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Ryan Petty
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MEMORANDUM

Contact Information:
ESSA@fldoe.org
DPS: 2021-02

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Jacob Oliva

DATE: January 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan Proposed Changes – Opportunity for Comment through January 22, 2021

The United States Department of Education (USED) is allowing states to request adjustments to Title IV funding restrictions to give districts and schools greater flexibility to help more students transition to in-person learning in a safe and supported manner, and also propose pandemic-necessitated changes to a state's approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan.

Florida plans to take advantage of these opportunities to request temporary removal of Title IV spending limitations for academic enrichment, health and safety, and technology so that districts, public charter schools and nonpublic schools can direct additional resources to meet their unique needs in supporting students' return to in-person learning. Florida will also propose minor adjustments, only to the extent absolutely necessary, to Florida's learning gains calculation in the Federal Percent of Points Index and some long-term goal timelines to provide appropriate time to meet them.

Florida will request these flexibilities and necessary changes as described below.

Title IV Flexibilities

- Waive the requirements of Title IV, Part A that limit spending within certain categories of the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.
- Provide the opportunity to redirect resources as needed toward instructional and health and safety supports that are particularly helpful for students learning in-person.
- Remove the 20% spending caps for well-rounded education and safe and healthy school conditions, respectively, and allow a greater percentage of the allocation on safe and healthy learning conditions, including: the purchase of curriculum resources, materials and supplies, including those for health and safety, for teachers and students that will help accelerate and ensure the safe return of students to in-person learning on campus.

JACOB OLIVA
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Title IV Flexibilities (continued)

- Remove the 15% spending cap to purchase technology-related items. The present need for technology is broad and includes more than the actual purchase of hardware. Removing this cap will:
 - Allow districts to purchase software to help manage learning both virtually and in-person;
 - Allow districts to replace equipment damaged or lost during remote learning so that schools have the technology they need to resume in-person learning as more students return to campus;
 - Allow smaller districts with smaller allocations to make larger technology investments so all students can safely return to campus and have access to up-to-date technology; and
 - Ensure districts are able to fully support their charter schools, and students in private schools receiving district services, by ensuring enough funds are available to support the technology needs for students, regardless of the choice options families have selected.

Necessary ESSA State Plan Changes

- Shift the timeline to meet the Academic Achievement, Graduation Rate and English Language Proficiency Progress Long-Term Goal targets by one year, as necessary to account for the disruption caused by the pandemic.
- Revise learning gains measures in English language arts and Mathematics for the 2020-2021 school year to reflect learning gains across two school years (2018-2019 to 2020-2021), due to the nationwide Spring 2020 suspension of assessment and accountability. This will help Florida continue to identify student learning gains, which provide clear evidence of student growth and achievement gaps, and allow this must-have measure to continue to be included in Florida's accountability system.
- Finally, states are required to submit an amendment to their ESSA State Plan when statewide academic standards are changed. An amendment is proposed to reflect Florida's adoption of the B.E.S.T. Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics in February 2020.

The public comment period for the proposed changes is open until January 22, 2021. All documents can be viewed at <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/essa.stml>. Please email any comments to ESSA@fldoe.org.