

**2011-12 AYP Status Webinar**  
**Maine Department of Education**  
**September 27, 2011**

Presented by Education Commissioner Stephen Bowen, with  
Rachelle Tome and David Connerty-Marin

**David Connerty-Marin:** Good morning, everyone. Thanks very much for joining us.

Today's webinar is a little bit different than usual in that we have no phone line, as you noticed, and luckily we do have audio. So thanks for helping us with that. And so what that means is that you can ask questions using the chat and then - and we'll answer here, but we don't have to worry about noise from the phone and so on. And we're just trying this out as an experiment. If you don't like it please let us know. There's actually a quick survey at the end of the webinar, it has only three questions. I hope that some of you will answer, and one of the questions is what do you think of this new format? So that will be helpful to us and to you in the future.

So if you have a question just answer it - just ask it in the chat box. You can ask it to everyone or chat privately with us, as the host, either way. And this session is going to be recorded and put on the NCLB accountability page in the next day or two, and so if you know of people who have missed, were not able to attend, or if somebody has - if you want to go back to it for any reason it will be there.

Our agenda today is threefold. First, Rachelle is going to share some information about next week's release of the AYP status at Maine schools. She'll be talking to some of the general numbers. We still don't have the full list to share with you today, but we'll be talking a little bit about some of the things that you'll see.

The second piece is that I will talk a little bit about the language and the context of next week's press release. We did this with the SIG webinar, actually with the SIG schools, back in April. It was very successful. We were able to talk to the schools who were on the list ahead of time and really share with them exactly what we were going to say. And people seemed to find that very useful, so that they knew when the release came out, there were no surprises, they knew exactly what language we were going to use. It doesn't mean they had to, it doesn't mean that you have to in this case, but you'll know exactly what we're saying and you can plan accordingly.

And the last piece, and Rachelle and I have no illusions that you've been on this webinar for either of us, is that the Commissioner will speak about the NCLB waiver flexibility that was announced last week, and, of course, some of my language you'll see will flow into his. I'll try to keep mine fairly short because a lot of what we'll talking about is not as busy as AYP results, but actually why AYP doesn't really work in the format that it's in right now, or I should say NCLB doesn't work in the format it's in right now. So we're going to start with Rachelle.

**Rachelle Tome:** All right. Good morning, everyone. And, yes, it is that time of year, time for our AYP letters to go out and for the list to go up on the web.

As we'll talk about in a bit, many of you have had the data and results that you needed at your schools and districts to have a preview of what's to come. But for those that may not have taken a look at the reports yet the targets have gone up. And as you can see

from the chart that's up on the screen in every case they did rise, and they are rising at an increasingly alarming rate. We are at a fairly straight up incline right now, from now until 2014. As you'll recall, NCLB asks for us to reach the academic targets in both math and reading at 100 percent proficiency in both reading and math by 2014, and we're well on our way to get there. Which sort of informs the rest of the information that we're going to share with you this morning.

What you've seen in your reports is that we're seeing an impact on AYP status this year from a couple of arenas. First of all, as you just noticed, the targets all went up over the last year. We also see an increase in the target for average daily attendance and for the graduation rate. And so this has had an impact on some of the schools that may have made AYP through Safe Harbor. Just as a quick review, remember, for Safe Harbor you not only have to show the improvement or the increase in students meeting proficiency, but you also have to meet the target for the additional indicators. So your Special Ed group or your economically disadvantaged group may have seen an improvement, but if they're not getting 93 percent attendance in the school or a grad rate that's meeting the target the school does not get to meet AYP. So we did see some increases as a result of that.

We also wanted to just remind you that when you're looking at your AYP reports that you're seeing the combination of a couple of pieces of data. First of all, the reports that you get online on the Measured Progress site give you an outline of the current year progress. And so we take that progress, and then we combine it with what your status was last year, and that helps us determine what the status will be for the '11-12 school year. On the NCLB site - under accountability - there's actually a little tool that helps you predict your AYP status, and runs you through a couple of different scenarios. And I know that some folks have already taken advantage of that to get a preview of what's to come.

What we did is break-out some of our preliminary data. And, as I said initially, you can see that there were definitely some changes. This represents those schools that have a status determined, but you can see for the schools making AYP, we decreased from last year, a pretty significant decrease, almost 100 schools. The monitor group went down a little bit, but it's still within the range. Those are schools that didn't meet the target for the first time. But, more significantly, if you look at the schools that went into improvement status, that was quite a jump. We went up by 70 schools, and we were projecting that that was what was going to happen. And that's because many of our schools that were on monitor last year, working hard, didn't meet the new targets. So they may have seen progress but they did not meet the new targets, they increased. And so that second year of not meeting AYP and, thus, went into continuous improvement priority status.

We did have about 21 schools that met targets for this year that were on CIPS, and that means that they have another year where they need to meet targets again in order to come off priority status but, so that's good news. Those are another group of schools that also met AYP. But you can see that there was a struggle for many schools this year, and that's why we're looking forward to some of the information the Commissioner will share with you in a little bit.

