

USDE WAIVER INPUT

**REQUESTED BY
COMMISSIONER
WILLIAMS**

USDE WAIVER INPUT

RECEIVED FROM ESC

REGION 1

TEXAS TEACHER EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (T-TESS)

- Commissioner of Education Survey of Superintendents
- NCLB waiver vs. Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System
- How much do you want the NCLB waiver from AYP considering that USDE has the following conditions for the Teacher and Principal Evaluation System?
 - **A. Are you willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of T-TESS and T-PESS?**
 - **B. Are you willing to use these evaluations to make compensation and personnel decisions?**
 - **C. Will you agree to all stipulations set forth by USDE?**

A. Are you willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of T-TESS and T-PCESS?

- Majority of Superintendents feel they do not know enough about T-TESS and T-PCESS to agree or disagree since only a few of them are participating in the pilot program (RAC MEETING).
- Superintendents who are participating in the pilot program (2) reported they are willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation.
- Superintendents stated they value the waiver significantly. They also stated they believe T-TESS and T-PCESS will be good evaluation tools; however, they believe the state should wait to see the actions U.S. Congress may take in updating ESEA and they recommend TEA continue negotiations WITH USDE to keep the waiver (RAC Meeting)
- *Yes. Our district has been piloting this instrument. We really like it as it goes beyond an event of compliance. It is designed for continuous improvement and reflection. It causes us to have conversations about where we are in our professional development and what we need to work on to improve.*
-
- YES
-
- YES
-
- No
-
- Yes

B. Are you willing to use these evaluations to make compensation and personnel decisions?

- Superintendents stated they already use teacher and principal evaluations to make compensation and personnel decisions. However, they are not familiar with the expectations from USDE and have some reservations (RAC Meeting)
- Superintendents feel they do not know enough about T-TESS and T-PESS to make an informed decision (RAC Meeting).
- Superintendents commented they are willing to use T-TESS and T-PESS as one of the tools to make compensation and personnel decisions (RAC Meeting).
- *No. I think this would be a mistake and we would be inundated by grievances by staff who would want an explanation about why this person got paid more than they did. Allegations of discrimination for gender and age would abound. I urge that we do not succumb to the pressure to tie these two things together. We need to keep our focus and I do not see this as a positive.*
-
- *The instrument, in my opinion is best in its purest form. It is an instrument that is designed to improve teaching and learning. It is not designed to justify compensation. It would be a mistake to turn it into something other than its intended purpose. I believe that decisions on compensation packages should be left to local control.*
-
- YES
-
- NO
-
- No
-
- Yes
- No

C. Will you agree to all stipulations set forth by USDE?

- Superintendents stated they are not well informed about the stipulations to make a decision (RAC meeting).
- Superintendents are not familiar with USDE stipulations to respond to this question (RAC Meeting).
- *No. This question is too vague. We are all busy running our districts and trying to improve teaching and learning. I am not well versed on all the stipulations set forth by USDE.*
- *WHAT ARE ALL OF THE STIPULATIONS; I CANNOT REMEMBER HOW ALL OF THE STIPULATIONS WILL IMPACT OUR DISTRICT.*
- *NO*
- No, because of limited information of stipulations
- *Yes*
-
- No

Survey

- Several individual Superintendents submitted their responses by e-mail.
- A group of Superintendents discussed the questions during the RAC meeting and their answers were summarized.

USDE WAIVER INPUT

**RECEIVED FROM ESC
REGION 2**

COMMISSIONER REQUEST USDE WAIVER

1. ***Are you willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of the new evaluation systems, T-TESS and T-PESS?***
 - *Yes, we are willing to accept the new system. We need a new appraisal system. The old one needs to be replaced.*
 - No to all three questions. I like the concept of the new evaluations, but too many questions to answer at this point.
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
 - I do not accept mandatory statewide implementation of the new evaluation systems, T-TESS and T-PESS
 - *Yes I would be willing to utilize the new evaluation system.*
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
 - Not without some modifications or at least assurances.

2. ***Are you willing to use these evaluations while making compensation and personnel decisions?***
 - *If the law allows us to use them as we make personnel decisions, absolutely.*
 - No to all three questions. I like the concept of the new evaluations, but too many questions to answer at this point.
 - *Yes*
 - *Yes*
 - I may use the evaluations to consider making compensation and personnel decisions - as long as any such decisions are at the sole discretion of the local school district and are not driven by any protocol or specific requirement formulated by TEA, the State of Texas, or the USDE
 - *I do not have a problem using the evaluation as an option for compensation and personnel decisions.*
 - I would agree to #2 with reservations about compensation (Just not sure what that exactly means).
 - Ideally student growth data would be available before the Summative Conference. Principals will still be required to make teacher renewal recommendations before performance data is available from the State. Additionally, I am opposed to tying compensation to student growth measure. There are too many variables involved. Ultimately, if a teacher is not performing, they won't be renewed. Teamwork, campus climate and morale would be adversely affected. Other thoughts on student growth: the 4 options for measuring student growth are unclear to me. The EOC's tested at different levels don't lend themselves to comparison. We have the option of using district level pre-and post- tests or SLO's, but any instruction in a subject is going to reflect growth over the course of a school year. Not sure how to do it.

3. *Will you agree to all stipulations set forth from USDE?*

- *If they are mandated, do we have a choice? It would be nice to know what those stipulations are prior to them being mandated.*
- No to all three questions. I like the concept of the new evaluations, but too many questions to answer at this point.
- Are those items one and two or is there more to the stipulations?
- Not willing to commit without knowing what the stipulations are.
- I may or may not agree to all of the stipulations set forth from USDE, since we do not have a final draft of those stipulations and do not know what they are.
- Our school district does not intend to become a pawn between the Texas Education Agency, its Commissioner, and State policymakers, the USDE and its Secretary nor even Congress. We intend to make the best quality decisions for improving student instruction and student performance based on best practices we discern to be applicable at the local school district level. We, locally, have serious misgivings about the caliber of education policy made at State and Federal levels.
- Our school district is continuing to serve an increasingly diversifying student population, making gains while doing so, despite the bickering between the State of Texas and the Federal Government over education policy. State and Federal policymakers have vastly overemphasized student academic performance at the expense of other more appropriate ways of measuring student growth and preparedness for higher education and/or workforce advancement. Unless or until State and Federal policymakers begin to broaden their perspective and also permit use of other means to measure student development while reducing and balancing emphasis on academic performance currently in use at the State and Federal levels, their policy positions will not be relevant to those of us who are trying to help students move to the next stages in their individual educational and life development.
- *I am not comfortable to agreeing on stipulations set forth by USDE without knowing what the stipulations are going to be in place on the districts. We already have unfunded mandates and I do not wish to add to it.*
- What are the stipulations?
- I cannot agree to #3 without more information.
- No. The US Constitution does not discuss education; it by default then, becomes a State responsibility. Our Federal government has moved into States rights. TEA and SBOE both defer to LEA in Texas on many matters. They should. Those LEA's know what is important to their communities and kids. The Federal government doesn't know or care about those things.

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REGION 3

Region 3 ESC –Victoria
USDE Waiver—Superintendent Quotes

I feel it should be local decision on how we evaluate our teachers and what tool we use. If these evaluations are going to decide compensation, is the state going to fund the increases for our teachers?

John O'Brien, Van Vleck ISD Superintendent

Here is what I think about the "stipulations" as I am interpreting them:

#1 - If the question is, are the Districts in the State of Texas willing to give up local control over the type of instrument the District uses to evaluate employees in place of one mandated by the Federal government by way of TEA, I would have to say "No" I would not be willing to give up this freedom. By nature, values, goals, and priorities are different in each district.., big, small, rural, inner city. A district should have the ability to "evaluate" the employees based on locally adopted values.

#2 - Again, if I am understanding this correctly, the Federal Government wants to tie student performance to teacher evaluations and teacher pay. I would say "No" to this as well. A student's learning is a build process, no one step is more important than the other, in fact the steps are interdependent on each other. I am not sure how you can reward or penalize a teacher for the lack of, or presence of, a student's education foundation. We cannot assume that the canvas' teachers start with are all the same.

Tyler Chaplin, Falls City ISD Superintendent

State wide implementation? Yes

1. Annual evaluations to be used for compensation and personnel decisions? Depends on the details. Since my fundamental belief is that quality education is delivered by a quality team, I am against a merit pay system that does not reward everyone on the quality campus. I think it would be next to impossible to compare schools, groups of students, or systems of educational support that are so varied between communities. Success is measured by what standards? Success is relative.
2. At my school district we already make personnel decisions based on evaluations and the proper amount of documentation.

