

STATUS OF AMENDMENT TO ESSA PLAN, SUBMITTED TO Secretary DeVos

EL INDICATOR FOR STATE & FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY (interim annual growth goals in ELP and academics based on rigorous standards)

This letter is to request an amendment to the approved ESSA Consolidated State Plan for Utah for the English Learner Progress (ELP) Indicator (ESEA section 1111 (4)(B)(iv)). Utah is seeking an amendment for this indicator to establish a more equitable approach to setting adequate growth targets for each English learner (EL) in our state. In this amendment, we wish to maintain the exit criteria of 5.0 and timeline to reach proficiency but seek to change the definition of adequate progress for the ELP indicator.

We are requesting in this amendment to change our definition of adequate progress toward English proficiency from a 0.4 gain in proficiency level from the students' prior year WIDA ACCESS score to individualized progress targets based on three determining factors:

- 1) the grade level in which the EL student entered the Utah education system;
- 2) the student's initial English proficiency level; and,
- 3) the amount of time a student has been in Utah's EL program.

Analysis of our historical EL data and modeling for the ELP indicator showed that the current definition of EL progress in our approved plan does not sufficiently differentiate among English learners. Analysis also showed that the single 0.4 progress expectation was not equitable across all schools, particularly when comparing elementary schools to high schools. In seeking this amendment, Utah is trying to acknowledge and value the unique background of each EL in our EL population and set rigorous yet achievable progress targets that set EL students on track for achieving English proficiency and academic success.

The amendment request, if granted, would enable the state to set individualized growth targets for each EL student in the state. The proposed targets for adequate EL progress were determined by examining:

- 1) our historical data on the time ELs take to reach English proficiency;
- 2) the body of research regarding EL students' language acquisition;
- 3) extensive stakeholder feedback; and,
- 4) the requirement under ESSA for states to establish rigorous goals for ELs to reach proficiency within 5 years.

Utah consulted with the Utah State Board of Education's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and experts in the field of language acquisition, including the Office of State Support. A survey was also conducted to gather feedback. Of the 16 respondents, 15 agreed with the proposed approach to set individualized growth targets.

Utah provided all LEAs in the state as well as the public with notice and reasonable opportunity to comment on this amendment. Public notice of the waiver request, and the notification of a 20-day public comment period on the amendment, was published on October 16, 2018. Despite the amendment being posted on USBE's website and publicized through press release and social media, no comments were received.

Please feel free to contact Tiffany Stanley, Chief of Staff for the Utah State Board of Education at tiffany.stanley@schools.utah.gov if you have any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your consideration.

Mark Huntsman, Chair, Utah State Board of Education

Sydnee Dickson, Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction