



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Stephen R. Staples
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Superintendent Staples:

I am writing in response to Virginia's March 31, 2014, request for a one-year extension of flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA flexibility), so that Virginia may continue to implement ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2014–2015 school year.

Our team has reviewed Virginia's request and, pursuant to section 9401(d)(2) of the ESEA, I am pleased to extend Virginia's ESEA flexibility request for one year, through the end of the 2014–2015 school year. My decision to extend Virginia's ESEA flexibility request is based on my determination that ESEA flexibility has been effective in enabling Virginia to carry out important reforms to improve student achievement and that this extension is in the public interest. I have also determined that Virginia's monitoring next steps have been adequately addressed. This letter also provides my approval of Virginia's proposed amendments to Principles 1, 2 and 3 of its ESEA flexibility request. A summary of Virginia's approved amendments is enclosed with this letter, and Virginia's approved request will be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) website.

Virginia has submitted high-quality plans to meet certain next steps identified during Part B monitoring, as part of satisfying the requirement that it resolve these next steps. Virginia's progress in implementing its high-quality plans during the 2014–2015 school year, as well as Virginia's continued work with ED on its requested changes will inform ED's decision regarding renewal of Virginia's ESEA flexibility after the 2014–2015 school year. Additionally, if Virginia remains on track to fully implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that meet all the requirements of Principle 3 in the 2014–2015 school year, Virginia will be eligible for consideration for a longer renewal of ESEA flexibility in the Spring of 2015.

Virginia continues to have an affirmative responsibility to ensure that it and its districts are in compliance with Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in their implementation of ESEA flexibility as well as their implementation of all other Federal education programs. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

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I am confident that Virginia will continue to implement the reforms described in its approved ESEA flexibility request and advance its efforts to hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students. If you need any additional assistance to implement your ESEA flexibility request, please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Witt at: elizabeth.witt@ed.gov or Christina Imholt at: christina.imholt@ed.gov.

Thank you for your commitment and continued focus on enhancing education for all of Virginia's students.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Veronica Tate, Director, Office of Program Administration and Accountability