Note : This document is a DRAFT

Application for the Educational Flexibility (Ed-Flex) Program

U.S. Department of Education
Issued: June 13, 2019

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Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0737. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit under section 9207 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this individual collection, or if you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form, application or survey, please contact the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20202-3118 at OESE.titlei-a@ed.gov.

Introduction

The Educational Flexibility (Ed-Flex) program is authorized under the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 and was reauthorized by section 9207 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Ed-Flex program allows the Secretary to authorize a State educational agency that serves an eligible State to waive statutory or regulatory requirements applicable to one or more the included programs for any local educational agency (LEAs), educational service agency (ESA), or school within the State.

Designation

Each eligible State participating in the Ed-Flex program shall be designated an Ed-Flex Partnership State.

Covered Programs

This program permits Ed-Flex States to waive requirements of the following State-administered formula grant programs:

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs (other than section 1111):
- Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children;
- Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-risk
- Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Duration of Ed-Flex

The Secretary will approve the applications for a period of not more than five years. The Secretary may extend the authority of an Ed-Flex Partnership State if the Secretary determines that the authority of the SEA to grant waivers has been effective in enabling the State or affected LEAs, educational service agencies, or schools to carry out their State or local reform plans and to continue to meet the accountability requirements, and has improved student performance.

Waivers Not Authorized

The Ed-Flex program does not authorize an SEA to waive any statutory or regulatory requirements relating to:

1. Standards, Assessments, and Accountability requirements under section 1111 of the ESEA;
2. Maintenance of effort;
3. Comparability of services;
4. Equitable participation of students and professional staff in private schools;
5. Parental participation and involvement;
6. Distribution of funds to LEAs;
7. Serving eligible school attendance areas in rank order in accordance with section 1113(a)(3) of the ESEA;
8. The selection of a school attendance area or school under subsections (a) and (b) of section 1113 of the ESEA, except that an SEA may grant a waiver to allow a school attendance area or school to participate in activities under Part A of Title I if the percentage of children from low-income families in the school attendance area of such

school or who attend such school is not more than 10 percentage points below the lowest percentage of such children for any school attendance area or school of the local educational agency that meets the requirements of such subsections;

9. Use of Federal funds to supplement, not supplant, non-Federal funds;
10. Applicable civil rights requirements; and
11. Any requirements that apply to the SEA.

An SEA may not grant any statutory or regulatory waiver unless the underlying purposes of the statutory requirements of the program for which a waiver is sought are met. Furthermore, requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or of any programs other than the ESEA programs referenced above and the Perkins program, may not be waived under the Ed-Flex waiver authority.

State Oversight

Each Ed-Flex Partnership State must annually monitor the activities of LEA, educational service agencies, and schools receiving waivers through the Ed-Flex program.

Report

Each Ed-Flex Partnership State must submit to the Department an annual report on the results of monitoring activities and the impact of the waivers on school and student performance. Each such State must include data demonstrating the degree to which progress has been made toward meeting the State's educational objectives. The data, when applicable, must include:

1. Information on the total number of waivers granted for Federal and State statutory and regulatory requirements, including the number of waivers granted for each type of waiver;
2. Information describing the effect of the waivers on the implementation of State and local educational reforms pertaining to school and student performance;
3. Information describing the relationship of the waivers to the performance of schools and students affected by the waivers; and
4. An assurance from State program managers that the data reported are reliable, complete, and accurate, as defined by the State, or a description of a plan for improving the reliability, completeness, and accuracy of such data as defined by the State.

[1] 5891b(c)(1)(G) currently prohibits waivers of the selection of a school attendance area or school under subsections (a) and (b) of section 1113 of the ESEA, except that an SEA may grant a waiver to allow a school attendance area or school to participate in activities under Title I, Part A "if the percentage of children from low-income families in the school attendance area of such school or who attend such school is not less than 10 percentage points below the lowest percentage of such children for any school attendance area or school…" (emphasis added). We believe the emphasized language is an error and that this prohibition should mirror the language in ESEA section 8401(c)(10), which prohibits waivers of the selection of a school attendance area or school under sections (a) and (b) of section 1113 of the ESEA, except that the Secretary may grant a waiver to participate in activities under Title I, Part A "if the percentage of children from low-income families in the school attendance area or who attend the school is not more than 10 percentage points below the lowest percentage of those children for any school attendance area or school…" (emphasis added).

Public Notice and Comment

Each SEA seeking waiver authority and each LEA, educational service agency, or school seeking a waiver under the Ed-Flex program must:

1. Provide the public with adequate and efficient notice of the proposed waiver authority or waiver, consisting of a description of the agency's application for the proposed waiver authority or waiver on each agency's website, including a description of any improved student performance that is expected to result from the waiver authority or waiver;
2. Provide the opportunity for parents, educators, school administrators, and all other interested members of the community to comment regarding the proposed waiver authority or waiver;
3. Provide the opportunity in accordance with any applicable State law specifying how the comments may be received, and how the comments may be reviewed by any member of the public; and
4. Submit the comments received with the application of the agency or school to the Secretary or the SEA, as appropriate.

Completing and Submitting an Application

Each SEA must address all of the requirements identified below in its application for Ed-Flex. The Department will review applications as they are received.

Complete applications should be submitted to the Title I mailbox at OESE.TitleI-A@ed.gov.

Application Review

Within 90 days of receipt of a complete application, the Department will issue a written decision that explains why such application has been approved or disapproved, and the process for revising and resubmitting the application for reconsideration.

The Department may approve an application only if it determines that the application demonstrates substantial promise of assisting the SEA and affected LEAs, educational service agencies, and schools within the State in carrying out comprehensive educational reform, after considering:

1. The eligibility of the State
2. The comprehensiveness and quality of the educational flexibility plan
3. The educational flexibility plan ensures accountability for the activities and goals described in such plan;
4. The degree to which the State's objectives:
    a. Are clear and can be assessed; and
    b. Take into account the performance of LEA, educational service agencies, or schools, and students, particularly those affected by waivers;
5. The significance of the State statutory or regulatory requirements relating to education that will be waived; and
6. The quality of the SEA's process for approving applications for waivers of Federal statutory or regulatory requirements and for monitoring and evaluating the results of such waivers.

Cover Page

Contact Information and Signatures	
SEA Contact (Name and Position): Shanthia Washington Assistant State Superintendent	Telephone: (334) 694-4710
Mailing Address: 50 North Ripley Street Montgomery, Alabama 36104	Email Address: shanthia.washington@alsde.edu
By signing this document, I assure that all application contents are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and I affirm each assurance listed at the end of the document.	
Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name) Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Education	Telephone: (334) 694-4900
Signature of Authorized SEA Representative	Date:

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Eligibility Information

Please check the assurances and provide the necessary information below to demonstrate eligibility for the Ed-Flex program.

☒ 1. The SEA has:

a. Developed and implemented the challenging State academic standards, and aligned assessments, described in section 1111(b) of the ESEA, and is producing the report cards required by section 1111(h) of such Act; or

b. If the State has adopted new challenging State academic standards under section 1111(b)(1) of the ESEA, made substantial progress toward developing and implementing such standards and toward producing the report cards required under section 1111(h) of such Act.

☒ 2. The SEA will hold LEAs, educational service agencies, and schools accountable for meeting the educational goals described in the local applications and for engaging in technical assistance and, as applicable and appropriate, implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities and targeted support and improvement activities under section 1111(d) of the ESEA.

☒ 3. The SEA has waived or will waive State statutory or regulatory requirements relating to education while holding LEAs, educational service agencies, or schools within the State that are affected by such waivers accountable for the performance of the students who are affected by such waivers.

c. **Describe the State's authority to waive State statutory or regulatory requirements relating to education (i.e. provide legal citations to relevant statute or regulation).**

Authority for the waiver of state statutory and regulatory requirements is primarily established through the *Alabama Innovation School Flexibility Act*, codified in §16-6D-5 through §16-6D-6 of the Code of Alabama. Under this Act, the State Board of Education is empowered to enter into "Flexibility Contracts" with local school systems. These contracts allow for significant programmatic and budgetary autonomy by granting exemptions from specific state laws, board rules, and policies, provided that the local education agency (LEA) demonstrates a clear plan to improve student achievement and maintains a system of accountability.

