



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

AUG 29 2008

The Honorable Michael P. Flanagan
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Michigan Department of Education
608 W. Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Superintendent Flanagan:

Thank you for submitting Michigan's new assessment materials for review under the standards and assessment requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). As you know, Michigan's assessment system, as administered in 2005–06, received *Full Approval* by meeting all statutory requirements for assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics. The letter from then-Assistant Secretary Henry Johnson, dated September 13, 2006, noted that, if Michigan made significant changes to its assessment system, the state would be required to submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval.

During July 2007 and May 2008, Michigan provided evidence regarding the State's new alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards, the MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence (MI-Access PS/I) and its new high school assessment, the Michigan Merit Examination (MME), for review and approval. I appreciate the efforts required to prepare for the peer review and hope that the process provides useful feedback that will support Michigan's efforts to continue to improve its standards and assessment system.

External peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education staff evaluated Michigan's submission and the evidence provided suggests that the assessment system implemented in 2007–08, including the MME and the MI-Access PS/I, is likely fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements. However, due to the nature of assessment development, some elements could not be completed prior to the most recent peer review. Certain evidence related to these elements is needed to demonstrate that Michigan's new assessments meet the standards and assessment requirements under ESEA. The remaining documentation that Michigan must provide is listed as an attachment to this letter. When the additional evidence has been submitted, it will be subject to peer and/or Department staff review. Approval of Michigan's revised standards and assessment system as implemented in 2007–08 is contingent on satisfactory peer review of the final materials.

The Department remains committed to working with Michigan to continue to improve its standards and assessment system and to raise the performance of all children. If you have any additional questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance,

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

please do not hesitate to call David Harmon (202-205-3554) or Abigail Potts (202-260-2465) of my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerri L. Briggs". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm
Joseph Martineau

Summary of Additional Evidence that Michigan Must Submit to Meet ESEA Requirements for Michigan's Standards and Assessment System

4.0 – TECHNICAL QUALITY

1. Final technical manual for the MI-Access PS/I.
2. Standard errors of measurement, reported on a scale score metric, for each MME cut point.

5.0 – ALIGNMENT

1. A plan and timeline for addressing alignment issues that emerged from the MI-Access PS/I alignment study.