Tony Williams, Industrial ISD Superintendent

1. Implement Statewide – Yes, this should be statewide and alternate systems should not be allowed. We want all staff and leaders to be held to the same standards. The components will lead to high standards and achievement. If districts are allowed to develop their own systems, this would create systems that could not be measured the same and would provide a variety of expectations for staff and students.

2. Annual evaluations to be used for compensation and personnel decisions. We agree that the evaluations should be used for personnel decisions and should be annually administered.

Questions lie with the use for compensation. Where would the funds come from, how would they be administered. Typically, principals go in the direction of least confrontation. Compensation tends to lead to grievances. Without very specific guidelines, it will be hard to administer equitably (Remember the career ladder?). Teachers teaching STAAR content should have higher levels of pay and be compensated for the results. How will teachers who are not teaching STAAR be measured the same as everyone else? Will the state mandate that for each content area some measure is administered across the board? Example - if I teach at second grade and my district administers the TPRI and bases my students' growth on the TPRI results, it is not the same as a district who used the ISIP and are measured on their ISIP results? There are too many variables to determine equitable growth. The state does not have the capacity and resources to develop instruments for every content and every level of instruction.

Robert Jaklich, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

I have several concerns regarding USDE appraisal of district teachers. Mainly that annual evaluations are to be used for compensation and personnel decisions. The USDE and TEA either need to put up the funding to help address education's concerns in hiring not "highly qualified", but truly qualified individuals to enter the teaching field. Salaries in education, especially in rural districts, are stagnant. We are having enough trouble finding teachers and to tie an evaluation system that is going to be viewed as a gotcha is not the way to encourage people to become educators. I already have teachers asking for a change in their teaching assignments because they are overwhelmed with high stakes testing. They are asking to get out of reading and math and to be moved into PE, social studies or any other area of education that does not have high stakes testing in place. I'd also like to know that if the USDE forces this upon Texas will they also help defend and pay for the legal expense that will arise as teachers are impacted by decisions that will be tied to their income or job. I have sat in on too many Office of Civil Rights complaints and EEOC complaints regarding employees in which the district has been well documented in determining its course of action only to find that there is a tremendous legal expense to the district to get rid of some employees. USDE and TEA should work toward developing a plan for supporting and training all teachers, especially those who struggle. Provide funding for each district to provide additional training to the 15-20% of the lowest performing teachers. That will help improve education and demonstrate that the State and the Feds are truly concerned about improving education. TEA and USDE have created a very complicated and unsustainable course for public education. My quote to both is either pony up the \$\$\$ and support education or shut up and get out of the way. Unfunded, stifling mandates can no longer be the course of action.

Emilio Vargas III, Goliad ISD Superintendent

After reading the document addressing all the changes in the new evaluation process -its understandable that one year of piloting is insufficient. There is a lot of information that can really be time consuming to gather --- lot of areas for misinterpretation of intent --questions as to whether such instrument would be used as intended --especially if it is up to individual districts to interpret --that always gets messy. So, yes, more time is needed to see how it fairs out in the piloting process. The issue is not the process but how it will be interpreted.

Dr. Antonio Aguirre, Jr., Austwell-Tivoli ISD Superintendent

1. As to statewide implementation, that will be hard. If the commissioner thinks he can pull that off, more power to him. Without legislation, it's impossible.

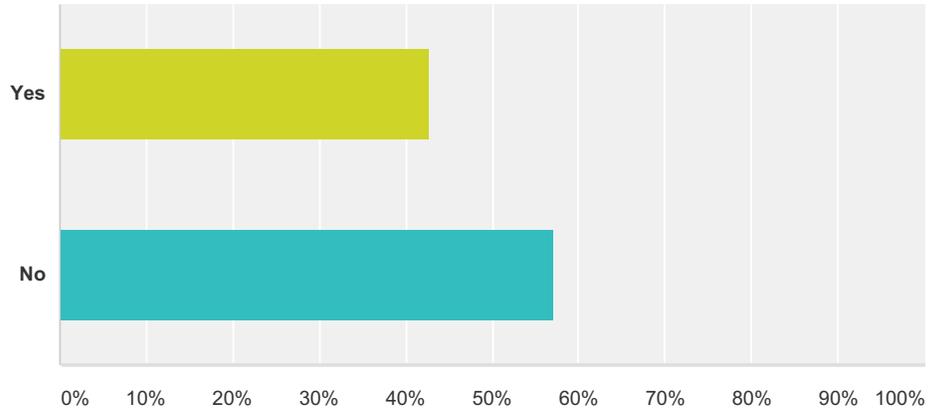
2. I suffer from having been a research scientist in a mathy field: physics. There is not a psychometrist alive who will say student standardized tests have been designed and normed for the evaluation of instruction. Plus, in the six statistics courses, three of them graduate level, that I had, I know there is no mathematically viable method to use any type of test score to evaluate instruction in a classroom where no test was given. Using 3rd grade tests to evaluate a 1st grade teacher, where no test was given, is a no-go with me. On this issue I suffer from too much education.

Michael Seabolt, Louise ISD Superintendent

USDE Evaluation Waiver Question

Q1 Would you want a USDE waiver for Texas regarding teacher/principal evaluations given the following stipulations?1) Implement waiver statewide2) Annual evaluations to be used for compensation and personnel decisions

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	42.86% 9
No	57.14% 12
Total	21

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	1 not 2	2/23/2015 12:19 PM
2	Too many unknowns tied to the compensation portion	2/23/2015 9:19 AM
3	1. only if rules set by state not individual districts 2. no	2/23/2015 9:10 AM

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REGION 8

Are you willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of the teacher and principal evaluations?		Are you willing to use annual evaluations for compensation and personnel decisions?		Will you agree to all of the stipulations from USDE?	
Yes - 7	No - 5	Yes - 3	No - 5	Yes - 4	No - 8
Comments:		Comments:		Comments	
<p>Yes-We have been involved in the pilot program for the T-TESS and the T-P ESS and found it very beneficial. It has forced more dialogue between the appraiser and appraise which I believe will result in higher student performance. Administrators and teachers seem to be more open about sharing information about the classroom. I was very reluctant at first; however, I am now seeing the benefit even though the process is very time consuming.</p>		<p>Yes-While willing to use the annual evaluations for compensation and personnel decisions, one will have to be very concrete in scripting and documentation.</p>		<p>Yes-As they apply to my local district.</p>	
<p>No-The option to have a locally developed evaluation tool should remain in place.</p>		<p>No-This is a qualified answer. The evaluations are already part of personnel decisions and should remain so. However, employment/compensation that is tied to the evaluation is a non starter if (1) test scores are part of the eval (2) we are getting into another "career ladder" situation (3) if the 20% remains in place for test scores. There is overwhelming research that shows "value added measurements" are unreliable. Where research supports "VAM", it can almost always be tied to reformers who have a specific agenda: ie The Walton Foundation, Bill Gates, Friedman/Chetty study, etc. and is therefore unreliable.</p>		<p>No-The Federal Government has NO BUSINESS coercing states/ districts/ communities into making educational decisions that rightly belong at the local level. Telling us we have to do this reform or that reform (ie VAM) in order to receive federal dollars is coercion, whether it works or not. Educational decisions belong at the local level.</p>	
<p>Yes-In a small district, we do not have the resources for any changes. PDAS has not been perfect, however any good administrator should be able to make a system work within their district. Small districts must do what the state says is mandatory.</p>		<p>Yes-In my district we do this already for all non-teaching positions.</p>		<p>No-Test scores are not the only answer. I have read that 60% of all teachers are not core (math, science, social studies or language arts) How does a coach, band director, CTE, or art teacher get evaluated? Portfolios? Win, loss records? I have too many questions to check yes to a question that says "all stipulations" without a clear definition of what "all" means. In my reading the USDE does not have clear answers either.</p>	
<p>Yes - I think it should be uniform throughout the state.</p>		<p>No-I think this is shaky ground.</p>		<p>No-It is my belief the specifics related to these sorts of evaluations should be left up to the local districts.</p>	
<p>No-Test scores should not have anything to do with an evaluation. A teacher could have low academic students in their classroom and low test scores because of that but they were a great teacher and doing all they could to help the students. Not a fair way to evaluate teachers. Especially when other teachers might have the accelerated classes. There is a lot more to consider when evaluating teachers than test scores.</p>		<p>No-Giving compensation based on evaluations pit teachers against teachers and causes bad moral on a campus.</p>		<p>No-Don't feel comfortable with this since we're not adhering to common core.</p>	
<p>Yes- If the law says that we will have statewide evaluation then we will obey the law.</p>		<p>No- Am I willing? No, I believe there is a vast body of research that shows tying compensation to evaluations does not provide for better personnel decisions. I was a Superintendent that supported career ladder and worked with Rep. Elton Bomer to help get that legislation passed. After several years of implementation I saw first hand how and why it didn't work. I then worked once again with Rep. Bomer to repeal career ladder because it doesn't work. Texas has significant data to show it doesn't work. However, if it is law we will comply.</p>		<p>No-Hard to answer. Haven't seen all the stipulations.</p>	
				<p>Yes-Once again if it is law we will abide to the stipulations. It is my belief that many of the stipulations are counter productive to quality Human Resource practices.</p>	

