



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

JAN 30 2014

The Honorable Stephan Pryor
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Commissioner Pryor:

I am writing in response to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) request on behalf of select local educational agencies (LEAs) to waive certain statutory and regulatory requirements of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). Specifically, CSDE has requested on behalf of the select LEAs a one-year waiver to allow all schools in those LEAs to field test assessments for all students in the tested grades in mathematics and reading/language arts aligned to college- and career-ready standards developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium in lieu of the State's assessments in grades 3 through 8 and high school. CSDE has also requested flexibility in accountability determinations for the selected LEAs and schools.

I am pleased to grant, pursuant to my authority under section 9401 of the ESEA, a one-year waiver of the following statutory and regulatory requirements under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, as amended, and their associated regulatory provisions:

- ESEA sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i), which require the State educational agency (SEA) to apply the same academic achievement standards, and to use the same academic assessments, for all public school children in the State. CSDE requested these waivers so that any individual student within Connecticut will be required to take only one assessment in each content area in 2013–2014 — either the current State assessment or the full form of the field test of the new assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards.
- ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xii), which requires the provision of individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports that include information regarding achievement on State assessments to parents, teachers, and principals as soon as is practically possible after an assessment is given. CSDE requested this waiver to permit CSDE and its LEAs to refrain from producing or providing these reports for a student's performance on a field test.
- ESEA sections 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) and 1111(h)(2)(B), which require an SEA and an LEA, respectively, to report on performance against annual measurable objectives (AMOs). CSDE requested these waivers to permit CSDE and its LEAs to refrain from reporting performance

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against AMOs for any school or LEA that participates in the field test of the new assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards.

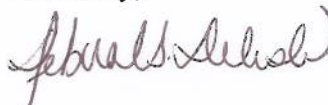
This waiver is granted to the CSDE on the condition that it will implement the following assurances:

- The CSDE and its LEAs will ensure that all students in the tested grades who do not take a field test in a particular subject will take the current State assessment in that subject, as required by the ESEA.
- The CSDE and its LEAs will report performance against AMOs for all schools and LEAs that do not participate in the field test.
- The CSDE and its LEAs will meet all reporting obligations with respect to reporting the actual achievement of students who take the current State assessments.
- The CSDE has identified the schools that will participate in the field test from each LEA that has chosen to participate in the field test.
- The CSDE will ensure that parents of students in each school participating in the field test have been notified of the school's participation, including by ensuring that the notification to parents includes a discussion of the implications of the school's participation in the field test and a notification of whether the parents' child will participate in the field test.
- In the 2014–2015 school year, the CSDE will administer the new reading/language arts and mathematics assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards, as well as its State science assessments, to all students in the grades required to be tested in accordance with the ESEA.

Please be aware that this waiver of requirements related to Connecticut's standards and assessment system under the ESEA is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and requirements under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. This waiver does not apply to statutory and regulatory requirements regarding science assessments under Title I, Part A of the ESEA.

I hope you find this flexibility helpful. I look forward to working with you and your staff as you implement this flexibility and as you continue working to improve education in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle

cc: Ajit Gopalakrishnan