



No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Waiver Workgroup October 28 Meeting Summary

The NCLB Waiver Workgroup met for the third time on Friday, October 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to discuss Minnesota's waiver request. The meeting began with an update on some clarification the US Department of Education provided after the October 21 meeting. Specifically, the group discussed the news that the US Department of Education would accept normative growth models as a method for identifying Priority, Focus and Reward Schools. The group was given a brief description of normative growth and had an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the use of normative growth.

For the rest of the morning, the Workgroup discussed various scenarios that could be used for identifying schools as Priority, Focus and Reward. This was an extension of the previous week's discussion of a Multiple Measurements Chart. Using weighting scenarios that were suggested by the group, MDE staff presented how differential weighting of the four measurements would impact the list of schools in each of the three classifications. Workgroup members commented that in making a decision on how to weight the four measurements, it is important to identify categories where there is a real need for improvement. The Workgroup also said that it was important to know whether the different weighting scenarios produced radically different lists of schools. The Workgroup was generally supportive of the method of using a Multiple Measurements Chart.

In the afternoon, the Workgroup worked through the issue of how to promote continuous improvement at Title I schools that are not identified as Priority, Focus or Reward. The Workgroup listened to a presentation from MDE's Office of School Improvement regarding school improvement plans and how they could be used to promote continuous improvement. The Workgroup then discussed issues in the table groups and recorded their responses to questions in writing for MDE to review. The Workgroup expressed support for having Title I schools whose results on the Multiple Measures Chart puts them on the lower end of statewide performance do a needs assessment, access support tools from regional coordinators and write a school improvement plan. There was also support for the idea of MDE auditing a certain percentage of improvement plans to ensure fidelity.

Finally, the Workgroup spent the final hour of the meeting posing questions and making comments on the “big picture.” The Workgroup was not limited to any one topic and discussed questions from all three weeks of meetings.

At the November 4 meeting, which will be the final formal meeting of the NCLB Waiver Workgroup, MDE will present an outline of its planned proposal for the NCLB Waiver. The Workgroup will have an opportunity to comment on the proposal and indicate any questions or concerns. Commissioner Cassellius will be in attendance to answer questions about the goals of the NCLB Waiver process.