



No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Waiver Workgroup

The workgroup's charge

The NCLB Waiver Workgroup has been assembled to provide input and guidance to be used in the development of Minnesota's waiver request. The workgroup will examine the requirements of the federal guidance and suggest potential paths forward as the Minnesota Department of Education works to write its waiver request. The workgroup will focus exclusively on Principle 2 in the federal guidance: a system of state-developed differentiated recognition, accountability and support. We are looking to create a new school accountability system that measures academic progress fairly and accurately, identifies the schools that are most in need of interventions and provides struggling schools with appropriate support.

The givens

The waiver request has to work within some parameters. There are several "givens" that will govern the process of developing Minnesota's waiver request. Perhaps most significantly, we must work within a very tight window of time. In order to have enough time to implement the changes involved in applying for the waiver, we must apply by November 14. The short timeline, the federal requirements and existing state statute mean that the following are givens for this discussion:

- We must work with the assessment and data regime we have.
- We must work within the guidance provided by the US Department of Education.
- The accountability system must be statewide and it must be consistent.
- The accountability system must measure all students and all schools.
- The state must be able to report the achievement of all districts, schools and subgroups through a school report card that can be easily understood by the public.
- The Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) must lead to an up or down determination for all schools.
- The accountability measurement must consider issues like cell size that are part of the current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measurement system.

While some of these givens might not be desirable to some, or all of the members of the workgroup, they cannot be changed and any recommendations must work within these confines. Please keep these givens in mind as you formulate ideas about how the accountability system should look.