

**ESEA FLEXIBILITY  
Amendment Submission Template**

Dear Assistant Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to request approval to amend the State’s approved ESEA flexibility request. The relevant information, outlined in the *ESEA Flexibility Amendment Submission Process* document, is provided in the table below.

Please note: We have included a sample amendment for your information. Please add rows as necessary to request multiple amendments.

<b>Flexibility Element(s) Affected by the Amendment</b>	<b>Brief Description of Element as Originally Approved</b>	<b>Brief Description of Requested Amendment</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Process for Consulting with Stakeholders, Summary of Comments, and Changes Made as a Result</b>
3.A  See pp. 149-151		As Arkansas has submitted in a previous amendment, ADE proposes that student growth data will be given to districts/schools/teachers during the 2014-2015 school year for instructional purposes; however, it will not be used as a measure included in the summative evaluation rating until the 2015-2016 school year.	With the transition from current state assessments to PARCC assessments, ADE desires to have an opportunity to provide growth data to schools/ districts to for instructional decision-making and to also identify areas where there may be gaps in data from the growth model	This issue has been discussed at several Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee Meetings (TEAC) and also with the Administrator Evaluation Advisory Committee. The Director of Educator Evaluation and Assistant Commissioner of Licensure and Educator Effectiveness have also conducted meetings with administrators from all of the co-ops to discuss updates.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0581.

<p>See p. 155</p>	<p>This is an addition to the previous Amendment</p>	<p>ADE proposes that Student Growth will be incorporated into a teacher’s final summative rating by assigning a “SOAR” (Student Ordinal Achievement Ranking) score. SOAR scores are based on a SGP model. Arkansas has a “trigger” model for growth. A teacher who does not meet the threshold for growth the first year cannot be rated Distinguished. If a teacher does not meet the threshold for growth for the second consecutive year, his/her overall rating will be lowered one level. The threshold for growth has been set at a SOAR score of 30.</p>	<p>The student data link has not been in place for teachers of non-tested areas. It is important for ADE to provide the student growth reports by teacher to schools for the 2014-2015 year to test the validity of the roster verification system. The information from the 2014-2015 school year will provide ADE with data to determine any issues with the roster verification system and will also provide the data to determine how many teachers were not attributed a SOAR score due to a “N” of less than 10.</p> <p>The student data link has not been in place for teachers of non-tested areas. It is important for ADE to provide the student growth reports by teacher to schools for the 2014-2015 year to test the validity of the roster verification system. The information from the 2014-2015 school year will provide ADE with data to determine any issues with the roster verification system and will also provide the data to determine how many teachers were not attributed a SOAR score due to a “N” of less</p>	<p>This issue has been discussed at several Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee Meetings (TEAC) and also with the Administrator Evaluation Advisory Committee. The Director of Educator Evaluation has completed on-site visits to all 15 educational cooperatives throughout the state. Administrators from the member school districts attended. The purpose of the meetings was to provide updates about student growth and other decisions that have been made about the evaluation system and obtain feedback from the pilot.</p> <p>Data has been modeled for currently tested grades and subjects and findings shared with the committee. This threshold may change after the implementation of PARCC assessments and data is reviewed.</p>
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See pp. 149-151	This is an addition to the previous Amendment	State assessments will be used the measure of student growth for all teachers of record. The TEAC also determined that the student growth measure that will be used for all non-tested teachers is literacy scores for the students that are assigned to them. For example, a U.S. History teacher that has 128 students assigned to him/her, will be accountable to meet the threshold of student growth for those students based on their literacy scores.	ADE believes with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the transition to PARCC assessments, the use of literacy scores in the evaluation system will help the non-tested teachers heighten the use of strategies to implement the literacy standards related to their content area in their classrooms. ADE also believes very strongly that in order to be successful, a state-wide initiative must be put in place to support these teachers with professional development offerings and support from their administrators. Tim Shanahan, an author of the CCSS and expert in disciplinary literacy, is being brought in to provide a two-day training in early June. The training will be videoed and place on AR IDEAS, where it will be available to all teachers. ADE is also working with content experts in art, music, P.E., science, and social studies to draft content specific training in each of those areas. The	This issue has been discussed at several Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee Meetings (TEAC), all of the states Educational Cooperatives, and also with staff at ADE's curriculum and assessment and professional development units. A concerted effort is underway to design and implement professional development opportunities to assist educators with the implementation of CCSS to support educators with content-specific learning opportunities. The Director of Educator Evaluation has completed on-site visits to all 15 educational cooperatives throughout the state. Administrators from the member school districts attended. The purpose of the meetings was to provide updates about student growth and other decisions that have been made about the evaluation system and obtain feedback from the pilot.

