Minnesota’s ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal
Welcome from Commissioner Cassellius
Today’s Agenda

• Review the US Department of Education (ED) waiver renewal process
• Provide implementation highlights of the waiver principles
• Review MDE’s suggested updates
• Timeline and next steps
Waiver Highlights –

• Minnesota set forth a goal in the waiver to reduce achievement gaps by 50 percent by 2017
• Minnesota has been a leader in setting high standards and aligning assessments to these standards
• A stronger accountability system is in place – one that focuses on reducing achievement gaps and improving graduation rates
  – The World’s Best Workforce legislation reinforces the state’s commitment to strong accountability
• We continue to improve the implementation of our waiver by working collaboratively with districts
ESEA Flexibility Waiver Timeline

- Fall 2011: Development of ESEA Flexibility Waiver by stakeholder group
- February 2012: DOE approval of MN’s waiver
- September 2012: Waiver monitoring Part A (no findings)
- September 2013: Waiver monitoring Part B (no findings)
- January 2014: MMR technical group makes MMR calculation recommendations for waiver extension
- July 2014: DOE approval of waiver extension
- Nov-Dec 2014: DOE releases waiver renewal guidance and informs MN that the state can participate in expedited review
- January 2015: Stakeholder engagement
- January 30, 2015: Submission of MN’s waiver renewal
Waiver Renewal Process

• DOE invited states that are meeting their commitments to ESEA Flexibility to request a four-year renewal through the 2018-19 school year

• States are to:
  – Provide updates of their continued efforts in the areas of academic standards, assessments and accountability systems
  – Provide an assurance that the state is on track with implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems

• Minnesota is one of the states eligible for expedited renewal and must submit by January 30, 2015
Principle 1 - Academic Standards

• All schools are currently implementing college-and career-ready academic standards
  – 2007 math standards: implemented since 2010-2011
  – 2010 ELA standards: implemented since 2012-2013

• State also adopted English language proficiency standards and began implementing the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards in the 2011-2012 school year
Principle 1 – Waiver Renewal

• The development of a district’s World’s Best Workforce Plan includes the integration and alignment of academic standards with classroom instruction as well as teacher evaluation

• During waiver renewal, states are to describe how they will continue to implement college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments
Principle 1 – Updates in Waiver Renewal Supporting Implementation of Academic Standards

• Standards Implementation Support Initiative was launched in 2014-15 in ELA with long term plans to expand to other subjects

• Standards Implementation Toolkit is an easy-to-use website that assists schools at all stages of implementation of academic standards
  – Link to the Toolkit: Standards Implementation Toolkit
Principle 2
Differentiated Accountability System

• The NCLB Flexibility Waiver strengthens Minnesota’s accountability system by:
  – Setting a new goal and targets each year to reduce the achievement gap by half by 2017
  – Providing every school an achievement gap measure
  – Raising the graduation rate goal to 90% for the all students group as well as each student group
  – Acknowledging the importance of growth for ALL students
  – Providing more and better quality of data to parents and communities
Principle 2 - Differentiated Accountability System

- Multiple Measures are used to compute two different ratings and determine designations and recognition for Title I schools
  - Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR)
    - Proficiency
    - Growth
    - Achievement Gap Reduction
    - Graduation Rates
  - Focus Rating (FR)
    - Focused Proficiency
    - Achievement Gap Reduction
Principle 2 - How are schools identified for support?

• Priority Schools
  – Lowest 5% on MMR
  – Initially identified in 2012; new schools were identified in 2014

• Focus Schools
  – Lowest 10% on FR
  – Initially identified in 2012; new schools were identified in 2014

• Continuous Improvement Schools
  – Lowest 25% on MMR not already identified as Priority or Focus
  – Identified annually
Principle 2
How are schools identified for recognition?

• **Reward Schools**
  – Top 15% on MMR
  – Identified annually

• **Celebration Eligible Schools**
  – Next highest 25% on MMR (in the 60th to 85th percentile)
  – Celebration Eligible schools are then invited to apply for the Celebration recognition
  – Identified annually
Principle 2
Minnesota’s Highest Performers

• Reward schools are designated annually; however, some Reward schools have demonstrated consistent high performance for multiple years.