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REGION 9

Are you willing to use these evaluations while making compensation and personnel decisions?	Are you willing to conduct annual evaluations on all teachers?	Will you agree to all stipulations set forth from USDE in order to maintain the waiver?	Are you willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of the new evaluation systems: T-TESS and T-P ESS?
I am willing to use evaluations to make personnel decisions, but I am not willing to use the evaluations for compensation decisions.	Yes.	No, I am not willing to agree to all stipulations set forth from USDE in order to maintain the waiver.	This is a difficult question to answer, since we have not truly experienced the new evaluation system.
Yes	Yes	No, the word "all" is the determining factor for me.	Yes
No. I will utilize the evaluations for personnel decisions, but if they are tied to merit pay for teachers based on student performance on a standardized assessment, I am not in support of the this.	I currently use annual evaluations. I am willing to continue this practice.	No. It is irresponsible to state that I am in support of ALL stipulations set forth from USDE without having see these and knowing what they entail.	We are currently voluntarily adopting the T-TESS and T-P ESS systems. However, I do not support the mandatory implementation due to the requirements within the teaching instrument that tie the evaluation system to the student performance within the evaluative system.
We do that now, so Yes	YES, we do that anyway.	NO	YES
Not willing for compensation but will for renewal.	Need annual on less experienced and not on quality experienced.	This is a loaded question. Who can agree to all not knowing what all includes.	Yes, but not lengthy and time consuming.
no	yes	no, not without seeing them	yes
No	Yes, only because we are so small and we already do annual evaluations for staff development planning.	No	No
I would not be willing to use these evaluations to make compensation decisions.	We currently do not conduct annual evaluations on all teachers but would be willing to.	Not without seeing the stipulations.	My understanding is that we will be required to accept this evaluation system regardless if we get a waiver or not.
No. I agree that the evaluations should be tied to personnel decisions. I am hesitant to agree to compensation decisions without a clear understanding of what that entails.	Yes.	Definitely no	No.
Yes	Yes	Not without a clear understanding of what the stipulations are.	Yes
No. I do not believe any appraisal system can determine compensation for personnel	Yes	No	Yes Due to our size we will adopt the state evaluation system
Yes	Yes	I would suspect so but sure would like to know what they are? What choice do we have?	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Not until I know the finished product of the evaluation system	Possibly, depending on what the finished evaluation system in its entirety entails	Yes, absolutely and I believe those that don't are making a huge mistake.	No

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REGION 11

Region 11 Responses

1. Are you willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of the new evaluation systems, T-TESS and T-PESS? **Yes-45%, No-45%, and Maybe-10%**

-My position related to these three questions is all “no”. There are many gaps knowledge-wise that haven’t been filled enough for me to commit.

- Agree with statewide appraisal implementation.

-Absolutely not, only if I am forced to.

-Because of work being done on the revision of the state’s waiver request and with the potential reauthorization of NCLB there are more questions than answers regarding the impact of the NCLB waiver. Without knowing what stipulations USDE will set forth, it is difficult to say we could agree to them. That being said, our district is an advocate of local control in public education and we will continue to support TEA and Region 11’s effort to ensure local control isn’t compromised. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to additional communication as more details become known.

-A statewide system is ok with me.

- It should not be a problem for us to implement the statewide evaluation system. It does not appear to be vastly different from PDAS but has some updated areas with student performance indicators. We are very concerned that our current tests are not valid and do not provide valid information regarding growth, college readiness, etc. as evidenced by the many testimonials from people in the field. We would much prefer if the state were to use nationally recognized norm-referenced tests to make these determinations rather than a test from Pearson that changes every year and passing measures are not determined until after the scores are seen. We have no confidence in the tests the State and Pearson have developed!

