

2001: NCLB (No Child Left Behind) was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by President George W. Bush, in which states were required to have their own academic standards and a yearly test for schools to maintain a higher quality of education. If your school did not meet the standards (called adequate yearly progress or AYP) they were marked as failing.

In 2011: The Obama administration announced it would award waivers-- from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)-- to states that agreed to adopt certain education ideas (or plans) that were supposed to be designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve instruction. Included in these waivers were ideas (or plans) such as: teacher evaluations tied to student test scores, college and career ready standards, and a college and career aligned (rigorous) testing. In exchange, states would get flexibility from some of the sanctions under the NCLB laws.

These flexibility waivers are now referred to as the "ESEA" waivers because they fall under the "Elementary and Secondary Education Act." (Thus far, 43 states have received flexibility waivers.)

Under the waiver, there are 3 sections and I will briefly go over each section of what our waiver currently states we will do.

### Section 1: **College and Career Ready Expectations**

There were two options under this first section.

A. Adopt college and career ready standards in at least ELA and Math that are common to a majority of a significant number of states and vetted through your states typical standard adoption process.

B. Adopt College and career -ready standards in at least ELA and Math that have been approved and certified by institutions of higher education and consistent with the definition of college and career ready (pg. 31)

Our current waiver states we chose “option B” to adopt the Common Core Standards, and then those standards were passed through legislation during the 2011 session. It also makes the statement that, “The Students Come First laws are “rooted” in the Common Core and that Idaho is making laws to implement pay for performance to tie student performance to teacher evaluations.” (pg. 27 and pg. 28) Also, that Idaho has been involved with the Common Core since 2008 (pg. 32)

Next, there is a second section of the waiver called:

## **Section 2: Develop Differentiated Recognition and Accountability**

This is the part where we were to develop our own accountability system for our state-- that was intended-- to better meet the needs of our state and school districts in the local context, knowing that by the year 2014 that every child

was supposed to achieve proficiency in the academic domain— or schools would be subject to some pretty severe sanctions that include:

- Alternate governance
- districts paying to bus kids to other schools
- districts paying for additional educational services (such as after-school tutoring)
- or parents and communities opening charter schools

I often say --when we talk about this section—the accountability piece--we often talk about the negative.....or folks “getting it wrong....” Meaning we often associate accountability with bad behavior, poor performance, and negative consequences—and that’s not accountability, that’s just consequences. And I also say -- if our national and state’s accountability model were centered more around “catching folks getting it right”-- or helping others to get it right, then .... we probably wouldn’t be here today.....talking, because real accountability is about ownership, choices or autonomy, collaboration, challenge and opportunities that help others get it right.

But anyway--This is where the five-star school rating for Idaho was developed, aligned with the Students Come First laws—

where it specifically states this includes the 95% participation rate in the calculations in a punitive manner (pg. 87 and 28) For example, schools lose 2 stars if found not to make the “95%” participation rate, as set by federal law. It also requires the use of Schoolnet and the ISEE system as part of Idaho’s state-wide accountability system. . This is also where the state was committed to participation in the SBAC testing. This section also refers to the “Repeal of the Students Come First” laws, and specifically states that the “Task force for Education” and the legislature will pick up the vision, since the voters of Idaho repealed the Students Come First Laws. (Pg. 29)

Finally, there is the final section known as number 3:

### **Section 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership**

This is the section where the Danielson Evaluation model was named and implemented-- and states that the teacher evaluations would be based on student performance. This section was also written for the State Department to monitor, approve, and correct what districts considered proficiency of their teachers. This is also where the specific program Teachscape (pg. 198) is written in-- as part of a requirement for certification of Principals to evaluate their teachers-- and it is required that a test be passed to show that training was taken—or lose your administrator’s endorsement. Also, it

states the board will promulgate rules to meet the requirements, since the Students Come First Laws were repealed (pg. 206).

