



No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Waiver Workgroup October 14 Meeting Summary

The NCLB Waiver Workgroup met on October 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to discuss Minnesota's waiver request. The meeting opened with introductions of all the workgroup members and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) staff in attendance along with a broad overview of the waiver opportunity and the workgroup's responsibilities. Handouts were provided for this discussion.

The workgroup then participated in two exercises to frame the conversation about reforming the state's accountability system. Members listed the things they liked and disliked about the current NCLB system and then listed the values that need to be included in the new system. These values were: teacher support, effective leadership, clear expectations, parent involvement, assessment, student support, data support and financial flexibility.

Using those values as a guide, the workgroup then discussed the three specific questions on the day's agenda:

1. How will we build State, local education agency (LEA) and school capacity to improve student learning?
2. What interventions should be used in Priority Schools? These interventions must be aligned with the "turnaround principles" and must be implemented by the Priority School's LEA.
3. What interventions should be considered for Focus Schools? How should the state work with LEAs to implement these interventions? These interventions must address achievement gap issues, low-performing subgroups and low graduation rates.

The workgroup split into groups and had 30-minute table discussions following presentations from MDE on each question. The small groups then reported their conclusions to the larger group and submitted written suggestions to MDE.

MDE is currently reviewing the suggestions provided by the workgroup and will incorporate them in the official waiver request application. At the final meeting on November 4, MDE will review all input that the group has provided and show how it has been incorporated in the final waiver request.

Next week, the workgroup will begin looking at methods for measuring schools for accountability purposes. This topic will be covered over the next two weeks.