March 30, 2016

Dr. Eugene Casey Wardynski, Superintendent
Huntsville City Schools
Post Office Box 1256
Huntsville, AL 35807-4801

Dear Dr. Wardynski:

Upon careful review of Huntsville City Schools Innovation/Flexibility Zone application, I am happy to approve one of the option requests made in your Innovation Zone plan. This approval will provide some flexibility to Huntsville City Schools to enact a one-year pilot of an innovative academic growth accountability program for the 2015-2016 academic year. Attached are approval guidelines for implementing the requests made in Huntsville City Schools Innovation/Flexibility Zone application.

Your continued commitment to innovation in education will provide exceptional opportunities to meet the needs of each of your students and prepare each for college and/or career in the 21st century. It is evident that the Huntsville City Schools plan for innovation ensures increased learning opportunities for accelerating students on a trajectory that will lead to success.

Please remain in communication with us to share your successes, challenges, and lessons learned that will be valuable to our moving our state forward and to providing helpful guidance to other districts as they develop innovative plans.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

TRB:KWP:DK

Attachment

cc:  Mrs. Sherrill W. Parris
     Mrs. Shantia Washington
     Mrs. Angela Martin
     Mrs. Rebecca Mims
     Mrs. Karen Porter
Qualifications and Recommendations for Approval of the
Huntsville City School System 2015-2016 Innovation Plan – Academic Growth
Accountability

Regarding the Huntsville City School System’s request for flexibility related to enacting an
academic growth plan for accountability, it is decided that:

1. The Huntsville City School System is granted one year to pilot ACT Plus Writing in the 11th
grade for English, mathematics, and science for the 2015-2016 academic term to show growth
as measured against ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (Grade 10) English, mathematics, and science.
2. The Huntsville City School System is not eliminated from the state failing schools calculations
nor exempted from an A-F report card as a result of this flexibility.
3. The Huntsville City School System’s state-mandated assessment and subjects will continue to
be subject to reporting to the United States Department of Education.
To: Dr. Thomas R. Bice, State Superintendent of Education

From: E. Casey Wardynski, Superintendent

Date: September 4, 2015

Re: Flexibility Request Under the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 – Adding ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or ACT Quality Core EOC (9th -12th grade) - Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology as Accountability Measurements for Academic Growth

In accordance with the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013, Huntsville City Schools (HCS) requests a waiver to Rules of the Alabama State Board of Education, Supp. No. 10-4, 290-3-2. Under the provisions of the Alabama Accountability Act we have held a public hearing, secured Board of Education approval of appropriate resolutions, and are forwarding the waiver request to you with proper certifications.

The waiver we seek would allow Huntsville City Schools to provide the flexibility necessary to enact innovative academic growth accountability program for Plan 2020 by including the following assessments for accountability benchmarks in addition to ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (grade 10) (English, Math, and Science):

- ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or
- ACT Quality Core EOC (9th – 12th grade) – Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology

Alabama State Department of Education defines a graduate as the following:

- Possesses the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a two- or four-year college, trade school, technical school, without the need for remediation.
- Possesses the ability to apply core academic skills to real-world situations through collaboration with peers in problem solving, precision, and punctuality in delivery of a product, and has a desire to be a life-long learner.

ACT Plus Writing and ACT Quality Core End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments measure the learning outcomes all students need to attain in order to succeed in college and in their careers.
**Anticipated results/desired outcome:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English % of Student Benchmarking</th>
<th>Math % of Students Benchmarking</th>
<th>Science % of Students Benchmarking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACT Plan (ALSDE Accountability Measurement) October 2014</strong></td>
<td>66.60%</td>
<td>29.30%</td>
<td>30.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACT Plus Writing Spring 2014</strong></td>
<td>60.90%</td>
<td>36.40%</td>
<td>41.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACT Quality Core EOC Spring 2014</strong></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="English 10 % of Student Benchmarking" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Algebra II/Trig % of Students Benchmarking" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Biology % of Students Benchmarking" /></td>
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<td></td>
<td>78.00%</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>51.00%</td>
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I have attached a copy of our waiver request. I have also attached a copy of our Board Resolution and a Statement of Assurance.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

3 Attachments:

1. Flexibility Request
2. Board Resolution
3. Statement of Assurance
Huntsville City Schools

Request to Allow Huntsville City Schools to Adding ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or ACT Quality Core EOC (9th -12th grade) - Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology as Accountability Measurements for Academic Growth

Current Situation:

- ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (Grade 10) English, Math, and Science are used as accountability assessments.