In Moving Ahead:

This version of our waiver expires in June, and we are “bound” to these requirements for the remainder of this year. But a new waiver is due March 31, and any changes made will take effect for the upcoming 2015-2016 school year—and this is a real opportunity for us to make substantial change. One of the problems with NCLB was that we were judging schools, teachers and kids based on a single test score, but keeping in mind that the flexibility waiver was intended for us to ***not do that***. It was intended for us to better meet the needs of our state and school districts in the local context—it was intended to allow more flexibility, less emphasis on one test--and instead, we are attempting to tie the new SBAC test to evaluations, and we tied ourselves to specific programs, contracts, and products—we have actually bound ourselves--even tighter—than we did before the flexibility waiver.

So, with this current waiver expiring, it’s actually perfect timing. In moving forward, we will build our new model of

accountability upon the framework for us to “get it right” and actually offer flexibility to school districts with the notion of local control --that it was originally intended for. helps us to change our culture. We have a chance to ease the burden on school districts and reflect the needs of our students, as the unique individuals that they are, and address the concerns of the very public that we serve-this was the original intent of the waiver—that’s why it is called “The Flexibility Waiver.” How do we accomplish this?

1. Removal of all “Students Come First” references, (whether you liked it or not) especially removal of any “specific program, product, or contract” as this is not the appropriate document —this is a federal document—and the way it names these items currently-- invites more federal intrusion. These name references actually hinder our chance at flexibility by not allowing us to change our direction, when we need to, as it “binds us” to specific products and or programs. It names external service providers who do not know our kids best—like the local level does.

2. Build a new accountability model that is based on the basic framework, or notion, that we can “get it right,” that we are looking for what works in schools, and we would like to work

together for best practices that are happening in school districts, every day. For example, instead of our model being based on a 5- STAR rating-- that deducts 2 stars for things like the 95% participation rate ... give credit or recognition to a school on a point system-- for a range of acceptable participation rates, such as 85-95% participation will receive 10 points towards a maximum points a school can earn. This is an example of how the new accountability model will be built, or have-- at its basis-- or foundation, that we are getting this work right for our kids in Idaho--not "I caught you getting it wrong." That Superintendent's and school districts can get together and help to further create this accountability model. This is in no way to get away from accountability—but instead, to shift the accountability to a much broader view—that includes social emotional, attendance, cultural climate.....all those things that really shape academics and our educators are very enthused and well-aware of this piece.

We also need to reduce the testing requirements to the minimum federal requirement. It doesn't mean we don't believe in accountability—but, instead, we want to shift the accountability to a much broader view—again, to include social emotional, attendance, and cultural climate—all those things that educators know really shape academics—and our

educators and Superintendents are very motivated with this piece. Also, we recognize that over-testing our kids is taking away from valuable instructional time.

It also keeps from folks feeling like they need to “teach to the test” because whatever we place the most value on, will drive the actions of the programs and what is taught. Also, good educators know-- if you are waiting --to tell if your students are progressing or not—by using the end of the year assessment-- like the SBAC -- it’s just too late. We can get a good balanced assessment into practice by staggering the testing for our kids, or only testing grades 3-8, and once at the high school level. We do have other testing measurements in place now-- to still monitor student growth in the form of a motion picture (instead of one snapshot in the life of a child) all while showing accountability. Remember, accountability is showing how we do things right, all along the way-- not to “catch folks” doing it wrong!

3. The federal test (SBAC) is not required to be tied to a diploma for our students--so why is Idaho doing this? This is a brand new test that we still don’t know enough about. Again, this doesn’t build an accountability model of success --instead, we are making hurdles even higher for our students-- who have already completed numerous requirements for graduation, such as end of course assessments, senior projects, and taking

college entrance exams such as the ACT, SAT, or the Compass, and don't forget, 10<sup>th</sup> graders take the PSAT (pre- SAT), as well. Are we actually going to deny a student a diploma-- based on a brand new high stakes test, especially if it is not a requirement? This practice actually hurts our most vulnerable students: the minority, our English language learners, and students with disabilities. (again—the idea of the waiver is based on flexibility)

4. Add an “opt out” option for parents (proficiency will still need to be proven through a portfolio option, in which districts will assemble a team to review) show parents we care about their concerns—and they still have rights --which are not “stripped” at the schoolhouse gates.

Finally, will we help schools that aren't progressing? We pair them with schools that are progressing! This is an example of a whole new vision which is based on shared accountability, mutual responsibility and learning from what works, this is our vision of “Supporting and schools and students to achieve!”

With that, I stand for questions.