At this point I think if you have any questions regarding AYP we'll try to address those.

**DC-M:** Any questions before we move on? Use the chat box. All right, great.

Well, we'll move ahead with my piece. I'll talk a little bit about what we're going to say on what we're planning to do, put the release out on Monday, next Monday, October 3rd, probably mid-morning. And so here's a few of the things we'll be saying and a few things we won't be saying.

The first thing that we'll be saying is that this year's report illustrates why AYP doesn't work in the format that it's in. And we welcome the opportunity to go for a waiver, and the Commissioner will be speaking about that in a few minutes. We will also share a summary of the statewide numbers and a link to the spreadsheet which, of course, has the status of all schools.

Our press release on AYP has gotten smaller each year, or at least we've narrowed the information that we put in it each year. We've found that, as you know, it's very complex, reporters and the public has a difficult time understanding it. So ultimately we tried to break it down to a summary, similar to the one that we showed you a couple of minutes ago that Rachele spoke about, the status, the number of schools in each status, and whether or not we link them to the report with the spreadsheet that shows the status for all the schools. We don't try to get too much into the explanation of all of the details. And especially this year we won't do that because mainly our focus this year is going to be how this really is not indicative of - it's not *useful* in the way it's set-up, and we're really looking to the next step.

So we do like to point out - and we believe, I think many of you, most of you hopefully believe it, too - that NCLB has at least been positive in the sense that it has put a strong focus on the achievement gap and on the need to work out that gap. So certainly in that sense the concept was right, but as we all know the practice has not been very - has not been useful in some ways. And so we'll be talking about that again, just briefly, because the Commissioner will speak about it. We know that the targets are unrealistic and unfair, too much focus on negative and unhelpful labels, not enough focus on student growth and school growth, and too much focus on one piece of data about a school. An important piece of data, no doubt, but certainly not the only measure of how a school is doing. And we will also be clear, and the Feds have been clear with us, as well, that we're not looking for a free pass. And this is not a free pass. We have to come-up with an accountability system to bring the place that we will pass their review. And that's really going to work for Maine, and will work for Maine schools.

We will not use the term 'failing schools'. I believe in the past few years we have done a good job - we have done a good job, the press has done a better job. You don't see that as often. It's certainly still out there. We do everything we can to avoid the term. It's inaccurate, it's unhelpful. And just sort of a communications tip, even in the context of trying to explain what's wrong with NCLB, I would not use the term because when you say that, it unfairly portrays schools as *failing schools*, people hear *failing schools*? And so just talk about NCLB's *unfair labels*, that's what we'll be doing. Again, I mean use whatever terminology you like, but my recommendation is that you just simply don't use the term at all.

And we don't talk about how a school ended up on the list. That's - I mean we indicate where they are on the list, what the status is. We certainly talk about the process to the extent that we're asked about it, but we don't talk about individual schools or why they're, you know, why they ended up on the list or are getting up on the list.

All right, just a couple of brief slides. We use - these are from the webinar I had mentioned earlier, that we did with the SIG schools, back in April, that were helpful. They're not 100 percent applicable in this case but I think they give you a general idea,

and just from some of our experiences over the years working on this, we say, *don't get into the weeds about the list and what's right about the list and what's wrong about the list*. Nothing highlights sort of your placement on the list, arguing that you shouldn't be on the list or where you are on the list. And so we say move past that, just state is as a given. And it's especially easy now given recent events. You know, there are flaws with the list, but here's what we're going to do, here's how we are moving forward.

Acknowledge the need for work. People are eager to hear about - to hear from you when you acknowledge - and I say it all the time, and you too, in the stories every year: We're not where we want to be. We may not be where the list says we are, but we're certainly not happy with the achievement that we may have at this time. And so here's what we're doing to move forward and to improve.

This one, not a lot of time now but certainly always a good reminder, you know, to talk as early as possible to as many people as possible. When you're delivering the news you're in a better spot than when somebody else delivers the news, and then you have to respond to it. You get to frame the story and frame the information when you tell it first. So talk early and often to whoever you can.

I guess this is kind of a repeat of what I said earlier, you know; just talk about what your school has been doing. We've done a lot of work on this, and we're moving forward, and we're going to work on these other things, as well, and work on more of the same and just be as positive as you can. Again, talking - always talking about moving forward and what you're going to do moving forward. And that's it for my section. If anybody has any questions please use the chat box, and then we'll move on to the Commissioner.

All right, well, proving my initial statement that you'll hear from the Commissioner, not from me and Rachelle, and we want to turn it over to the Commissioner.

**Commissioner Bowen:** Good afternoon, everybody. It's good to talk to you. This is really - this is not really talking, but anyway.

I appreciate your - the 91 of you getting on in the middle of a school day to sort of get updated on this stuff. As most of you know, we got the information we've been waiting for from the Feds on Friday. We will be getting out some stuff in this week's Commissioner's Update, weekly update, building on basically some of the materials that we had, looking at what the waiver is going to look like. I was out of the office most of the day yesterday, and this morning, and Wanda is out of town. We haven't managed to get the whole NCLB Team around a table yet to really dig into these materials and get a sense of what we've got in front of us.

