MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents  
FROM: Mick Zais, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent of Education  
DATE: October 2, 2014  
RE: One-Year Delay Using Value Add Measures for Student Growth

I am writing to inform you that I have requested a one-year delay from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) in using value add measures for calculating student growth in the improved educator evaluator system. While there are several reasons for requesting this delay, the one that was most compelling for me was the need for teachers in tested grades and subjects and those in non-tested grades and subjects to be on the same timeline in measuring student growth as a significant part of the teacher’s evaluation.

A delay means that all teachers will have student growth measures for the 2015-16 school year. South Carolina will still initiate value-added measures this year and provide them to educators for informational purposes only. These measures apply only to teachers whose students take state-administered assessments. It is critical that teachers in tested grades and subjects and all principals participate in roster verification in January for those on a block schedule and in May for all other tested courses and grades. Roster verification is the process by which teachers verify that correct student scores are attributed to them.

Attached you will find our formal letter of intent to USED. Please note that this is a request only and that the flexibility has not yet been granted. We will have to await a final decision from USED. I firmly believe that it is best for students in South Carolina that teachers be evaluated based on their ability to help students learn. I also recognize that it’s important that all teachers be on the same timeline, those in tested subjects and those with student learning objectives.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns about this decision, please contact Dr. Cindy Van Buren, Deputy Superintendent for the Division of School Effectiveness at (803) 737-3150, evanburen@ed.sc.gov.