Requested Changes: Huntsville City Schools (HCS) requests a waiver to allow Huntsville City Schools to provide the flexibility necessary to enact innovative academic growth accountability program for Plan 2020 by including the following assessments for accountability benchmarks in addition to ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (grade 10) (English, Math, and Science):

- ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or
- ACT Quality Core EOC (9th – 12th grade) – Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology

School year we plan to implement the plan: Immediately

Anticipated results/desired outcome:

- This proposal supports adding ACT Quality Core and ACT Plus Writing as accountability measurements.

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</tbody>
</table>

Schools included: All Huntsville City Schools with a Grade 10
**Individuals, Groups, Schools, etc. who will be affected:**

- All Huntsville City Schools with a Grade 10

**Why the innovation plan is required / how it will improve student achievement:**

Alabama State Department of Education defines a graduate as the following:
- Possesses the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a two- or four-year college, trade school, technical school, without the need for remediation.
- Possesses the ability to apply core academic skills to real-world situations through collaboration with peers in problem solving, precision, and punctuality in delivery of a product, and has a desire to be a life-long learner.

This proposal supports allowing Huntsville City Schools to enact innovative academic growth accountability program for Plan 2020 by including the following assessments for accountability benchmarks in addition to ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (grade 10) (English, Math, and Science):

- ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or
- ACT Quality Core EOC (9th – 12th grade) – Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology

**How the proposal differs from current practice or law:**

Currently only the ACT Aspire for Grade 10 (English, Math, and Science) can be used to show academic growth for Plan 2020. This proposal would allow Huntsville City Schools to enact innovative academic growth accountability program for Plan 2020 by including the following assessments for accountability benchmarks in addition to ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (grade 10) (English, Math, and Science):

- ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or
- ACT Quality Core EOC (9th – 12th grade) – Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology
Statement of Assurance
The Huntsville City Schools Board of Education (HCS) recognizes and fully embraces our responsibility to enact innovative academic growth accountability program for Plan 2020 by including the following assessments for accountability benchmarks in addition to ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (grade 10) (English, Math, and Science):

- ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or
- ACT Quality Core EOC (9th – 12th grade) – Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology

E. Casey Wardynski, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Huntsville City Schools
256-428-6810
WHEREAS, the HUNTSVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION and the SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS seeks to allow Huntsville City Schools to provide the flexibility necessary to enact innovative academic growth accountability program for Plan 2020 by including the following assessments for accountability benchmarks in addition to ACT Plan and ACT Aspire (grade 10) (English, Math, and Science):

- ACT Plus Writing (11th grade) – English, Math, and Science and/or
- ACT Quality Core EOC (9th – 12th grade) – Algebra II/Trig, English 10, and Biology

WHEREAS, the Alabama State Department of Education currently only allows the ACT Aspire for Grade 10 (English, Math, and Science) be used to show academic growth for Plan 2020.

WHEREAS, the HUNTSVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION recognizes and fully embraces our responsibility to enact innovative academic growth accountability programs for Plan 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that every person present shall know that the HUNTSVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION and the SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS will be requesting a waiver under the Alabama Accountability Act to allow HUNTSVILLE CITY SCHOOLS authority to add ACT Plus Writing and ACT QualityCore® End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments for accountability benchmarks to measure the learning outcomes all students need to attain in order to succeed in college and in their careers.

Done this third day of September Two Thousand and Fifteen.

E. Casey Wardynski, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Laurie McCaulley, President

Mike Culbreath, Vice President

Beth Wilder

Elisa Ferrell

Walker McGinnis