



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 3 2008

Dear Chief State School Officer:

Thank you for the hard work you have done to implement a high-quality standards and assessment system in your state. A high-quality standards and assessment system is essential to producing valid and reliable measures of student achievement, a key component of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). We commend the significant effort you have put forth to prepare for a thorough and rigorous approval process, including peer review by a panel of experts.

Although many states have fully approved standards and assessment systems in reading/language arts and mathematics, some states have yet to establish systems that fully meet NCLB requirements and are continuing to provide evidence to demonstrate compliance and receive full approval. In addition, states that have approved systems continue to revise their assessments in the normal course of business. Accordingly, we are providing all states with the enclosed fact sheet, which sets forth updated information on the Department's standards and assessment system status designations and implications of those designations for state standards and assessment systems.

The 2007–08 school year is the first year that science assessments were required. As I noted in my letter of February 28, to demonstrate compliance with this new requirement in 2007–08, a state needed to demonstrate, at a minimum, that it had approved content standards, administered science assessments in each of the required grade spans (including an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards), included all students, and reported information (please refer to: <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saapr5.doc>). We are currently reviewing the information each state provided. On or around July 1, 2008 a separate letter regarding your state's progress toward meeting the four criteria noted above will be sent. By October 1, 2008, any state that has not met each of these four criteria for the 2007–08 school year will be designated *Approval Pending*.

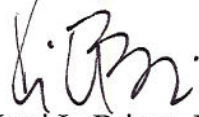
I am confident that you will continue to develop and improve your state's standards and assessment system in order to have valid and reliable information for holding schools and districts accountable for student achievement. The Department will continue to offer tailored technical assistance to any interested state. Please keep in mind that technical assistance may be particularly useful with regard to the development of alternate assessments based on alternate or modified academic achievement standards. The Department has scheduled two peer reviews for the next school year: October 27 through November 4, 2008, and March 23–27, 2009.

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202
www.ed.gov

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

I encourage you to let the Department know if you have any suggestions for how to improve this process. If you have suggestions, or if you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Rooney at Patrick.Rooney@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Briggs".

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Gene Wilhoit
Governors
Title I directors
State assessment directors