I would highly recommend to you, though, that you take a look at this ESEA flexibility document that the Feds released on Friday, and we're going to - we've got a link to that, right? That's going to be on our - it's going to be somewhere?

**DC-M:** Yes.

**Commissioner Bowen:** Okay, so we'll get this document out. It's not long, it's about 20 pages or so, but it gives a good overview of sort of what they are looking for in Washington, and what they're prepared to give us in response, which is some flexibility, and they're going to give us some time to get a new system put into place. This

document includes timelines for the implementation of a replacement, essentially for the AYP model, but they do have some sort of core principles. So you look on the slide there you'll see that they have identified four core principles around which they're going to build this waiver.

The first is to college and career ready expectations for all students. That essentially means that they're going to want us to adopt college and career ready standards. They're defining that as either standards that are developed in concert with the other states, as the Common core was, or standards that we develop in consultation with the higher eds in our state. So that will be - I mean I think we're in pretty good - we're in a pretty good position with regards to the standards, but then we need to move on from there to developing the assessment systems and all the rest of that, looking at - and assessment systems that, again, they're going to look for achievement and growth in grades three to eight and ones in high school. So sort of annual testing piece is going to - it looks to me like it's going to remain in place, but they're going to let us obviously move to the common core near the commonly developed standards as a part of that.

The bigger chunk, that second chunk is the state developed differentiated recognition accountability and support. That's going to take the place of AYP, and they are going to give us some flexibility around how we identify schools. And they've created essentially three different categories here, one of which, and this is new that they intend to create these - identify - allow us to identify *reward schools*. So we are going to, for once, be able to say, acknowledge schools that have seen high achievement or high growth over the last year with this reward school designation. They also identify - are going to have us identify *priority schools*, which are those schools that are the low-performing schools, and then *focus schools*, which are schools that have shown significant achievement gaps. So they're going to have us sort break that out a little bit more than I think we have to this point.

But the main piece, and, I think, the *biggest* piece of work that we have in front of us, is sort of designing this new system. What is the accountability system going to look like? What are the assessments? How are we going to use that assessment data to identify schools and then put into place all the support mechanisms that we need to put into place?

You can see, if you look through these documents they are still looking for us to focus on all of the students, and all subgroups of students, so we're going to continue to break-down the information into the subgroup populations and be tracking those, both in absolute terms and then over time, variance in student in this growth model. I think we're ahead of a number of states in terms of having this longitudinal data system and the capacity to measure growth over time. They are - they do in here allow states to begin to work that. And once states do have a growth model in place, they are going to be wanting states to have that growth *information*, that growth *data* as part of this system. So for my money I think the big piece of work we've got is that number two piece, that differentiated recognition, accountability, and support piece. How are we going to redesign that entire structure so that it continues to fit within these expectations of the Feds, but gives us the flexibility that we need to develop a system that's going to work for us? And the good news is that they are going to give us some relief from the AMOs and so forth moving forward so we can implement this new system.

The third one, and this is I think new, in that we're not as much - while we're replacing - I guess we're replacing a little bit - the highly qualified teacher piece. And this is to receive flexibility; we've got to move in a direction of effective instruction and leadership. And I'll

read right out of the document here - *receive the flexibility in SEA and each LEA... each district must commit to develop, adopt, pilot, and implement with the involvement of teachers and principals, teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. The SEA must develop and adopt guidelines for these systems.* That will be our responsibility at the State, working with you to develop those sort of guidelines for these evaluation- and support systems. The LEAs must, it does say 'must', develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that are consistent with the guidelines that we'll develop at the State level. So we're going to have a chunk of work to do together to figure out what kind of standards we want to set statewide for teacher evaluation and administrator evaluation systems. These districts will be obligated to develop those evaluation and support systems consistent with those guidelines. The guidelines do include, if you again look back at this larger document, it's - they lay-out, well, six different pieces that these new models need to have. They need to be used for continual improvement. These are the new evaluation systems; they must meaningfully differentiate performance at three different performance levels; they have to use valid measures in determining performance, including the significant facts and data on student growth. So that will have to be a component of these evaluation systems. They have to be done regularly, clear, timely feedback, and it has to be used to inform personnel decisions.

So the Feds have created some broad outlines. We, at the state level, working with you, will have to develop the sort of narrower guidelines around what we want those models to look like across the state and then the districts will be developing them there. And we'll have to have a talk later on about, do you want the State to go ahead and develop some models or put some models out there for the districts to adopt? We've got that work underway with the stakeholder group already. The stakeholder group is going to be meeting in a couple of weeks. So we're going to sort of get caught-up over the summer. As all of you know, we have the TIF schools that are already piloting some of these pieces. We've got half a dozen of those. So we'll be looking at those as part of the stakeholder meeting and then we'll build that out. So we've - I think we're down the road a little ways on this, but that's something new that is something else we're going to have pick-up.

