



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

July 1, 2015

The Honorable Tony Smith  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777

Dear Superintendent Smith:

This letter is in response to a request received by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to amend its approved ESEA flexibility request to modify its methodology for identifying focus schools. ISBE included in its request a revised methodology to identify focus school and rationale for the change.

I am pleased to approve ISBE's request to amend its ESEA flexibility request to include its new methodology for identifying focus schools. ISBE's amended request, along with a copy of this letter, will be posted on ED's website. A summary of ISBE's amendment request is enclosed with this letter.

I am confident that Illinois will continue to implement the reforms it proposed under its approved ESEA flexibility request and advance its efforts to hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students. ED is committed to helping you accomplish your goals and remains available to provide technical assistance as needed. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Witt or Faatimah Muhammad of my staff at: [OSS.Illinois@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.Illinois@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Heather Rieman  
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Susie Morrison, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Education Officer  
Amy Jo Clemens, Assistant Superintendent Innovation and Improvement

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202  
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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

## **Amendment to Illinois's Approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request**

The following is a summary of the amendment to Illinois's approved ESEA flexibility request. ED approves the following amendment through the 2015-2016 school year because Illinois's ESEA flexibility request, as amended, continues to be aligned with the principles of ESEA flexibility. Please refer to ED's website ([www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html)) for Illinois's complete ESEA flexibility request.

### **2.E.i: Methodology for Identifying Focus Schools**

Revision: Illinois has modified its methodology for identifying focus schools. Based on the new methodology, schools with the lowest-achieving subgroups statewide (bottom 10 percent in performance) based on a three-year average of math and English/language arts assessment scores will be identified as focus schools. Additionally, Title I-participating high schools with graduation rates less than 60 percent over a number of years that have not already been identified as priority schools will also be identified.