



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

September 20, 2022

The Honorable Molly Spearman  
Superintendent of Education  
South Carolina Department of Education  
1429 Senate Street, Room 1006  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Superintendent Spearman:

I am writing in response to South Carolina's request on May 26, 2022, and revised on August 30, 2022, to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), using the COVID-19 State Plan Addendum (Addendum). South Carolina requested these amendments to account for short-term changes to its system of annual meaningful differentiation for the 2021-2022 school year due to extraordinary circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the waivers the Department granted South Carolina from the accountability requirements of the ESEA for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years and the assessment requirements for the 2019-2020 school year.

Specifically, South Carolina requested the amendments to:

- Shift forward long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rate, and progress in achieving English language proficiency by two years.
- For its School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicators, not include the State's social studies assessments or its grade 8 science assessment results in the Preparing for Success indicator for elementary and middle schools; use a different school climate survey for its School Climate indicator; and add employability credentials based on a student's individualized education program (IEP) as an additional method to earn points on its College and Career Readiness indicator for high schools.
- Modify the weight of its SQSS indicators for high schools by reducing the Preparing for Success indicator from ten to five points and increasing the School Climate indicator from five to ten points.
- Identify schools for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) – lowest performing based on data from school years 2018-2019, and 2021-2022 instead of three consecutive years.
- Identify schools for targeted support and improvement (TSI) based on data from school years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2021-2022 instead of three consecutive years.
- Omit the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years when determining whether a school has met the statewide exit criteria for CSI and additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) schools.
- Use two years of data instead of three in order to calculate the average number of points earned on the College and Career Readiness indicator as part of the exit criteria for CSI schools eligible to exit in fall 2022.

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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.*

- Use two years of data instead of three in order to calculate the average performance in achievement, growth, and the College and Career Readiness indicator as part of the exit criteria for ATSI schools eligible to exit in fall 2022.

I am approving South Carolina’s short-term changes to its ESEA consolidated State plan. This letter and South Carolina’s approved Addendum for the 2021-2022 school year will be posted on the Department’s website along with the currently approved version of South Carolina’s ESEA consolidated State plan (available at: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-consolidated-state-plans/>). Because I am approving changes through the Addendum that are not limited to the 2021-2022 school year (e.g., shifted long-term goals), the State must submit an updated ESEA consolidated State plan that incorporates those approved changes at a later date.

Please be aware that approval of this amendment to South Carolina’s consolidated State plan is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is South Carolina’s responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

I know that you are doing all in your power to support your districts and schools to ensure the health and well-being of students and educators. Thank you for your dedication to this effort. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at [OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov](mailto:OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

James F. Lane, Ed.D.  
Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary  
Delegated the Authority to Perform the  
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Elizabeth Carpentier, SCDE Deputy Superintendent