The last piece, reducing duplication, unnecessary burden - this piece intrigues me. It says *SEA should remove duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements that have little or no impact on student outcomes.* The same could be said of the Feds, I would argue. And I would hope that there's going to be some type of quid pro quo here, where the states and certainly those of you that I've talked to, and that have talked with me, know that I have a great deal of interest in getting out of your way and removing duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements. We had been working with a team this summer looking at that, and we'll have some news for you very shortly on the school approval forum and sort of looking at some pieces surrounding that, working with the Data Team to streamline some of the data. So we're taking some steps in that direction, but we're going to have to give some assurance to the Feds as a part of this waiver package that we're going to revise administrative requirements and reduce duplication. So we really are going to have to ramp-up that effort to make sure that we're doing everything we can to get out of your way and allow you to focus on teaching and learning inside your buildings.

So those are the four broad parameters that the rest of this document is constructed under. And if you look through it you'll see it does dig into some details about what are the specific pieces of the law that they're going to allow flexibility around. There is a

timeline component that's later on in the document, that lays out by year when they want pieces up and running, how much time they're prepared to give us to do this. So it's pretty well thought out in terms of those pieces.

I would add one other thing that's just to - that needs to be added in here, which is part of this document talks about consultation with all of you. And it says *...each SEA..., meaning us, the State...must engage diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its requests. The SEA should solicit input from stakeholders representing diverse respective experience and interests, including those impacted by the implementation of the policies.* So they are requiring and, of course, we would do this anyway but they certainly are requiring and expecting the State departments to engage all of you, all of our stakeholders as we move forward. We've got to do some thinking. We'll talk to the association leaderships about what's the best structure for doing that. Do we develop a working group to sort of work through this? Like I said, this just landed in our e-mail boxes here on Friday. We haven't even had the team together yet. We've got a leadership team meeting tomorrow. So we, here, have been looking through the documents but haven't even had a chance to sort of talk about how we would do this. And, again, we'll sit with the association leadership and sort of talk about what's the best strategy for moving this forward - do we build a design team and the department starts to move forward, and we have a working group or a stakeholder group that sort of bounces - that those ideas get bounced off. We'll have to figure out what's a way that we can structure this where we're getting a good chunk of feedback and we can move this thing forward.

In terms of timelines, this is the last thing I'll mention, and I didn't see it in this document - maybe it is in the second document, which they also released on Friday, which is more of the application. Which, of course, being a Federal program it's exhaustive and goes on page after page after page. They have essentially put out three submission deadlines. One is they're looking for November 14th of this year as the first date by which states can submit a waiver application. It is now September - what is it? The 27th - I don't see any way that we'll be even close to having anything ready to go in six weeks. So I don't see us doing anything around that November 14th date. I mean we'll be just getting nice and started I would argue probably by that point because of the sheer enormity of what we're being asked to do here.

The second date that they have in here - well, this second - I'll ask you to interpret this for me, it says a date, the other date is a date to be announced in mid-February 2012. Now I don't know - my reading of that sentence could be that they're going to announce that date until mid-February, but I think what they intended to say was that they're going to pick a specific date by mid-February, will be the second round, if you want to put it that way, of where you can submit a waiver. That certainly seems far more doable to me. Again, this is a big piece of work, and as we dig into it and really get a sense of it that will tell us where we need to be, but mid-February certainly is a lot more doable than the middle of November is.

They've added a third date on here for sometime after the end of the 2011, '12 school year, so there's going to be some third date in June I would presume, or July. But I think given where we are, that we've adopted the Common Core standards, we're the lead on the science standards. We do have some of the pieces around teacher and administrator effectiveness we've been sort of plugging away on. So I think we've got some work done there. We've got the longitudinal data system, and so we're going to have the growth model piece put together. So we've got quite a number of pieces I think that put us well - that make us well positioned to move on this. Again, I don't see any

way we can get this off the ground by November 14th, but certainly I would set a date, set a target for that mid-February date that we could get the waiver in. And that will give us the time to go ahead and work with all of you and make sure we have a lot of feedback as we build this new system.

So that's kind of, again, we got this on Friday, looked at it over the weekend, have not had a chance to talk either with the NCLB Team or the leadership team here at the department, or legislators or anybody else at this point. So this is my sort of first take of what we're looking at for a waiver. We are going to apply, there's no question about that, and we are committed, we're obligated under the waiver guidance but committed, certainly even if we weren't, to work with all of you to develop a system that is going to get us where we need to be, which is we're tracking how kids are doing. We're reporting that out to the public and stakeholders, being very, very transparent about how we're doing. And then we're able to deploy the resources we have to those districts that really need resources to get themselves turned around. And, of course, we've got some other pieces out there - the standards based diploma, that maybe we can start to pull into this some of the proficiency based models out there that the districts are working on. Is there a way we can pull some of those pieces into this, as well.

