



**CORE Waiver – Concept for Adding LEAs**

CORE staff have developed the following high level concept for adding LEAs to the CORE Waiver. The intention of this initial concept is to provide a starting point for conversations between CORE and the US Department of Education (hereafter, USED) as to how best to open up the Waiver for other LEAs to join by entering into the mutual accountability and common agreements by requesting waivers from USED.

In general, the notion below is based upon the idea that interested LEAs would go through a preparation process in SY 2015-16, requiring that LEAs meet a pre-determined set of readiness criteria to be allowed to apply to the USED to join the CORE Waiver starting in SY 2016-17. Our hope would be that the final set of readiness criteria and entry approval process would be written into our extension letter such that, if approved, we would be able to move forward this process as being fully sanctioned by USED.

**High Level Process for Districts Joining in SY 2016-17**

Step	General Timing
<b>Step 1:</b> LEA submits letter of interest signed by their Superintendent with a technical assistance fee to CORE for an initial readiness assessment.	Summer 2015
<b>Step 2:</b> LEA attends informational session, and CORE staff complete an initial readiness assessment.	Fall 2015
<b>Step 3:</b> LEA decides whether to proceed and submits a letter of intent with a second technical assistance fee for support in meeting readiness criteria, for assessment of the LEAs’ data vis-a-vis the Index metrics, for participating in baseline measurement of social-emotional and culture climate assessments, and for a review of readiness at the end of the process.	Fall 2015
<b>Step 4:</b> LEA works toward readiness criteria, which include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder consultation with respect to entering the CORE Waiver with all key stakeholder groups.</li> <li>• Principle 1: Full implementation of the Common Core State Standards.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Principle 2:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Submission and assessment of district data vis-à-vis the Index metrics.</li> <li>○ LEA-wide participation in a baseline assessment of culture-climate perceptions and social-emotional skills.</li> <li>○ Philosophical alignment with and capacity to implement interventions and supports with respect to Reward, Priority, Focus, and “Other Support” schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Principle 3:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Philosophical alignment with and capacity to implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that align with CORE’s guidelines.</li> <li>○ Plan for getting any necessary agreements with bargaining partners to proceed.</li> <li>○ Plan for developing systems in SY 2016-17, piloting systems in SY 2017-18 and for full implementation in SY 2018-19.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Winter 2015-16
<b>Step 5:</b> Assessment of readiness criteria by CORE with recommendations to USED for Waiver approval	Spring 2016
<b>Step 6:</b> USED approval of CORE recommended LEA Waiver applications.	Spring 2016

<sup>1</sup> This could potentially be assessed using the CORE Waiver Self- and Peer-Review Expectations and Rubric.

<sup>2</sup> ""



### Letter of Interest (LOI) Process

Upon the announcement by USED that other California LEAs could apply to participate in the CORE Waiver, CORE would initiate a letter of interest application process that would include LEA self-report on initial readiness and willingness to commit to the mutual accountability agreements of the CORE Waiver, sign off by the Superintendent and a technical assistance fee to CORE for initial readiness assessments and support.

During the LOI process, CORE would host a number of informational webinars to provide information and to answer questions.

The letters of interest would be a requirement to proceed and would therefore provide CORE and USED a sense of the level of interest, and the scale of the work for SY 2016-17.

### Managing the Application/Approval Process

- **Readiness criteria technical assistance specialists:** Based upon the number of LOIs received, CORE will select and train part-time readiness criteria technical assistance specialists that will support district teams to engage in the readiness process. In our selection of these individuals, we will prioritize LEA staff currently involved in CORE Waiver work, county office staff/partners, and staff/partners of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) for these part-time roles. We will also seek to select regionally so that specialists can engage in onsite support.
- **Workshop series with associated submission deadlines:** CORE will hold a series of regional workshops at two to three points in the year, where LEA teams will work on the readiness criteria under the guidance of CORE staff and technical assistance specialists. Workshops will be staggered to allow LEA teams to build toward the criteria throughout the year. They will also be regional (e.g., North, Central, South).
- **Providing “ad hoc” technical assistance:** In between workshops, LEA teams will be able take advantage of a prescribed number of hours of technical assistance from their assigned specialist.
- **Assessing district progress against the readiness criteria:** Technical assistance specialists will be ultimately responsible for assessing whether or not LEAs have met the readiness criteria. All LEAs will be reviewed by at least two specialists and CORE staff will review a sampling of applications.
- **Data readiness:**
  - **Administrative data:** CORE will partner with a high volume data collection and management firm to akin to what many states use to extract, warehouse and report data. Interested LEAs will work with that partner to assess their readiness to engage in data sharing, and potentially to collect and report back baseline performance on metrics that utilize administrative data.
  - **Student, Staff and Parent Survey/Self-Report Data:** Interested LEAs will engage in implementation of the CORE-wide culture-climate and social emotional learning instruments in Spring 2016.

### Supporting an Expanded Set of Participating LEAs once Admitted

Once we transition to an expanded set of LEAs, we will build on the structure created by technical assistance specialists to support participating LEAs. Depending on the scale of the work, we may need to hire some specialists to join our team fulltime in support of the implementation work.

Support will be differentiated in terms of LEA size. Most LEAs will engage in regional support structures, which, depending on the scope of the participating districts, may leverage the county support structures in place in California. Larger LEAs will be invited to participate in California-wide activities with LEAs that have currently approved waivers.



