



NEW MEXICO

NCLB WAIVER SUMMARY: EDUCATOR EVALUATION

While the application developed by the U.S. Department of Education for states seeking waivers from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required many specific details about state efforts to improve education, it did not require a comprehensive list of such endeavors. Therefore, New Mexico's approved waiver plan may not capture all the state is doing to improve education. State officials also note that they must resolve some details before implementing the new evaluation system. The following summary covers the evaluation aspects of New Mexico's waiver plan as it stood when approved. It may not tell the complete story of educator evaluation in the state, however, as that work continues to evolve.

New Mexico's waiver application was approved based on a commitment by the state to provide the Department of Education with final guidelines related to their work on educator evaluation by the end of the 2011-12 school year. The department will then coordinate a peer review of the guidelines to ensure that they align with the state's waiver plan.

PROMISING ASPECTS OF PLAN:

- While most elements of the New Mexico system still need to be decided and developed, the state does recognize the unique evaluation needs of teachers who teach tested subject areas versus those who do not, and articulates plans to address each group.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION:

- Perhaps because it has not yet adopted the requisite legislation, New Mexico is extremely vague in its plans for using evaluation results to inform personnel decisions and professional development. Given that evaluations are only as good as their ability to improve teaching quality, this is an area for additional attention.
- The Department of Education did not require states to address the issue of equitable access to effective teachers as part of their waiver plan. Yet, for those students most in need of effective teachers, this is an important part of improving teacher quality. It is critical to view each state's plan in this context. New Mexico's plan does not explain how it will use evaluation results to monitor and address any inequities in the assignment of the least effective teachers or principals to students with the highest need.

- New Mexico plans to convene an advisory council to determine details of the teacher evaluation system. The decisions made by this council could make for a strong system resulting in a meaningful difference in the experiences of teachers and students, or the council's decisions could lead to a weak system that does little to improve the quality of teaching and the resulting student outcomes in the state. Much remains to be seen.
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EVALUATION DESIGN

What are the components of the state's proposed teacher and principal evaluation system, and how are those components weighted?

- For teachers in tested subject areas, 50 percent of the evaluation is based on student achievement, 25 percent is based on observation, and 25 percent is based on other locally adopted and state-approved measures.
- For teachers in non-tested subject areas, 50 percent of the evaluation is based on locally adopted and state-approved multiple measures, 25 percent is based on observation, and 25 percent is based on the school grade. This is a temporary approach until additional assessments are developed.
- For principals, 50 percent of the evaluation is based on the school's A–F grade, 25 percent is based on fidelity of teacher observations and evaluations, and 25 percent is based on other measures as determined by LEAs.

What roles will the state and districts play in developing and implementing an evaluation system?

- The state is planning to convene an advisory council to address issues such as how to calculate student growth and evaluations for teachers in non-tested subjects or grades.
- The state will develop a list of pre-approved multiple measures and criteria for the systems developed by LEAs.

How does the state intend to measure student growth in tested grades and subjects? Will the measure be comparable across LEAs within the state?

- The model for measuring student growth still needs to be developed.
- The state will seek to use three years of data where possible.

How will the state guide development of student growth measures for non-tested grades and subjects?

- The measures for assessing teachers in non-tested subject areas and grades are referenced as a transition model until better measures are developed and implemented.

How will the state measure evidence of teacher and leader practice?

- The state will require a minimum of two observations each year, which could include observations made by trained evaluators from outside the school.
- Every district will be required to use a uniform observation tool developed by the state.

Will all educators be evaluated at least annually?

- Yes.

USE OF EVALUATIONS

How will the state use teacher and principal evaluations to inform individual professional development and to improve instructional practice?

- The state aims to align professional development to evaluation results and will use observations to inform individual professional development plans.

How will the results of teacher and principal evaluations inform personnel decisions?

- The state would remove ineffective teachers after they receive multiple ineffective evaluations and opportunities for improvement. The plan does not detail how this process would work.
- According to the plan, teachers' compensation advancement will be linked to their effectiveness in the classroom, but no additional detail is provided.

How will the state use educator evaluations to ensure equitable access to effective teachers?

- The Department of Education did not require states to address the issue of equitable access to effective teachers as part of their waiver plan. Yet, for those students most in need of effective teachers, this is an important part of improving teacher quality. It is critical to view each state's plan in this context. New Mexico's plan does not explain how it will use evaluation results to monitor and address any inequities in the assignment of the least effective teachers or principals to students with the highest need.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATIONS

How will the state train educators and evaluators in the new evaluation system?

- The plan acknowledges that the new evaluation model will require rigorous training in its purposes and processes.
- The state plans to offer districts multiple opportunities for assistance through regional and statewide networks.
- A Technical Assistance Council will craft a professional development strategy to support implementation of the new evaluation system.

How will the state ensure the reliability and validity of LEA evaluation systems?

- Districts will be required to report annual evaluation outcomes.
- The state will evaluate the selected observation tool during the pilot period to establish quality control measures and make necessary changes.
- The state is developing an audit structure for district compliance with evaluation requirements. This structure will run on a cyclical schedule.

How does the state address other implementation considerations, such as ensuring a robust teacher-student data link or managing the rollout timeline?

- In outlining the timeline of the pilot and further implementation, the waiver plan discusses the need to address collective bargaining agreements.