So I think we've got a great opportunity in front of us. It is going to be a pile of work. I don't think there's any question about that. But they have given us, you know, they're giving us a doorway here, a window to operate in, and they're going to give us some relief from AYP moving forward to give us some time so that we can get Rachelle working out with me, and Wanda and Dan and the rest of the team and the rest of the leadership group here to get this piece moved forward. So that's where I'm at right now, and happy to take questions, and the three of us still here, we can go from there.

**DC-M:** We have a few questions. We've also just posted on the webinar, links, the two primary links - U.S. Department of Ed has the ESEA flexibility document the Commissioner was speaking about initially, and primarily another document called *Supporting State and Local Progress*, and a number of other documents, including the big packets and so on. So we've had a few questions so far. A reminder: if you have questions, go ahead, and some of you already have started. And I'm going to ask the Commissioner and Rachelle - we have a couple of questions from schools and in one case a district that is already in the CIPS process, and asking, *so what do they do, do they keep going, do they stop?*

**Rachelle Tome:** They do - as with many things that come from the Federal Government, the current rules do not change until the Commissioner receives that wonderful letter that says your waiver has been approved. So for those of you that are in CIPS, I know that you have plans that are already in place, you've already started the hard work for this year. We've got contracts coming your way with additional funding for many of you. All that stays in place. It's a great opportunity to continue to explore your data, to look at those areas that may continue to need some assistance to provide professional development and training and parental conversations at your schools and districts in order to continue the great work that you're already doing.

For those of you that are in CIPD and you've already been identified, we've had those conversations in the spring. You have a set-aside in your application, and you'll continue with those district plans. Again, it's still that opportunity to look at the places across the

district that might need additional professional development and attention in specific content areas. So none of those requirements goes by the wayside. And if you do have any questions regarding that after this webinar I'll be talking with Steve Vose, who coordinates the CIPS work for the Title I schools and I'll be able to answer questions for any of the districts in CIPD.

**DC-M:** And, specifically, will the state continue to fund CIPS plans?

**Rachelle Tome:** Yes.

**DC-M:** Yes, okay.

**Rachelle Tome:** Any of the funding that we've already allocated for the FY '12 year is still yours and you're able to use it. And as we work forward with this plan, with the new accountability plan, I have no doubt we will build in some kind of a transition or a look at how it could impact CIPS schools and what that might look like going forward. Because we're going to get to rework the whole system, but we know that, again, many of you are currently in a process of improvement and we want to help you move forward in the best way possible.

**DC-M:** What advice do we have for an RSU that's just beginning to create a new professional growth evaluation system for teachers?

**Commissioner Bowen:** Well, I would say, I mean and I know there's districts already working on new evaluation systems. I mean in this document you have a little bit of guidance of what they're going to be looking for here. So I think as - what we're obligated to do in my reading of this is the State, the SEA develops sort of the guidelines for these systems, and then the LEAs are going to be obligated to actually build the evaluation systems consistent with *those* guidelines. Now the guidelines that we're going to put in place, obviously, will have to be consistent with what's in this document here. And, as I said, as you read through it they want - they have a certain structure in mind for these evaluation systems. They're going to be used for continuous improvement. They're going to have three different performance levels that are meaningfully differentiated. They want valid measures to determine performance levels, including significant factor of student growth for *all* students, including English learners, students with disability, and other measures of professional practice, okay? So that's going to be that other piece that will be brought in. You're going to have to set-up a system once the instrument is developed to evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis to provide feedback, and use that data to inform personnel decisions.

So I think the development of the assessment, the evaluation instrument is going to be guided a little bit by this. Now, I don't foresee us coming out and saying you've *got* to use this percent for student growth. I know a lot of states have said, well, you're - a lot of states have adopted statewide evaluation models. Other states have said, *You districts can develop evaluation models, but they must be 30 percent student performance or 40*

*percent student performance*. Sitting here now I don't see us going down that road. At some point we have to address that it is a significant factor related to student growth.

Now how you define *significant*, I don't know; but we'll have to develop some guidance around that. But I think if you and the folks that you're working with locally - you're working with your local association developing this - take a look at this guidance and make sure that you've got that in the back of your mind as we move forward. And, again, we want to have this waiver piece ready to go by February. So we're going to be moving forward relatively quickly I think to start thinking about how these pieces will move forward. And ideally by sometime in February we've got the guidance - at least the guidance pieces that we intend to submit as part of the waiver. And when we get the magic letter, the golden ticket back from Washington that signs off on that, then we'll know that the guidance that we put in, that we've proposed to adopt, has passed muster, and then can begin to inform the work that you do on those evaluation systems.

And, again, we've got the TIF Districts working on this. We'll be talking about that with the stakeholder group, we'll be getting those models out there. If we look at this fall as they're just getting them developed. So we'll have a good database, a handful of models to look at. All of those do make use of student performance data in some way. So we are going to have a handful of those to look at, and I think probably what we'll do is either use the existing stakeholder group or some other way to look at those models and think about what should this guidance look like and move from there, and that will be part of the waiver package. So, again, I don't want anybody to stop working on this, but take a look at these documents that we're getting from the Feds. And, of course, there'll be more guidance coming, and just keep that in the back of your mind as you move forward in the development of those pieces.