-It is a mandatory statewide implementation of the new evaluation then we will accept it.

-Not at this time. We have not had enough exposure and do not feel that teachers should be graded on non-standardized students with a standardized assessment system.

-Still too many unknowns regarding final product to confirm.

-I am fine with a state adopted system. I think it makes it easier for everyone to be on the same page.

-Not having seen the new system, I’m hesitant to confirm acceptance of such a proposal. If it’s in fact mandatory, I won’t have an option to accept or decline, right? I do understand that the consistency of a statewide evaluation system would be beneficial in many ways. The hesitation comes from my lack of familiarity with all the components.

-I am in favor of a statewide initiative for evaluations to lend credence to the process. I am not familiar with these systems, but I am assuming they have been vetted and qualified by competent professionals in our professions.

2. Are you willing to use these evaluations while making compensation and personnel decisions? **Yes-31%, No-52%, and Maybe-17%**

-Yes, but as one component of a broader performance pay system being developed for our district.

-No for compensation and Maybe for Personnel decisions.

-Disagree with use for compensation and personnel decisions.

-I might use the evaluations on making personnel decisions but absolutely not on salaries.

-I am not opposed to using these evaluations to make compensation and personnel decisions; however, I don't want these to be mandated at the state or federal level. I believe compensation and renewal/nonrenewal issues should be handled at the local level.

-From what I have seen of the new system it would be only a piece of the decision for compensation/personnel determination and that should be acceptable to us.

- I would be willing to use the evaluations for personnel decisions but not compensation decisions.

-Not at this time.

-Dependent on the final product.

-I think that a degree of flexibility with compensation would be helpful, but also recognize that educators have previously found this road to be pretty bumpy. I would be willing to use an evaluation instrument as one of many data sources impacting compensation and personnel decisions

3. Will you agree to all stipulations set forth from USDE? **Yes-10%, No-63%, and Maybe-27%**

-Unsure without knowing the stipulations.

-Would NOT agree with ALL USDE stipulations.

-A double absolutely not.

-Yes, FWISD wants to ensure we are in a position where we receive maximum funding and flexibility.

-I doubt I will agree with all stipulations set forth from USDE. It is the right and duty of the States to provide for public education NOT the federal government.

-We believe that the stipulations from the USDE will always have accountability requirements attached but it is my hope that Texas will not attach more requirements than the federal requirements as we have done in previous years (testing in more subjects and grades than are required by the Feds, separate accountability systems that don't match, etc.).

-I am not sure what all of the stipulation set forth by the USDE are, so it would be hard to agree with them at this time.

-Too many unknowns to provide an answer in the affirmative or negative.

-Too broad...I'd like to know more about proposed stipulations before answering. That said, (as in question #1) if it's mandated, I won't have much of an option, right?

-I am not sure about the extent of the stipulations, but a waiver not accepted would mean that almost all Districts would not meet AYP minimum requirements unless they have exceeded an asset growth rate. This would provide another blow to our public education system.

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REGION 13

Region 13 Austin

I visited with the Region 13 superintendents and while there was no consensus regarding the NCLB waiver, there were two primary questions that, if answered would help folks considering. The first related to AYP. Will districts and campuses start over with AYP ratings. Most districts were fine not pursuing the waiver if AYP "resets." However, if they start back where they were or if the final year under AYP is considered for the new rating there were a number of concerns. The second question has to do with the student growth piece on the new T-TESS and P-TESS. Superintendents want to know how much discretion they will have regarding how the accountability/student growth piece of the new appraisal system will be used in decision making at the local level. Tom Leonard, the superintendent from Eanes shared how that had been handled in Illinois and was comfortable with that approach, which had been approved by USDE and allowed for a great deal of discretion.

I would be glad to have follow-up conversations with either of you regarding the discussion. Another question that has come up is the status of the NCLB re-authorization. At least one of my superintendents has been told that the House may vote a bill out as early as next week? Do either of you have any information on what is being proposed and potential timing for a new law?