			<p>content specific trainings will be offered at each of the educational cooperatives throughout the summer. Each will also be videoed and placed on AR IDEAS for any educator that is unable to attend in person. Because of capacity issues, ADE is not able to include any other content areas for this summer; however, a plan is in place to add other content areas beginning in fall of 2014. ADE staff is also working with faculty from Career and Technical to assist in trainings specific to those areas.</p>	
See p. 152	This is an addition to the previous Amendment	In the 2013 legislative session, the ½ of the artifacts language was removed to help clarify the operationalization of the system. Among the artifacts that are used to determine the educator’s professional practice rating will be external measures that demonstrate an educators’ impact on	Since Arkansas is using a trigger method for growth, that language was very confusing and made it difficult to integrate with the trigger system.	

		student growth.		
See pp. 150-151	This is an addition to the previous Amendment	ADE has not yet determined student growth measures for the following: K-3 teachers, teachers that teach only seniors, special education teachers, and teachers that are not teacher of record such as counselors, library media specialists, administrators, and elementary art, music, and P.E. teachers that only see students in a pull-out class.	<p>ADE staff is working with statisticians to determine if the above outlined growth model can be used for teachers in grades 2 and 3. Data is being modeled and researched to determine the validity of using the SOAR method as growth from the second grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills to the new PARCC assessment in third grade; however, there is no data from Kindergarten to determine growth from grades K-1.</p> <p>ADE staff is also meeting with special education educators to review the SOAR model for special education educators. It has not been ruled out to be a viable measure for those educators; however, there are concerns, particularly the inability to calculate a SOAR due to the low “N” number in a majority of the state’s special education classes, and all parties want to make sure due diligence has been done before making a</p>	This issue has been discussed at several Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee Meetings (TEAC), all of the states Educational Cooperatives, and also with staff at ADE’s curriculum and assessment and professional development units. A concerted effort is underway to design and implement professional development opportunities to assist educators with the implementation of CCSS to support educators with content-specific learning opportunities. The Director of Educator Evaluation has completed on-site visits to all 15 educational cooperatives throughout the state. Administrators from the member school districts attended. The purpose of the meetings was to provide updates about student growth and other decisions that have been made about the evaluation system and obtain feedback from the pilot.

			<p>final decision.</p> <p>All decisions concerning student growth have been made based on data modeled from the current state assessments. There are a significant group of teachers that are not included in this data due the grades current state assessments are administered. The state will have to model data when PARCC assessments are administered and set new thresholds, accordingly.</p>	
See p. 155	This is an addition to the previous Amendment	ADE staff has also convened a LEADS (Leader Excellence and Development System) committee comprised of various administrators to identify an appropriate growth measure for administrators. The state is piloting the LEADS rubric and will fully implement in the 14-15 school year. The LEADS committee has determined to use a school-wide SOAR score for principals. The threshold has been set at 30, same as for teachers.	Administrators have a direct influence on the quality of teachers in a building, who in turn have a direct influence on the quality of instruction provided to students.	The LEADS advisory committee first convened in September 2013 and has met three times. At the most recent meeting, the committee recommended using a school SOAR score to evaluate growth for a building principal/ assistant principal with the threshold at 30. This threshold may change after the implementation of PARCC assessments and data is reviewed.

<p>3.B See p. 155</p>	<p>This is an addition to the previous Amendment</p>	<p>ADE has contracted with Bloomboard to provide a statewide on-line observation system to be used by all districts. The system will be beneficial to educators because it will streamline the data collection and evaluation process and allow all documents to be completed electronically. The state system will also provide an avenue for the state to collect teacher ratings to be published on school and district performance reports.</p>	<p>Prior to the contract award, ADE has not had a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the evaluation systems, nor a way to collect the required evaluation ratings. This online system will provide ADE with aggregate information at the state level and also break down data by region to illustrate performance at an overall performance level, performance at a domain level and also at a component level. This data not only provides quality assurance, but ADE will also have the opportunity to provide professional development based on identified areas of need statewide from data collected through observations and ongoing evaluation of performance.</p>	<p>ADE went through a comprehensive RFP process to select the named vendor. Criteria for the RFP was generated from feedback from the 2012-13 pilot schools' experience with technology used to conduct observations.</p>

Attached to this letter is a redlined version of the pages from our approved ESEA flexibility request that would be impacted with strikeouts and additions to demonstrate how the request would change with approval of the proposed amendment[s]. Please contact Karen Walters at [karen.walters@arkansas.gov](mailto:karen.walters@arkansas.gov) or by phone at 501-682-4210 if you have any questions regarding these proposed amendments.

ADE acknowledges that the U.S. Department of Education may request supplementary information to inform consideration of this request.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Hill", written over a horizontal line.

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*Chief State School Officer*

3/28/14

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*Date*