**DC-M:** Could you speak a little bit more to who will be involved in the process of developing the application?

**Commissioner Bowen:** Well, I mean it's - what they have here, what they're asking for is that we are going to have to, as part of our waiver application we're going to have to provide a description of how we meaningfully engaged and solicited input from teachers and their representatives, and then from other organizations, communities, students, parents, community based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities, English and language based business organizations, Indian tribes, so forth. And I think what we're going to have to do is talk to the associations and probably do a little, like I said, build a working group or some type of a structure around that where all the associations will be represented. Obviously, as we look at this we're going to have to - it'll be more broad-based than that - some community folks, business organizations, the tribes will have to have a seat here. So they are really looking for the folks at the table around this waiver to be much more broad than maybe here we would typically put together, which is representatives of the associations, the principal association, superintendents, school boards, and so forth. They are looking for this to be - to have a broad group at the table here.

So, like I said, we'll be getting additional guidance from the Feds. We'll be talking as a leadership team here at the Department and, obviously, consulting with the associations to try and get some sense of making sure that everybody has got a seat at the table as we design this thing. And my guess is that the ultimate waiver piece will probably end up

looking a little bit like the race to the top of the application in that we'll need some type of indicator of commitment on the part of the SAUs and the associations and so forth to move forward. So, obviously, it doesn't make any sense for us to sit in the back room here and try and piece something together and hope we can get you all to sign-off on it, and then send it to Washington on February, the middle of February. We're going to need you at the table from day one. Who that's going to be, Bill, I mean I obviously can't sit here and say that, but obviously we're going to be working through the associations and figuring out a way that we can create a panel that can move something forward, that can move relatively quickly. And, like I said, do we have a sort of small design team and then have some sort of a stakeholder group that the design team works off of and provides feedback, you know, something like that where we don't end up with a 30-member panel trying to piece this thing together, but we do have some folks who've got technical skill that can start piecing this together. And a series of meetings with a broader stakeholder group that's got representatives from all the - not just the associations but the other community groups – Coalition for Excellence, the chamber - I mean I don't know. We'll have to look through the list and sort of think about who ought to be at the table there. But, clearly, what the Feds are going to be looking for is when we put this thing in the envelope and send it to Washington in February that we've got a lot of signatures on that and we've got a lot of agreement. So that's going to be a big piece of work, obviously, because we're, you know, some of this is going to be - it's going to be hard to sort of work through, but we're going to have to get there because the alternative is to keep doing what we're doing, which as all of you know isn't working.

**DC-M:** We have a question: Does the waiver apply only to Title I schools or the whole state as far as accountability and funding risk?

**Rachelle Tome:** Well, the actual determination of any kind of supports or other mechanisms that the state decides to put into place will apply to Title I schools. The overall identification of those categories that the Commissioner outlined earlier would apply to all schools in the state. But every district gets Title I money, with the exception I think of one or two in the whole state. If you're a district that gets Title I money, then, in your assurances, you agreed to accept whatever accountability measure may be applied.

The current accountability measures the sanctions that have become very onerous in recent years, are applied to those schools that accept Title I money, with the exception of a district that's gone into improvement status. The good news is - I saw in answer to another question a little further down - part of the proposal in getting this waiver means that the set-asides that you currently have in your application will go away. There will no longer be a 20 percent set-aside for school choice or for supplemental services. There will no longer be a 10 percent set-aside for schools to have additional professional development. And no longer a 10 percent set-aside for districts that are in improvement status.

Now, the State has to create a plan for how we're going to support you and provide technical assistance in those differentiated categories that we shared earlier, but there will be much more flexibility in how we can access some of that funding and be more directed in our support, which has been one of the criticisms of the law the way it is now. We - I've talked with many of you with the things that we would like to do or would want to do to help you, and sometimes our hands have been tied in a way that we've been able to do that. And I'm very confident that, working together, we'll create something that

will help us identify the schools that need some major assistance and find the most effective ways to support them, but at the same time recognize those schools that are putting some innovative and creative practices into place that are helping all of our students achieve success and meet the college and career ready standards that we're aiming for.

**DC-M:** Hey, Rachelle, on school choice, the requirement for school choice and CIPS schools – can you speak on that?

**Rachelle Tome:** Supposed to go away.

**DC-M:** Okay.

**Rachelle Tome:** Those were seen as impediments to the improvement because they took valuable dollars that could have been directed at programming and pushed it into other areas, where schools and districts had less control. So that's one of the pieces of flexibility that will come as part of the waiver.

**DC-M:** We have a question: How will the SMARTER Balanced Assessments coordinate with the state accountability system?

**Commissioner Bowen:** Well, one of the pieces that's - actually, I was just looking at this - when you look through this document, one of the definition pieces is a high quality assessment. And they're going to be looking for high quality assessments to be part of this. They sort of have some broad language here around what a high quality assessment *is*, but certainly I think they have in mind SMARTER Balanced and the other assessment system being developed by the groups of states. So I think that's going to be a part of that.

