



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

December 19, 2012

The Honorable Pam Stewart
Interim Commissioner
Florida Department of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1514
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Commissioner Stewart:

I am writing regarding the status of Florida's approval for ESEA flexibility. Currently, Florida's request for ESEA flexibility is approved through December 31, 2012, subject to the condition that it revise its current policy to include as graduates in its school grading system only students who graduate with a regular high school diploma. In order to meet this condition, Florida was required to submit to the Department by December 17, 2012 a revised request for ESEA flexibility that reflects this changed policy. However, as noted in your December 13, 2012, letter to me, Florida is transitioning to a new Commissioner of Education, who will begin serving as Commissioner on January 14, 2012. Thus, Florida requests an extension of the approval of its ESEA flexibility request to allow the new Commissioner time to address the policy change with the Florida State Board of Education. Given this transition, I am extending the deadline by which Florida must change its policy to March 29, 2013. On or before that date, Florida must submit to the Department an amended request for ESEA flexibility that includes evidence that it has modified its rule for calculating high school grades to include as graduates only students, including students with disabilities, who earn a regular high school diploma.

Given the transition, I am also extending approval of Florida's ESEA flexibility request through the end of the 2012–2013 school year. If Florida meets the above condition, Florida may request an extension of ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. At that time, Florida, like other States, would be able to request an additional extension through the 2014–2015 school year. If Florida fails to meet the condition, the waivers being granted to Florida through ESEA flexibility will expire at the end of the 2012–2013 school year, and Florida and its districts will be required to immediately resume complying with ESEA requirements.

Please contact Victoria Hammer of my staff at Victoria.Hammer@ed.gov if you have questions as you move forward to resolve this condition. Thank you for your continued focus on enhancing education for all of Florida's children.

Sincerely,

/s/

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary for
Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Governor Rick Scott
Jane Fletcher, Director, Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement