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**Consortium of Nine California Districts Announce Plan for New Federal School Accountability  
*CORE NCLB Waiver Request Submitted to CA State Board of Education for Review***

**Sacramento, CA** – A consortium of nine school districts participating in the [California Office to Reform Education \(CORE\)](#) are seeking a flexibility waiver to substitute federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) rules with a new locally-driven accountability system aimed at preparing all students for college and career. Federal rules require local educational agencies seeking a federal waiver to first submit the waiver request to the state for review and comment. The nine districts submitted their applications bundled as a [CORE Waiver](#) to the California State Board of Education today.

“Our districts lean into accountability as a way to learn, grow and improve as adults so our students benefit with greater future options upon graduation,” said Michael Hanson, Superintendent of Fresno Unified School District and CORE Board President. “We are excited about the shared responsibility for improved learning for youth.”

“True success for all students is achieved by serving the needs of the whole child,” added Tony Smith, Superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District. “We know that academic success is just one piece of the puzzle. Our districts, schools, and communities are collectively responsible for improvement on multiple factors that contribute to student preparedness, and for elimination of disparity and disproportionality on all measures in the academic, social, and cultural domains.”

“We believe this plan is aligned with the proposed Local Control Funding Formula and the principle of subsidiarity discussed by Governor Brown in his State of the State address,” said Dr. Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, Superintendent of the Santa Ana Unified School District. “Our districts want federal and state flexibility to use resources in ways that most effectively help prepare all students for college and career. In exchange, we are assuming a new and more comprehensive system of accountability to meet the needs of our students and prepare them for successful futures”

The CORE waiver plan calls on districts to collect and share data far beyond that necessary for federal accountability purposes. The additional data elements will be shared among all



participating districts so that the districts can hold themselves and each other accountable for preparing every student for college and career. The shared data will also foster development of a professional learning community with a culture of excellence, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

The CORE waiver proposal is built upon four foundational goals that align to, and extend beyond the three principles of the waiver guidelines:

- College and career ready expectations for all students;
- A focus on collective responsibility, accountability, and action that emphasizes capacity-building over accountability;
- The development of intrinsic motivation for change through differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for schools; and
- Focused capacity-building for effective instruction and leadership.

The CORE waiver plan commits that all participating districts will fully implement the Common Core State Standards by the 2013-14 school year and will transition to Common Core-aligned assessments by the 2014-15 school year.

The participating CORE districts plan to share multiple data elements that collectively measure schools' progress in preparing all students for college and careers. Using this data, schools will be identified as a "School of Distinction," a "Priority School," or a "Focus School." In line with the ethos of collaboration and shared responsibility for all students' success, coaching teams from Schools of Distinction will provide intervention planning and support for continuous improvement at Priority Schools and Focus Schools.

The districts will also use the shared data system to strengthen teaching and learning in their individual community contexts' and will agree on elements that will be common among educator effectiveness and evaluation systems that each district will develop individually during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 years and implement by the 2015-16 school year.

The nine districts participating in the CORE Waiver are: Clovis, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, Sanger, and Santa Ana Unified School Districts. Together, these CORE districts serve more than a million students.

The participating CORE districts hope to work with the U.S. Department of Education to reach approval of the waiver and finalize provisions of the waiver plan. Once finalized, other school districts and charter schools in California will be eligible to participate in the waiver provided they are willing to similarly reorient their work around preparing all students for college and careers, including by implementing college- and career-ready standards and assessments,



participating in the new accountability system, committing to sharing data, and developing and implementing educator effectiveness and evaluation systems.

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