



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DEC 18 2006

The Honorable William J. Moloney
Commissioner of Education
Colorado Department of Education
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203-1704

Dear Commissioner Moloney:

I am pleased to approve Colorado's assessment system under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). I congratulate you on meeting this important NCLB requirement.

My decision is based on input from peer reviewers external to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) and Department staff who reviewed and carefully considered the evidence submitted by Colorado. I have concluded that the evidence demonstrates that Colorado's standards and assessment system satisfies the NCLB requirements. Specifically, Colorado's system includes academic content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; student achievement standards in reading/language arts and mathematics; alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in reading/language arts and mathematics; assessments in each of grades 3 through 8 and high school in reading/language arts and mathematics; and alternate assessments for those subjects.

Accordingly, Colorado's system warrants ***Full Approval with Recommendations***. This status means that Colorado's standards and assessment system meets *all* statutory and regulatory requirements, but that the assessment system could be strengthened in some ways. The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards, and the Lectura meet the essential requirements of NCLB, but we recommend Colorado continue to research the impact of accommodations on the meaningfulness of scores for limited English proficient students. I am pleased to know that Colorado participated in our recent LEP Partnership meetings and hope that your involvement with this initiative will help in this effort.

Please be aware that approval of Colorado's standards and assessment system under NCLB 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*. Finally, please remember that, if Colorado makes significant changes in its standards and assessment system, the State must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval.

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Our Mission is to Ensure Equal Access to Education and to Promote Educational Excellence throughout the Nation.

We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. Please accept my congratulations for your State's approved standards and assessment system under NCLB. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Colorado.

Sincerely,



Henry L. Johnson

cc: Governor William Owens
Beth Celva