In addition to this broad legislative authority, the Alabama Administrative Code (Rule 290-1-1) provides a regulatory mechanism for the State Superintendent of Education to grant waivers for specific administrative requirements. While these state statutes allow for extensive flexibility, they explicitly prohibit the waiver of requirements related to such things as civil rights, student health and safety, and financial transparency. This combined legal structure ensures that while the state can remove administrative and statutory barriers to innovation, it maintains a firm commitment to essential protections and public accountability.

Descriptions

1. **Describe the process the SEA will use to evaluate applications from LEAs, educational service agencies, or schools requesting waivers of**
   A. **Federal statutory or regulatory requirements;**

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will establish a process for reviewing and approving Educational Flexibility (Ed-Flex) waiver requests on a case-by-case basis for local educational agencies (LEAs). Waivers will be considered when an LEA demonstrates that a specific federal statutory or regulatory requirement creates a barrier to the effective implementation of educational initiatives, school improvement efforts, or strategies designed to improve student outcomes.

ALSDE will utilize its existing electronic grants management system as the primary mechanism for receiving, reviewing, and maintaining Ed-Flex waiver requests. By integrating waiver requests into established federal program application processes, ALSDE will minimize administrative burden on LEAs while ensuring appropriate oversight, accountability, and monitoring.

LEAs seeking an Ed-Flex waiver will be required to submit a formal request identifying the federal requirement to be waived, describing the educational purpose of the waiver, an outlined evaluation criteria explaining how the waiver will support improved student outcomes, and providing evidence of stakeholder consultation, as appropriate. Requests will be reviewed by ALSDE federal program staff to determine statutory eligibility, alignment with federal program objectives, consistency with state educational priorities, and the extent to which the waiver is expected to remove barriers to improved educational outcomes.

ALSDE will provide notification of approval or denial following its review of each request. Approved waivers will be monitored to ensure continued compliance with applicable federal requirements and to evaluate the effectiveness of the waiver in supporting local educational goals.

B. State statutory or regulatory requirements relating to education.

Pursuant to Ala. Code § 16-6D-5 through 16-6D-6, a school system wishing to pursue a flexibility agreement requesting a waiver from state laws, policies, and/or regulations shall successfully comply with the requirements and procedures set forth by the ALSDE regarding school flexibility contracts known as an Innovation Zone Application. ALSDE will continue flexibility contracts between the local school system and the State Board of Education wherein a local school system may apply for programmatic flexibility or budgetary flexibility, or both, from state laws, regulations, and policies, including regulations and policies promulgated by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The Innovation Zone Applications must:

- Indicate the specific statue or rule requested for a waiver;
- Describe the vision and innovative features of student success;
- Indicate the expected outcomes for students;

- Describe how the proposal aligns and reflects Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan;
- Identify the measurable goals;
- Identify the objectives;
- Indicate the activities;
- Indicate the timeline for meeting identified outcomes;
- Indicate the accountability measures and benchmarks;
- Describe how the plan will be monitored and evaluated;
- Describe how results will be reported; and
- Explain how implementation will be sustained.

LEAs are required to seek approval from local boards of education prior to submission. Upon submission, the appropriate section staff member reviews the application for completeness and determines if the waiver is within the parameters of the state/federal law. Once approved, the waiver is granted by the State Superintendent of Education. Evaluations are conducted annually to review outcome data.

2. **Describe the State statutory and regulatory requirements relating to education that the State educational agency will waive.**

Alabama seeks flexibility from specific federal requirements that may limit the state's ability to strategically deploy federal resources to meet the diverse needs of local education agencies (LEAs) across Alabama. Alabama's districts vary significantly in size, capacity, geographic location, and student demographics, particularly among rural, high-poverty, and historically underserved communities. In some instances, rigid federal spending requirements and allocation formulas can restrict LEAs from implementing coordinated, evidence-based initiatives that address local priorities and improve student outcomes.

To address these challenges and better align federal resources with local needs and strategic priorities, ALSDE requests flexibility in the following areas for the reasons outlined below:

1. Title I, Part A Carryover Limitation (ESEA Section 1127(a))- *limits the carryover to 15% of funds allocated in a fiscal year.*

ALSDE requests the authority to waive the 15 percent limitation on carrying over Title I, Part A funds, allowing LEAs to roll forward funds. This flexibility would allow LEAs to retain and strategically utilize funds across fiscal years to support comprehensive, long-term improvement efforts rather than expending funds on short-term activities solely to meet carryover requirements. The waiver would enable districts to plan for and implement sustainable investments in instructional programs, academic interventions, educator support, and school improvement initiatives that require multi-year funding commitments.

2. Title IV, Part A Spending Requirements (ESEA Sections 4106(e)(2)(C)-(E) and 4109(b))- *requires LEAs with an allocation of $30,000 or more to spend at least 20% on well-rounded education, spend at least 20% on safe and healthy education, and 15% cap on technology integration.*

ALSDE requests authority to waive the federal spending percentage allocations that are

required in the well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and effective use of technology categories. ALSDE also requests flexibility regarding the limitation that prohibits LEAs from using more than 15 percent of their Title IV, Part A allocation for technology infrastructure. While these requirements were designed to ensure balanced investments, they may not reflect the specific needs identified through local needs assessments. The requested flexibility would enable LEAs to direct resources toward the areas of greatest need and highest potential impact, whether those needs involve instructional technology, student support services, college and career readiness initiatives, or academic recovery efforts.

Granting these waivers would allow ALSDE and its LEAs to maximize the effectiveness of federal funding by aligning expenditures with local priorities, evidence-based practices, and comprehensive improvement strategies. Increased flexibility would support high-impact, systemic investments that strengthen educational opportunities, improve school quality, and advance academic achievement for all students across Alabama, while maintaining accountability for the intended purposes of federal funds.

The requested waivers will only be granted to LEAs upon an approved waiver request. In addition, as identified under the Ed-Flex program, the ALSDE will not authorize waivers of any statutory or regulatory requirements relating to:

- Standards, assessments, and accountability requirements under ESEA section 1111;
- Maintenance of effort;
- Comparability of services;
- Equitable participation of students and professional staff in private schools;
- Parental participation and involvement;
- Distribution of funds to LEAs;
- Serving eligible school attendance areas in rank order in accordance with ESEA section 1113(a)(3);
- The selection of a school attendance area or school under subsections (a) and (b) of section 1113 of the ESEA, except that an SEA may grant a waiver to allow a school attendance area or school to participate in activities under Part A of Title I if the percentage of children from low-income families in the school attendance area of such school or who attend such school is not more than 10 percentage points below the lowest percentage of such children for any school attendance area or school of the local educational agency that meets the requirements of such subsections;
- Use of Federal funds to supplement, not supplant, State and local funds;
- Applicable civil rights requirements; and
- Any requirements that apply to the SEA.

The Code of Alabama 1975, specifically Title 16 (Education), and the Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 290, establish the State Board of Education's and the State Superintendent's general authority for the administration, fiscal oversight, and accountability of federal education programs. Under this authority, the ALSDE has adopted administrative procedures and grant management protocols—including those within the ALSDE Administrative Code governing ESEA programs—that align state budgeting, carryover, allocation, and amendment requirements with federal statutory provisions.

Through Ed-Flex, the ALSDE will waive applicable state administrative rules and grant

administration requirements—to the extent that they mirror, enforce, or are contingent upon federal statutory or regulatory provisions—for participating LEAs, educational services agencies, and schools. By aligning these state-level waivers with federal flexibility, Alabama will empower districts to prioritize resources toward the *Alabama Literacy Act*, the *Alabama Numeracy Act*, and College and Career Readiness (CCR) initiatives.

3. **Describe the clear educational objectives the State intends to meet under the educational flexibility plan, which may include innovative methods to leverage resources to improve program efficiencies that benefit students.**

Alabama's Ed-Flex Plan reflects the State's educational objectives found in our Strategic Plan, Alabama Achieves, which focuses on advancing student achievement and leveraging resources to improve program efficiency, focusing on our motto: "Every Child. Every Chance. Every Day."

- Academic Growth and Achievement- Increase student outcomes in all academic areas with a focus on reading and mathematics.
- College, Career, and Workforce Ready- Engage, challenge, and support every student in relevant, impactful instruction that equips each student with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully enter college, career, or workforce.
- Safe and Supportive Learning Environment- Provide safe environments that support the physical, mental, emotional, social, and cognitive development of all students in every school.
- Highly Effective Educators- Ensure highly effective educators are equipped with content knowledge and teaching skills to address the needs of all learners in every school.
- Engagement- Build a collaborative environment at the ALSDE that provides fast, reliable customer service for citizens, state leaders, and local education agencies.

The table below provides the specific rationale and objectives for each of the requested items that Alabama would like to waive:

Current Rule	Requested Waiver	Objective	Alignment to Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan
1) Title I carryover limitations of 15% once every three (3) years.	Provide annual carryover authority for Title I, Part A funds to enable strategic, multi-year investments in evidence-based student academic supports and school improvement efforts, rather than being subject to the current 15% carryover limitation that may only be exceeded once every three years.	Allow LEAs to utilize funding more meaningfully by providing fiscal stability by investing in academic support and school improvement activities that yield high-impact outcomes over multiple years.	Aligns with Academic Growth & Achievement by supporting sustained implementation of evidence-based interventions designed to improve reading, mathematics, and overall student performance. Supports Safe & Supportive Learning Environments through multi-year school improvement efforts and targeted supports for struggling schools and student groups. Supports Engagement by providing LEAs greater flexibility to strategically manage federal resources to meet local needs.

Current Rule	Requested Waiver	Objective	Alignment to Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan
6) Title IV, Part A 20% rule for LEAs awarded over $30,000	Remove the percent requirement so that LEAs can spend Title IV, Part A funds according to their needs assessment.	This would enable districts to maximize the impact of limited federal funds, reduce administrative burden associated with compliance-driven spending allocations, and ensure investments are aligned with local priorities and evidence-based strategies that support improved student outcomes. .	Aligns with Safe & Supportive Learning Environments by allowing districts to prioritize student well-being, school safety, and mental health needs. Supports Academic Growth & Achievement when funds are directed toward well-rounded educational opportunities, STEM, computer science, or other academic priorities. Supports Engagement by empowering local decision-making and aligning expenditures to documented local needs rather than federally prescribed spending percentages.

4. **Describe how the educational flexibility plan is coordinated with activities described in the Title I, Part A section of the SEA's approved consolidated State plan, consistent with subsections (b), (c), and (d) of section 1111 of the ESEA.**

The ALSDE's Ed-Flex Plan is designed to support and enhance the implementation of Alabama's approved Consolidated State Plan under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The requested flexibilities provide local education agencies (LEAs) with additional discretion in the use of federal funds while maintaining full alignment with the requirements of Section 1111(b), (c), and (d) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These flexibilities enable LEAs to more effectively address local needs, strengthen school improvement efforts, and improve student outcomes without reducing accountability or academic expectations.

Alignment with ESEA Section 1111(b): Academic Standards and Assessments

- ALSDE's Ed-Flex Plan does not waive or modify Alabama's challenging state academic standards, annual statewide assessments, or assessment participation requirements.
- Alabama will continue to administer its statewide assessment system and use assessment results to measure student achievement and inform instructional improvement.
- The requested flexibility supports the strategic use of federal funds to help students meet Alabama's academic standards while maintaining rigorous expectations for all learners.

Alignment with ESEA Section 1111(c): Statewide Accountability System

- Alabama's accountability system will continue to serve as the primary framework for measuring school performance, student achievement, academic growth, graduation rates, English learner progress, and the performance of student subgroups.
- The requested waivers do not alter accountability indicators, long-term goals, school identification criteria, or reporting requirements established under Alabama's ESSA

State Plan.

- Flexibility in the use of Title I, Part A and Title IV, Part A funds will allow LEAs to better align resources with identified needs while remaining accountable for improving student outcomes.

