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Subject: District and School Planning

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Document No. 4605
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
CHAPTER 43

Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Sections 59-5-60, 59-18-1300, 59-18-1310, 59-18-1510, 59-20-60, 59-139-05 et seq., and 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.

43-261. District and School Planning.

Synopsis:

State Board of Education (SBE) Regulation 43-261 (R.43-261) governs the requirements of the districts' strategic plans and schools' renewal plans. These plans are filed every five years and may be amended at any time. The SBE has the power to waive any regulation that may impede a plan.

Notice of Drafting for the proposed amendments to the regulation was published in the *State Register* on August 28, 2015.

Instructions:

Section A(2) below replaces Section A(2) currently in law.
Section C. below replaces Section C. currently in law.

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Indicates New Matter

Text:

43-261. District and School Planning.

A. Development of District Strategic Plan and School Renewal Plans

1. Each school district must develop a five-year district strategic plan and each school must develop a five-year school renewal plan as required by the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 and the Education Accountability Act of 1998. District and school plans shall coordinate and align improvement initiatives.

2. New five-year district and school plans shall be submitted to the State Department of Education by April 30, 2005, and every five years thereafter. Plans will become effective on July 1 of the same year. The annual update of the district strategic plan must be submitted to the State Department of Education by April 30 of each year or, if applicable, on the AdvancED plan deadline, whichever is later.

3. The district strategic plan includes the accountability system that directs an annual needs assessment; prioritizes the performance goals; and reports how the district supports schools, students, and families. The district strategic plan and school renewal plans must establish priorities and prioritize efforts to focus on raising student achievement levels for all students, the prevention of academic problems, and reducing the achievement gaps identified on the annual report card. It is imperative that the planning processes demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and respond to accountability requirements in both state and federal legislation. The plans must be developed collaboratively by a broad-based group of stakeholders using a consensus process.

4. The district strategic plan, school renewal plans, and annual updates must be reviewed and approved by the local board of trustees and coordinate funding from local, state, federal, and private sources.

5. Districts and schools are urged to follow the model planning process developed by the State Department of Education, although no single planning format is required for district or school plans. Whatever process is used for developing a district strategic plan and school renewal plans must include each of the following components:

- a. comprehensive needs assessment,
- b. performance goals,
- c. interim performance goals,
- d. strategies and action plans,
- e. evaluation of the strategies,
- f. evidence of comprehensive consensus building, and
- g. assurances.

6. Schools that use the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation process may substitute the SACS plan for the school renewal plan provided that it includes the components (a) through (g) listed above and described below.

a. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The annual needs assessment will provide focus for planning teams to set priorities for the plan. The comprehensive needs assessment must identify targeted areas of discrepancy between the desired performance levels and the current status as indicated by available data. Any discrepancies in the following areas identified by the school and district report cards must be included in the plan:

- (1) achievement,
- (2) achievement by subgroups,
- (3) graduation rates,
- (4) attendance,
- (5) discipline,
- (6) teacher/administrator quality and professional growth, and
- (7) other priority areas.

b. Performance Goals

Measurable performance goals, written in five-year increments, shall be developed to address the major areas of discrepancy found in the needs assessment in key areas reported in the district and school report cards. Performance goals in the district strategic plan and school renewal plans must address:

- (1) student achievement,
 - (2) teacher/administrator quality,
 - (3) school climate (parent involvement, safe and healthy schools, and other locally identified areas),
- and
- (4) other innovation initiatives or priorities as identified by districts and schools.

c. Interim Performance Goals

Interim performance goals will establish annual measurable targets for the five-year performance goals.

d. Strategies and Action Plans

Strategies shall be derived from scientifically-based education research and best practices and shall be designed to meet the performance and interim performance goals. Action plans, which may include innovative initiatives, will provide details (action/activity, person responsible, start and end dates for major action steps, professional development, necessary resources, and progress measures) regarding the implementation of each data-driven strategy to ensure continuous improvement. Staff development shall meet national professional development standards and must provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategies. Coordination of funding from local, state, federal, and private sources is imperative. Schools visited by an external review team (ERT) must incorporate appropriate recommendations into their annual update.

e. Evaluation of the Strategies

Ongoing evaluation (formative and summative) will assess the progress toward performance goals and annual interim performance goals. Measures of effectiveness must include outcome and process indicators of improvement. The methods of assessing the efficacy of the strategies must provide data regarding the impact of the strategies and whether they should be continued, modified, or terminated. After the initial year of the plan, the evaluation results from the annual update will become a key component of the ongoing needs assessment process.

f. Evidence of Comprehensive Consensus Building

Shared decision making is central to the formulation of a functional plan. Therefore, a collaborative consensus building process shall be used in the development of the district strategic plan and school renewal plans. Stakeholders, including teachers, administrators/principals, parents/guardians, and community representatives, must be actively involved in the district strategic planning and school renewal planning processes. The School Improvement Council must actively participate in the development of the school renewal plan.

g. Assurances

Assurances, signed by the district superintendent, attest that the district and schools comply with all applicable federal and state statutory and fiscal requirements.

B. Review of District Strategic Plan and School Renewal Plans

1. The district strategic plan, school renewal plans, and annual updates shall be submitted to the local board of trustees for review and approval. Five-year plans approved by the local board of trustees must be submitted to the State Department of Education for review and approval by peer review panels convened and trained by the Department.

2. The review panel will do one of the following: (1) approve the plan, (2) provisionally approve the plan pending suggested modifications, or (3) disapprove the plan. The Department shall provide technical assistance, directly or indirectly, to districts and schools with provisionally approved or disapproved plans to ensure that all plans are approved.

3. All district strategic plan updates will be reviewed by the State Department of Education on an annual basis.

C. Waivers

Upon request of a district board of trustees or its designee, the State Board of Education may waive any regulation that would impede the implementation of an approved district strategic plan or school renewal plan. The State Board of Education may delegate to the State Superintendent the ability to waive regulatory requirements for similarly situated school districts and schools. The Superintendent will report regularly to the State Board of Education all waivers issued by the Superintendent. The State Department of Education will maintain a central electronic location of all waivers issued by the State Board of Education and the Superintendent.

Fiscal Impact Statement:

None.

Statement of Rationale:

This amendment to R.43-261 will streamline the waiver process for districts and schools. The amendment delegates SBE power to the State Superintendent on issues that the SBE has ruled on previously.