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Contact: Charlene Briner 651-582-1145

Minnesota Submits No Child Left Behind Waiver Application

Plan sets the stage for better accountability model for schools

Roseville, MN – Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius and Minnesota Department of Education officials submitted an application for a waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind law today. Calling Minnesota's application for a new accountability plan "a model that makes sense," Cassellius said the waiver application reflects the strong appetite for meaningful accountability by educators, parents and the public.

"Today marks an important step forward in our state's efforts to provide a world-class education to every student," said Commissioner Cassellius. "We firmly believe our waiver application represents a bold and creative accountability plan that better and more appropriately fits Minnesota's needs."

In August, Minnesota applied for a limited and conditional waiver from certain provisions of No Child Left Behind. Shortly after, President Obama authorized Secretary Duncan to offer every state the opportunity to apply for waivers from the current No Child Left Behind law. The Administration did not take action on Minnesota's abbreviated waiver request, instead requesting that states submit more comprehensive waiver applications by the November 14 first-round deadline.

According to U.S. Department of Education (U.S.DOE), states must meet four principles for consideration of approval of waivers. Those principles are: 1) states must have college- and career-ready standards; 2) states must have, or be in development of, a system of teacher and principal evaluation; 3) states must have a plan for assessment and accountability; and 4) states must actively seek reduction of burdensome paperwork and duplication.

Cassellius indicated that the work done to prepare for the August waiver set the stage for the larger application submitted today. She pointed to the fact that many of the principles required by US DOE for states applying for waivers have already been implemented in Minnesota, including the bi-partisan teacher evaluation law passed this year, and Minnesota's work on rigorous standards and a growth model that is already in state statute. In Cassellius' estimation, those measures position the state for favorable consideration by federal officials.

Over the course of the past two months, the Department of Education has shared information about the waiver with thousands of stakeholders and solicited feedback from educators, legislators, and the public. Cassellius and Department officials will continue to provide outreach and education about the changes in the coming months.

"When Secretary Duncan visited Minnesota this past January, he remarked on Minnesota's seeming lack of urgency to tackle our most pressing education issues," said Cassellius. "Today I can say with confidence that our lack of urgency has been replaced with a deep commitment to lead the nation on the important work of replacing outdated accountability measures with a model that provides a fairer, more accurate picture of school performance, and sets high expectations for every teacher, principal and student in our state."

Forty-one states have indicated they will apply for waivers. Eleven of them, including Minnesota, are applying in the first round. Federal officials have indicated decisions will be made and states notified about their applications in January.

[View Minnesota's waiver application](#)

http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=022402&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

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