Alignment with ESEA Section 1111(d): School Support and Improvement

- ALSDE will continue to implement comprehensive and targeted support and improvement activities for schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI).
- The requested waiver of the Title I, Part A carryover limitation will provide LEAs with greater flexibility to support long-term, sustainable school improvement initiatives and evidence-based interventions.
- Flexibility regarding Title IV, Part A spending requirements will allow districts to direct resources toward the highest-priority needs identified through comprehensive needs assessments and school improvement planning processes.
- These flexibilities will strengthen local capacity to implement strategies that address achievement gaps, improve educational opportunities, and support continuous improvement in Alabama schools.

Through this coordinated approach, ALSDE will ensure that the Ed-Flex Plan serves as a mechanism for advancing the goals of Alabama's ESSA State Plan by providing LEAs with greater operational flexibility while maintaining strong accountability, high academic standards, and a continued focus on improving outcomes for all students.

5. **Describe how the SEA will evaluate (consistent with the requirements of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) the performance of students in the schools, educational service agencies, and LEAs affected by the waivers.**

The ALSDE will maintain a dual-layered evaluation framework—spanning both state and local levels—to rigorously assess how Ed-Flex waivers influence student outcomes. This evaluative structure ensures that all flexibilities remain focused on the core achievement goals mandated under Title I, Part A.

LEA Evaluation

LEAs must describe in their waiver application how they will monitor and evaluate the waiver's effect on student outcomes. This includes defining performance measures, disaggregating performance data, and reporting outcomes annually to the ALSDE.

State Evaluation

The ALSDE reviews LEA reports and school accountability data to assess waiver effectiveness, focusing on the following Accountability indicators: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Progress in English Language Proficiency, Chronic Absenteeism, Graduation Rate, and College and Career Readiness.

The additional flexibility provided under Ed-Flex will be balanced by Alabama's commitment to accountability and continuous improvement. The ALSDE will utilize existing ESSA accountability measures, student performance data, and program monitoring processes to

oversee LEAs operating under approved waivers and to ensure that flexibility translates into meaningful gains in student achievement and school performance.

The ALSDE will maintain a comprehensive monitoring process to ensure that approved Ed-Flex waivers are implemented in accordance with federal requirements and support improved student outcomes. As part of its oversight responsibilities, ALSDE will conduct an annual risk analysis to identify potential programmatic, fiscal, and performance-related risk factors within participating local education agencies (LEAs). The results of this analysis will be used to assign risk levels and inform the scope and frequency of monitoring activities. This risk-based approach will help ensure that waivers are implemented with fidelity, accountability, and a continued focus on student-centered outcomes.

The ALSDE will conduct regular reviews of LEA performance, program implementation, and fiscal stewardship to evaluate the effectiveness of waiver activities. As part of its oversight responsibilities, ALSDE will retain the authority to modify, suspend, or terminate an approved waiver if an LEA fails to meet established performance expectations, does not comply with applicable requirements, or demonstrates insufficient progress toward achieving its educational objectives. This accountability framework will ensure that flexibility is used responsibly and remains focused on advancing student achievement, strengthening school performance, and supporting continuous improvement across Alabama's public schools.

6. **Describe how the SEA met the requirements for Public Notice and Comment to:**
    A. **Provide the public with adequate and efficient notice of the proposed waiver authority, consisting of a description of the agency's application for the proposed waiver authority, including a description of any improved student performance that is expected to result from the waiver authority.**

The ALSDE will provide a 30-day public comment period to solicit stakeholder input on the proposed Ed-Flex application. To ensure broad awareness and meaningful engagement, ALSDE will:

- Publish a public notice and provide access to the Ed-Flex application through appropriate communication channels.
- Distribute information regarding the application to local education agencies (LEAs), education partners, and relevant stakeholder organizations across the state.
- Establish a dedicated email address (edflexwaiver@alsde.edu) to receive public comments and recommendations.
- Review and consider all feedback submitted during the comment period.
- Incorporate appropriate revisions based on stakeholder input and finalize the Ed-Flex application for submission to the U.S. Department of Education.

This public engagement process will help ensure transparency, encourage stakeholder participation, and support the development of an Ed-Flex application that reflects the educational priorities and needs of Alabama's students, educators, and communities.

7. **Submit as an attachment the comments received from Public Notice and Comment with the application of the SEA to the Department.**

Public notice and comments will be attached at the conclusion of the public comment period.

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