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State Superintendent of Schools

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April 24, 2018

Betsy DeVos
Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Ms. DeVos:

I am writing to request approval to amend Maryland's Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). The request is related to the response to *English Language Proficiency* ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii) which requires the state to: "Describe the long-term goals for English learners (EL) for increases in the percentage of such students making progress in achieving English language proficiency, as measured by the statewide English language proficiency assessment including: (i) baseline data; (ii) the State-determined timeline for such students to achieve English language proficiency; and (iii) how the long-term goals are ambitious."

Maryland indicated in its response to the requirement that the State "has always established common entrance and exit assessments and criteria;" however, "as additional data on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) are reviewed, Local Educational Agency (LEA) stakeholders, WIDA experts, and State Educational Agency (SEA) staff will re-examine the attainment goal that will provide ELs an opportunity to demonstrate performance comparable to their native English-speaking classmates."

After studying two years of data, Maryland requests approval to update its proficiency attainment goal from "an overall level of 5.0 or higher" to an overall score of 4.5 or higher on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. As anticipated, the WIDA score changes resulting from the standard setting in 2016 impacted Maryland's English language proficiency data. English learners with a proficiency level of 4.5 had an equi-probable likelihood of achieving proficiency on PARCC when compared to performance of English-only peers. EL experts from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and WIDA validated the findings. On January 26, 2018, WIDA conducted a webinar with LEA English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) coordinators to share PARCC and ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 data analysis for their consideration. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) conducted a survey of LEA coordinators to gather input. To align with the new proficiency attainment goal, Maryland is amending the corresponding Growth-to-Target table and the Annual Measurement of Interim Progress table. (See pages 20-21 and 91-92.)

On April 4, 2018, consistent with the way Maryland customarily provides similar notice and opportunity for comment to the public, the MSDE posted this amendment on its public website (marylandpublicschools.org) to solicit input and feedback from the general public. The comment period was open from April 4, 2018 to April 18, 2018. It was also included in the Superintendent's weekly memo to local superintendents on April 6, 2018. Number of local school systems (LEA names) submitted comments stating support for the amendment.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

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