Below are implications for each of key activities of the CORE Waiver:

Topic	Implications/approach
<b>Self- and Peer-Review Process</b>	The process will be expanded to include all participating LEAs. Smaller LEAs will be placed into regional triads. Larger districts will be placed into California-wide triads. Technical assistance specialists will train and support LEAs engaging the process. (See below for additional information about how we propose to continue leveraging the peer review process as the primary system for monitoring and accountability).
<b>Principle 1 Support</b>	LEAs are already supported through various structures in the implementation of college and career ready standards (e.g., through their county offices).  CORE may open up certain activities on a fee for service basis (e.g., conferences focusing on implementation).
<b>Principle 2 – Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting</b>	All LEAs would participate in data collection, reporting and analysis through CORE’s partners (e.g., the John Gardner Center for Youth, a to be determined partner for data extraction, warehousing and management if the number of LEAs expands substantially).
<b>Principle 2 – School Pairing</b>	Priority, reward and “other collaborative partner” schools would be part of School Pairing. The structure of School Pairing would be adapted for scale (e.g., leaning more on data for matching and less on factors communicated through conversations with LEA leaders). Pairs would continue to participate in annual institutes. Especially for smaller and less accessible LEAs, efforts would be made to pair regionally. Technical assistance specialists would provide support for these school intervention efforts.
<b>Principle 2 – Communities of Practice</b>	Similar to Pairing, the structure for Communities of Practice assignments and support would be adapted for scale (e.g., working toward regional assignments, leveraging a survey process with prospective participants). Technical assistance specialists would provide support for these school intervention efforts.
<b>Principle 2 – Other Support</b>	CORE may open up certain activities on a fee for service basis (e.g., conferences focusing on implementation or data utilization).
<b>Principle 3 Support</b>	Building from the work of the readiness process, regional workshops would be held to support LEA teams in their efforts to implement their educator effectiveness systems.

**Monitoring an Expanded Set of Participating LEAs once Admitted**

As additional approved LEAs enter into full implementation of all waiver elements, we recognize that the workload of managing and monitoring the required components for both USED and CORE will increase. We believe that the self- and peer-review processes within the waiver, which are designed to monitor and ensure mutual accountability, can well serve the LEAs and USED to evaluate efforts and progress of waiver implementation. As is currently required of participating LEAs, newly added LEAs will also participate in the annual self- and peer-review processes by conducting self-assessments, and then by being peer-reviewed by two other approved LEAs using the rigorous rubrics and calibration protocols. As often as possible, newly approved LEAs will be partnered with existing LEAs to guarantee rigorous evaluation.

We suggest that USED view monitoring of the self- and peer-review process as the primary mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the commitments within the CORE Waiver. Similar to state-level monitoring, we recognize that it will not be possible to perform in depth monitoring of each district, every year or even every other year. Rather, broad



monitoring of the peer review process and selective sampling of peer reviews will enable CORE and USED to assess the fidelity of implementation in a manageable way. Engaging in the review process will allow USED staff access to comprehensive reporting of all LEAs’ waiver principle implementation status and progress, as well as ensuring that the review process is executed with fidelity and rigor. Further, USED staff will be able to ascertain if LEAs that do not meet expected implementation cut-points as determined by peer review process are indeed designing and implementing development plans toward expected implementation.

Below is a summary of the steps in the CORE waiver self- and peer-review process as well as implications for USED engagement for monitoring:

<b>Process</b>		
<b>Steps</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Implications for USED Engagement</b>
<b>1</b>	Norming and calibration using approved rubrics	USED could participate in or review the facilitation process used by CORE staff to monitor the rigor of the self- and peer-review process used by all LEAs ensuring that the review steps and overall cycle are tightly normed and calibrated.
<b>2</b>	LEA self-review	
<b>3</b>	Initial peer-reviews with two partner LEAs	
<b>4</b>	In person peer-review event for questions and deep discussion	
<b>5</b>	Final peer review scores for submission to the Oversight Panel	
<b>6</b>	Development planning and implementation for unmet expectations/domains	
<b>Oversight Panel Reporting</b>		USED could attend all or select Oversight Panel meetings to observe the high level of engagement and accountability applied by the Panel.
<b>7</b>	Interim reporting of development plan progress	USED could review selected final LEA development plans and interim progress reports.
<b>8</b>	Peer-review of development plan progress	
<b>Oversight Panel reporting</b>		See Oversight Panel recommendation above.

All self- and peer-review reporting narratives, evidence samples and scoring, along with interim reporting and development plan progress are reported annually to the Oversight Panel. We recommend that USED representatives attend Oversight Panel meetings to support monitoring process of waiver implementation.

As an additional check on the rigor and fidelity of the peer review approach, the Oversight Panel could choose to hire a third party evaluator to review and report on execution of the process. (The expense of this would be built into annual technical assistance fees).

In some sense the annual self and peer review process is more frequent than typical monitoring of federal programs by state officials, as it occurs every year and covers the full breadth of the Waiver. Ultimately, we believe that this



approach is more likely to yield high impact results on practice that translate into improved outcomes for youth precisely because as the self and peer review experience genuinely engages educators in continuous improvement where they are the owners of both the process and the results.