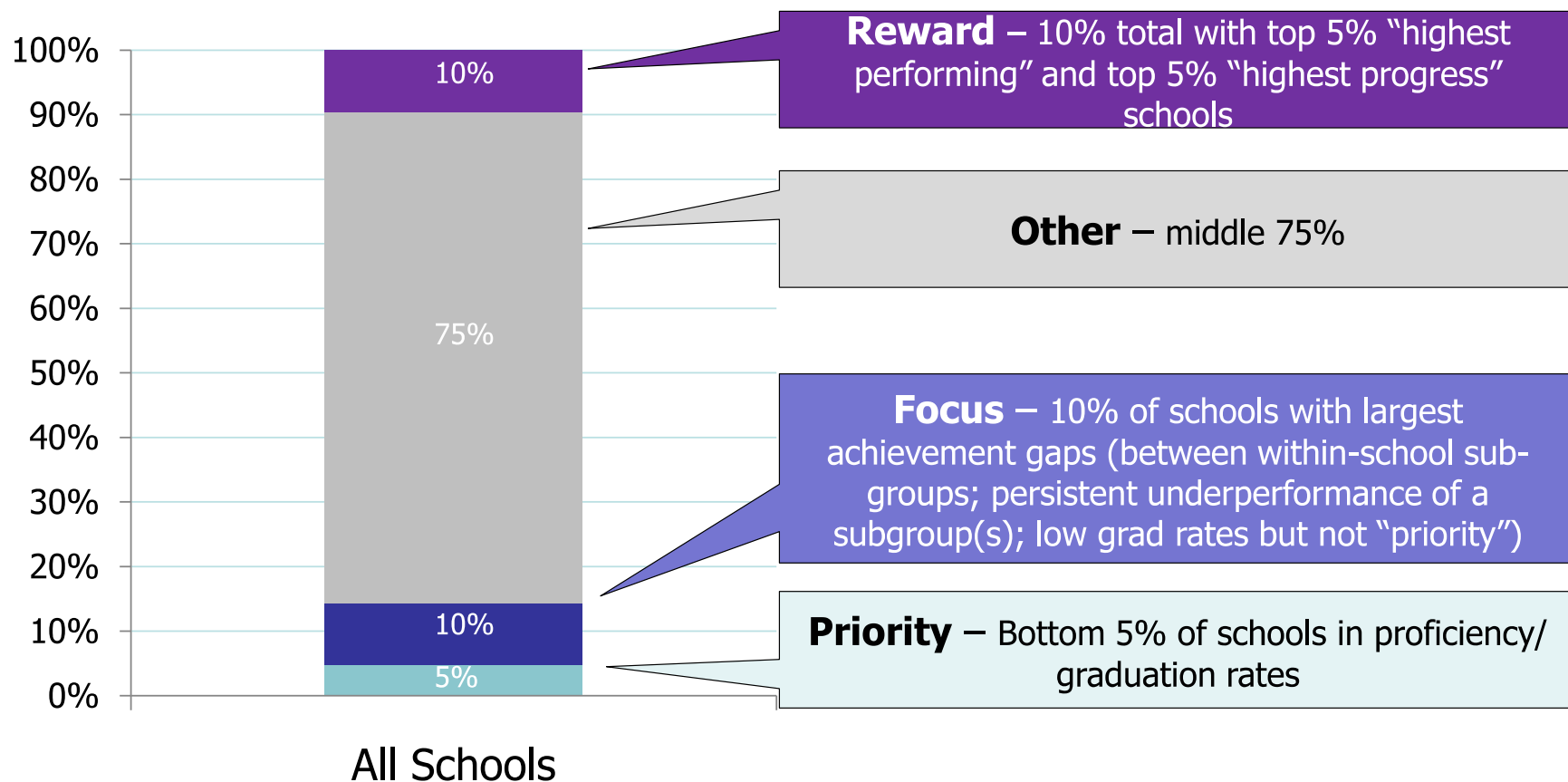
Options include:

- Cut in half the difference between current proficiency rates and 100% in six years, overall and for each group,
- 100% proficiency by 2020, or
- Other “similarly ambitious” goals—looking for innovative models



## Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

An SEA must develop and implement a system that differentiates schools into the following 4 categories, with targeted interventions/rewards for each group:





# Principle 3: Teachers and Principals

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Demonstrate a plan for evaluation systems for teachers and principals that includes:

- At least 3 tiers of differentiation (ratings)
- Evidence of growth in student learning as a significant portion of the evaluation
- Multiple measures of teacher/leader practice
- Plan to use evaluation results to
  - Help improve instruction*
  - Inform personnel decisions*





# Teachers and Principals

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- Waive Highly Qualified Teacher Improvement Plan requirements and associated restrictions on funds
- States are not exempt from the requirement to ensure equitable distribution of experienced, in-field and certified teachers
- When states and districts move to new evaluation systems, they can use the results of these systems to meet this requirement



## Principle 4: Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden

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- To provide an environment in which schools and districts have the flexibility to focus on what is best for students
- Remove duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements that have little or no impact on student outcomes
- Evaluate and revise SEA administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools



# Other Waiver Request Components

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## Flexibility for:

- Rural LEAs receiving Rural School Achievement Program funds
- Transfer of Certain Federal Funds to Title I
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Community funds



# Stakeholder Engagement

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Stakeholder consultation is a major requirement of the waiver request

Opportunities for meaningful engagement and input in shaping the waiver request must come from:

- Federal Programs Committee of Practitioners
- Teachers and Leaders
- Other stakeholders, including such groups as students, business and community organizations, and representatives of students with disabilities, among others.



# Other Information

- No limit on the number of waivers granted
- All state applications will be peer-reviewed
- First round of applications will be due November 14th, with decisions made before the end of the year
- Second round of applications will be due in mid-February with Spring 2012 decisions
- USDE has pledged a collaborative process for refinement of waiver requests
- Waivers will last through 2013-14, with Department review and possibility for additional flexibility at that time.



## USDE Concluding Thoughts:

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*The waiver process gives the states the opportunity to set higher standards, define accountability, and address plans to improve low-performing schools and reward those doing well.*

*The waiver plan allows for the right balance between the states and the federal government.*

*The process allows states a much greater role in setting expectations and aligning resources.*

*States have been demanding greater flexibility which this process now provides.*



# Information and Questions

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USDE Website for Official Documents related to the waiver request

<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>

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