• As of 2014:
  – 40 schools have received the Reward recognition three years in a row
  – 20 schools have received the Reward recognition four times
Proposed Changes to School Recognitions

• Reward schools proposal:
  – In order to receive the Reward school recognition, a school cannot fall short of their proficiency targets for the same student group for two or more consecutive years
Principle 2
Statewide System of Support

• The NCLB Flexibility Waiver strengthens Minnesota school accountability by:
  – Transitioning from a punitive, compliance-based system to one of targeted, strategic support
  
  – Empowering a statewide system of support that can provide professional development to teachers through the work of the Regional Centers of Excellence
  
  – Creating opportunities to learn from the best practices of our highest-performing schools
Principle 2
Statewide System of Support Results

School Successes -

• 74 percent of Priority schools who worked closely with the Regional Centers of Excellence demonstrated better student growth in 2014 than in 2011

• 83 percent of Priority schools and 54 percent of Focus schools that worked closely with the centers are doing a better job today of closing achievement gaps than they were in 2011
Principle 2
Statewide System of Support Results Continued

School Successes -

• Since being designated as Priority or Focus schools in 2012, nearly 20 percent of these schools improved so much that they are now recognized as Celebration Eligible or Reward

• 43 percent of all schools initially designated as Priority or Focus improved to the point where they were no longer designated as low-performing
Principle 2 - Waiver Renewal

• During waiver renewal, states are to:
  – Ensure schools receiving the highest rating are closing achievement and graduation rate gaps
  – Submit lists of Priority and Focus schools and timelines for implementation
  – Update its plan for providing incentives and support to other Title I schools
    ▪ MDE and Regional Centers providing support to Continuous Improvement schools and other Title I schools
  – Describe statewide strategy for holding districts accountable for improving school performance
    ▪ WBWF is a state accountability system that is locally owned, developed with parent/community involvement and supported by MDE through technical assistance in continuous school improvement planning
Principle 3
Principal Development and Evaluation

• Minnesota Statutes 123B.147 are the SEA guidelines for the waiver

• Districts are receiving support through:
  – Minnesota’s example model (piloted in 2012-13)
  – Ongoing technical assistance

• MDE received a Bush Foundation grant. A position exists to:
  – Collect and share best practices in principal development evaluation
  – Provide training and resources to districts

• A letter of assurance was issued in September 2014
Principle 3
Teacher Development and Evaluation

• Minnesota Statutes 122A.40/41 are the SEA guidelines for the waiver

• Districts are receiving support through:
  – Minnesota’s example model (piloted in 2013-14)
  – Regional communities of practice (2014-15)
  – Regional Centers of Excellence workshops
    ▪ Conducting Observations and Growth-Focused Conversations
    ▪ Student Learning Goals
  – Ongoing technical assistance

• A letter of assurance was issued September 2014
Principle 3 – Waiver Renewal

• States that are implementing educator evaluation systems according to waiver requirements are not required to take further action during the waiver renewal process

• Minnesota will select an assurance that indicates the state is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on state assessments into educator ratings
Stakeholder Engagement

• January 12 – Statewide Webinar
• January 13 – Regional Stakeholder Meeting
  – Marshall
• January 14 – Regional Stakeholder Meeting
  – Brainerd
• January 20 – Statewide Webinar (repeated from January 12)
• January 20 – MN Waiver Stakeholder Group
Next Steps

• January 2015: Stakeholder engagement
• January 30, 2015: Submission of MN’s waiver renewal
• DOE anticipates approving renewal requests for states in the expedited review group by the end of March 2015
• MDE and DOE staff will meet in early March 2015 to engage in conversation about the key priorities of Minnesota’s work
• Renewals are granted for up to four years, through the 2018-2019 school year, unless there is a reauthorization of ESEA
Reauthorization of ESEA

• There has been recent momentum of a possible ESEA reauthorization in 2015
• If reauthorization occurs, states would be required to transition from waivers to the new law within a specified time period
• The direction of a reauthorized law appears to be consistent with the waiver principles
Contact

• If you have further questions after today’s meeting or additional feedback for MDE, please feel free to contact mde.nclbwaiver@state.mn.us