



## NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



# Growth Models: Ensuring Grade-Level Proficiency for All Students by 2014

July 2007

*"To ensure greater flexibility in tracking individual students' annual progress, growth models provide states with more options for a nuanced accountability system, while adhering to the core principles of No Child Left Behind."*

— Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

In April 2005, Secretary Spellings announced a New Path for the *No Child Left Behind Act*—a set of common-sense principles and approaches to guide states as they measure their progress in meeting the law's important "bright line" goals. These goals include assessing all students in grades 3-8 and once in high school every year, breaking down results by student subgroup to help close the achievement gap, improving teacher quality and informing parents of their options in a timely manner. Above all, they must lead to all students achieving at grade level or better in reading and mathematics by 2014.

One approach requested by many states is the use of growth-based accountability models. These models hold promise as reliable and innovative methods to measure student achievement over time. In Nov. 2005, Secretary Spellings announced a pilot program for qualified states to request the use of growth-based accountability models so their fairness and effectiveness could be evaluated. The Department received many requests by states to participate. Last May, the first two states, Tennessee and North Carolina, were approved for the pilot, which is ongoing. Secretary Spellings has also approved Delaware, Arkansas and Iowa to implement their growth models for the 2006-2007 school year. Additionally, Florida submitted a quality growth model that was conditionally approved by the Department and has now received full approval for the 2006-2007 school year. Ohio has been approved on the condition that the state adopt a uniform minimum group size for all subgroups, including students with disabilities and limited English proficient students, in AYP determinations for the 2006-2007 school year.

Today, Secretary Spellings announces the approval of high-quality growth models for two more states following the bright-line principles of No Child Left Behind. Alaska and Arizona have been approved to use their growth models for the 2006-2007 school year.

- As a condition of participation, the States must share data on which schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under each model, the original status model and the new growth model.
- The Department will then gather this data and share it with other states and the public.

These two states are meeting the bright line principles of NCLB, and their growth model proposals meet all seven core principles outlined by the Department last November. These principles are:

1. Ensure that all students are proficient by 2014, and set annual goals to ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students;

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2. Set expectations for annual achievement based on meeting grade-level proficiency, not on student background or school characteristics;
3. Hold schools accountable for student achievement in reading / language arts and mathematics;
4. Ensure that all students in tested grades are included in the assessment and accountability system, hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of each student subgroup, and include all schools and districts;
5. Include assessments in each of grades 3-8 and in high school for both reading/language arts and mathematics, and ensure that they have been operational for more than one year and receive approval through the NCLB peer review process for the 2005-06 school year. The assessment system must also produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year;
6. Track student progress as part of the state data system; and
7. Include student participation rates and student achievement on a separate academic indicator in the State accountability system.

**The Department is using a rigorous peer review process to ensure that the selection process was fair and transparent for all participating states.** A panel of nationally recognized experts has been reviewing and making final recommendations on states' proposals. The peer reviewers represent a wide range of perspectives and expertise, from academia to the private sector to state and local and community organizations. They include:

- **Dr. Anthony Bryk**, Stanford University; **Dr. Robert Mendro**, Dallas Independent School District; **Dr. Harold Doran**, American Institutes for Research; **Dr. Jeff Nellhaus**, Massachusetts Department of Education; **Dr. Chrys Dougherty**, National Center for Educational Accountability; **Dr. Ann O'Connell**, University of Connecticut; **Dr. Lou Fabrizio**, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; **Dianne Piché**, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights; **Dr. Tom Fisher**, Independent Consultant; **Dr. Sandy Sanford**, Riverside County Office of Education; **Dr. Pete Goldschmidt**, California State University, Northridge; **Dr. Chris Schatschneider**, Florida State University; **Sharon Lewis**, Council of Great City Schools (retired); **William Taylor**, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights; **Dr. Margaret McLaughlin**, University of Maryland; and **Dr. Martha Thurlow**, University of Minnesota.

**The Department has conducted the review and approval process in a thorough and timely way:**

- **June/July 2005** — The Department held working group meetings on the potential use of growth models to meet the goals of NCLB.
- **November 21, 2005** — The Department announced the eligibility criteria for States to apply for the growth model pilot program.
- **February 17, 2006** — Deadline for states to apply to be considered for the growth model pilot for the 2005-06 school year.
- **March 2006** — Proposals from eight states (Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, North Carolina, Oregon, and Tennessee) were forwarded to the peer reviewers for consideration.
- **April 2006** — The peer reviewers met to consider states' proposals.
- **May 17, 2006** — The Department announced Tennessee for approval and North Carolina for conditional approval in the growth model pilot program for 2005-06.
- **September 15, 2006** — Deadline for five states that were previously peer-reviewed to submit revised proposals to the Department for consideration for the 2006-07 school year.
- **October 2006** — Second peer review for the states that submitted revised proposals.

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- **November 1, 2006** — Deadline for states to submit new growth model proposals to the Department for the 2006-07 school year. The overall limit of approved plans remained at ten. Nine states (Alaska, Arizona, Iowa, Hawaii, Ohio, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Utah) have applied for the remaining five slots.
- **November 9, 2006** — The Department announces Delaware for approval and Arkansas and Florida for conditional approval in the growth model pilot program for 2006-07.
- **March 15-16, 2007** — First peer review for the eight states that met the Secretary's core principles.
- **May 1, 2007** — Deadline for the five States for which the peers requested additional information to submit revised proposals. The five states were: Alaska, Arizona, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Ohio.
- **May 14, 2007** — Second peer review of the five states that submitted revised proposals.
- **May 24, 2007** — The Department announces Iowa for approval and Ohio for conditional approval in the growth model pilot program for 2006-07.
- **June 26, 2007** — The Department announces Florida for full approval in the growth model pilot program for 2006-07.
- **July 3, 2007** — The Department announces Alaska and Arizona for full approval in the growth model pilot program for 2006-07.

A detailed description of the peer review guidance for the NCLB growth model pilot applications can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.pdf>