I mean part of the discussion we're going to have to have is, *Are there other assessment instruments we want to use?* I mean it's clear that they - they're going to want - I mean here's the definition: *...a high quality assessment is an assessment or a system assessment that is valid, reliable, and fair for its intended purposes, to measure student knowledge and skills against college and career ready standards.* And it sort of goes from there. So if a valid, reliable piece, you know, that's standardized text or some variation of those. So, again, I mean the challenge for the SMARTER Balanced group is to develop sort of 21st Century test that meets these parameters that are laid-out here. So I'm sure when this came out the folks working on the SMARTER Balanced piece, including Dan Hupp and the folks here at the department, are going to be looking at this and making sure as that assessment instrument gets developed, said instruments gets developed that it's going to meet these needs, covers a wide range of standards, elicits complex student demonstration of applications of knowledge, provides accurate measure of student achievement across full performance continuum for high and low achieving students. You know, gives you data that you can track over time to make sure that students are on a track to be college- and career-ready and so forth. So that's obviously going to be a part of it. And as you look at the timeline, they understand and

have acknowledged what the timeline is for the development of those. They're designing the timeline around the development of the common assessment instruments. So I think they - obviously, that's going to be a key piece of this moving forward.

**DC-M:** So let us know if you have more questions. I think that we've covered all the ones in the chat box, so we'd like to hear more. And we'll certainly wait a few seconds here, a couple minutes, and if I missed one please chat that, too. And what we're also going to do is put up on the screen first his contact information for Rachelle, and for me, and the Commissioner. Did I get that right, is that your address?

**Commissioner Bowen:** That'll work. You guys know how to find me. I mean it's no secret.

**DC-M:** And the other thing that we're going to put up here before - and I see somebody is actually typing in a question, which is great - the last screen, when we're done I hope you'll take a second, it only has three questions. And primarily we're just trying to see about this format we used today, see if you find that better, worse, or you don't care either way.

**Commissioner Bowen:** If I can just add one thing. Building off what Rachelle just said, again, if you look through this document you'll see under the definition section it talks about the turnaround piece. And it looks to me like what they're trying to do here is sort of adopt some principles around these turnarounds to be, as Rachelle said, much less prescriptive in terms of what you need to do, you need to fire this person, you do this, this, all of these things that we're currently required to do, they're creating a set of principles to take the place of that. Now the principles are, in a lot of ways, consistent with what we have. So the first of these bullets under this is strong leadership, reviewing the performance of the current principal, replacing the principal if change is necessary, or demonstrating that the principal is moving forward, providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling staff, curriculum, budget... Ensuring teachers are effective. Talk about the quality of the staff. Redesigning the school day, week, or year to provide additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration. Strengthening the instructional program, research base, rigorous, aligned with the content standards. Using data to inform instruction, you know, sort of safe and healthy schools issues. Ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. So they're really going to be looking - they're giving us a huge opportunity here, I think, to take the four models that we have now and replace those with some sort of custom design pieces, where I think we really are going to be able to give the district some flexibility. We adopt a set of principles, where whatever the turnaround system is that we're putting in place is consistent with these principles. So I think, again, we've got a really good opportunity here I think to - if we really step up and really put our thinking caps on, and come-up with a good way to approach this. They have given us a lot of flexibility, probably more flexibility than I think Congress was hoping that they would come-up with. And, of course, we know that Congress has responded.

One other thing to know, which has come-up in a couple of the other things that I've been reading and hearing about on this. These waivers only - these take effect

assuming we get a waiver, but when Congress - this is - they were very careful to say at the U.S. Department that this is a *temporary fix*, and that any day now Congress may go ahead and reauthorize the law in some way that we would *hope* is consistent with this. Certainly, we can take this to be the Administration's position with regard to what ESEA should look like. But we do need to keep in the back of our minds that Congress, of course, reserves the right to act and reauthorize the law, and it would obviously be painful if they came in and went an entirely different direction than this. But the President has a role to play here, too. So the hope is that when and if Congress decides to act that they're going to do something that's consistent with this and it's not going to have the states lurching back in a different direction now that we've started moving in this direction. So we do need to keep that in mind that this is being built appropriately as a temporary fix until ESEA is reauthorized by Congress.

**DC-M:** Pat, I mean Marianne has asked if we're going to post the PowerPoint on the web. We will do that. We can - we will post the PowerPoint, the full webinar with the audio. The transcript, it'll take us a day or two to get the transcript up there, to be accessible. And, as well as some of the links that are here, and we may find a couple more. So we'll - if you go to the Accountability page on our website, and actually we can, come to think of it - we'll put a link from our home page in the top, in the Spotlight section. But in the meantime probably most of you have been to the NCLB page, and if you go to the home page, on the far right-hand side in the list of links there is *No Child Left Behind*. You can also find it in the index under No Child Left Behind. And then click on *Accountability*, and somewhere on that page we will put some information about how to find these materials.