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REGION 14

REGION 14 Abilene

In response to the Commissioner's request of what our superintendents are thinking about the evaluation waiver, I offer the following responses from 17 out of our 42 superintendents:

1. They are willing to accept mandatory statewide implementation of the new evaluation system
2. They are willing to use the evaluations in compensation and personnel decisions.
3. They would need to know what the USDE stipulations are before they could accept them

Hope this helps.

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REGION 15

Region 15 San Angelo

Region 15 superintendents that were in attendance at the monthly TASA Study Group meeting today all felt like the TEA needs to stand firm in its efforts in regards to the waiver.

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REGION 16

Region 16 Amarillo

Our superintendents appear to mostly be in agreement with the Commissioner's current stance on the waiver. They want to keep the flexibility they currently have on teacher and principal evaluations. The hope is that the USDE will change their views on the waiver **or** that NCLB will be significantly revised during reauthorization.

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REGION 17

February 26, 2015

Michael Williams, Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Service
1701 Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Commissioner Williams:

As requested, Region 17 Education Service Center (ESC 17) gathered feedback from regional superintendents regarding the United States Department of Education (USDE) waiver submitted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The advisory committee was comprised of superintendents that have been elected/appointed to serve in leadership positions at the regional or state levels. Listed below are the superintendents that were selected to serve on this committee:

- Herb Youngblood – Superintendent, Abernathy ISD; Chairman, Regional Advisory Committee (RAC); President, Texas Association of Community Schools (TACS)
- Jimmy Parker – Superintendent, Roosevelt ISD; Member, RAC Executive Committee; Member, Executive Committee TACS
- David Vroonland – Superintendent, Frenship ISD; Past President, Fast Growth School Coalition
- Denver Crum – Superintendent, Springlake-Earth ISD; Member, RAC Executive Committee President, Regional TACS
- Kevin Spiller – Superintendent, Seagraves ISD; Member, RAC Executive Committee; Executive Committee Member, Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)
- Julee Becker – Superintendent, Slaton ISD; Member, RAC Executive Committee
- Ed Sharp – Superintendent, Whitharral ISD; Member, RAC Executive Committee
- Nelson Coulter – Superintendent, Guthrie ISD; Chairman, Regional TASA
- Vicki Rice – Superintendent, Morton ISD; Officer, Regional TASA
- Dane Kerns – Superintendent, Smyer ISD; Officer, Regional TACS
- Charles “Bub” McIver – Superintendent, Olton ISD; Officer, Regional TACS
- Gilbert Trevino – Superintendent, Floydada ISD; Officer, Regional TACS
- Berhl Robertson – Superintendent, Lubbock ISD; Member, TASA Legislative Committee
- Keith Bryant – Superintendent, Lubbock-Cooper ISD; Member, TASA Legislative Committee

On Thursday, February 26, 2015, ten (10) of the committee members listed above met to discuss and provide regional feedback regarding the USDE waiver request. After discussion, the committee offers the following feedback:

The committee respectfully requests that the Commissioner of Education continue actively pursuing the renewal of the temporary waiver of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); however, state legislation should not be enacted to mandate districts to implement a particular teacher or principal evaluation system. Furthermore, personnel and compensation decisions should be determined at the local school district level.

The members of the committee wish to express their appreciation to the Commissioner of Education for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the USDE waiver. Committee members clearly understand the difficulty the Commissioner has weighing the conditions set forth by the USDE and the lack of authority to implement the evaluation systems on a statewide basis. If the Commissioner needs to have additional conversation regarding this recommendation, please feel free to contact any committee member or me.

Sincerely,

Kyle Wargo

USDE WAIVER INPUT

RECEIVED FROM ESC

REGION 18

1. In order for USDE to grant a waiver to TEA regarding federal accountability, TEA must adhere to certain requirements regarding teacher and principal evaluations. As a district, are you willing to implement a statewide evaluation system for teachers and principals. i.e., a system that must be used by every district in the state of Texas?

Yes 17_ No 1_

2. In order for USDE to grant a waiver to TEA regarding federal accountability, TEA must adhere to certain requirements regarding teacher and principal evaluations. As a district, are you willing to use the teacher and principal evaluation systems for making personnel decisions regarding rehiring and compensation?

Yes 14_ No 4_

3. Which is more important to you as a District:

8_ Districts having flexibility in determining your teacher and principal evaluation systems and how they will be utilized for local personnel decisions

10_ Not having to meet federal accountability requirements (such as AYP).