And actually I want to make a - because I've had a captive audience, about 10 seconds - we've been doing a lot of promotion of our Commissioner's Update, the weekly Commissioner's Update, which has replaced the old administrative letter system. And I'm presuming and hoping that you're all receiving that, but if you're not or if you know of people who are not please do let us know because that is the official correspondence, and you need to be receiving that. So thank you for that. We have another question.

**Commissioner Bowen:** Yes, realistically, we're going to be talking about impact for Maine for FY '13.

I mean if you, again, if you go back to this document and you look at the timelines they've laid-out here, I mean they're not messing around. We're not taking a lot of time to get this going here. And as you go through I mean, as we've said, beginning with the assessment results for this school year we can begin to apply new AMOs beginning with the release of the AYP determination based on '11, '12 assessments. We're no longer going to be identifying LEAs or schools for improvement. Beginning with school year '13, which this question is in regards to, the schools no longer need to take the actions that are required for all the improvement status stuff. And they show us on this - on their timeline, by school year '13 we are implementing our system of differentiated recognition, accountability and support. And so, and LEAs are implementing interventions consistent with the turnaround principles. So the goal here is, by '13 the old - the AYP system is gone, and we will have a new system in place. So that is obviously a massive amount of work, but I think we do have some time, it's only the end of September, and we need to have the waiver up to them by mid-February. Assuming they sign-off that gives us time and, obviously, as we're doing this we'll be moving some of these pieces forward to get this thing off the ground for the '12-13 school year.

But that's what they are anticipating states to do: that we will have, by school year '13, a new system for recognizing the schools as outlined in here, the reward schools, the priority schools, and so forth; that we have new intervention and turnaround procedures in place based on these standards; that we've got the interventions for the Title I schools, as identified, the appropriate schools, and so forth. So I mean the goal is to have this thing going by school year '13, so we don't have a lot of time to - a lot of time, we don't have forever to get this thing going. But we, you know, we want this up and running by '13. It is going to be a big pile of work, and it is going to require all of us working together.

So going back to Bill's statement about who is going to be at the table - obviously, we need as many of you at the table as we can manage because implementing this is not going to be any small piece of work if we want to have this off the ground by '13... being able to identify these schools, identify and operate all the turnaround pieces, what kind of support are we going to have available, having these new teacher evaluation systems in place. I mean we've got - we have a pile of work to do here, folks. I mean a *pile* of work. So we're going to have to really - and the legislature will be back in town, well, actually they're in town today, on something else. But they'll be back in here in spring, in January. And, obviously, we'll have to have some discussions with them about how this - what this is going to look like, what it's going to need for resources and capacity, both here at the State and our capacity to come out and give you the assistance and help you need, and then what kind of capacity we can put out into the field to get you going. Because we're going to move - this has got to move quick.

**Rachelle Tome:** Just ditto.

**DC-M:** I don't see any other questions coming up. If anybody has another question start typing so that we'll know. Well, we're all reachable.

**Commissioner Bowen:** Yes.

**DC-M:** If you have follow-up questions, again if you would, take a second to do the survey. It just has three questions, and there's also room for comment if you have any comment.

**Rachelle Tome:** Could I just...?

**DC-M:** Yes.

**Rachelle Tome:** As we move along this process you'll find that U.S. ED will have a number of webinars, themselves, providing technical assistance for those of us at the State and for all of you. But that is a great resource. They try to get their webinars up just as soon as they have them. So, in addition to whatever presentations we may provide, you can get additional clarification right from the Department of Education as it happens. So that's a good way to stay on top of things.

**Commissioner Bowen:** Yes, and anything we get in here, because we get sort of a constant stream of information from CCSSO, the National Governors' Association. I mean we've got a lot of folks that we work with who are giving us information, webinars and data, interpretations, and all of that. And we'll get all that stuff to you as quickly as we can. Obviously, we're going to have - put stuff up on the website. We'll make sure to send stuff out in the weekly update. We'll probably create some sort of a box or something in that weekly update that's - it's dedicated entirely to this. So we've got a constant - every week you'll get some type of update related to this. And, again, as we start to sit down and work with the associations on - and the legislature and the State Board and everybody else on how we move this forward, we'll keep you in the loop on that. And, obviously, you guys know where to find me. Shoot me a note if you've got any thoughts about that. And, like I said, we'll get together with the associations and start talking about how we move this forward. And it's an exciting opportunity. I mean it really is, and it's a great opportunity for us to think about how we want a system to work for Maine, and what's going to work for us, what's going to be the fairest way to identify schools that really need help and get them that help. So I just think we've got a great opportunity. It's very exciting stuff. Daunting, in the mountain of work we have in front of us, but I think exciting. And we've got a tremendous amount of resource. We've got great resources here at the Department, tremendous resources out with you guys in the field as well. We'll be asking for a lot of help from you to help get this thing done - it's going to be a team effort, and I'm looking forward to it.