



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

APR 10 2006

The Honorable Betty J. Sternberg
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06145

Dear Commissioner Sternberg:

Thank you for submitting Connecticut's 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). We appreciate the efforts required to prepare for the peer review and hope that the process provides useful feedback that will support your State's efforts to monitor student progress toward challenging standards.

External peer reviewers and U.S. Department of Education (ED) staff evaluated Connecticut's submission and found, based on the evidence received, that it did not meet all the statutory and regulatory requirements of Section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA. I know that my staff has discussed the results of this review with your staff. However, I want to take this opportunity to enumerate the evidence that Connecticut must provide in order to have a fully compliant standards and assessment system under NCLB. That evidence is listed on the last pages of this letter.

I urge you to submit any available evidence demonstrating how Connecticut's system meets the standards and assessment requirements as soon as possible. I also request that, as soon as possible, you provide us a plan with a detailed timeline for how Connecticut will meet any remaining requirements for which evidence is not currently available. After reviewing those materials, I will then determine the appropriate approval status for Connecticut's standards and assessment system.

Enclosed with this letter are detailed comments from the peer review team that evaluated Connecticut's assessment materials. The peer reviewers, experts in the areas of standards and assessment, review and discuss a State's submission of evidence and prepare a consensus report. I hope you will find the reviewers' comments and suggestions helpful, and remind you of our offer to provide you further technical assistance at your request.

We look forward to working with Connecticut to support a high-quality assessment system. If you would like to discuss this further or would like to request technical

assistance, please do not hesitate to call Valeria Ford (202-205-2213) or Catherine Freeman (202- 401-3058) of my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry L. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

Henry L. Johnson

Enclosure

CC: Barbara Beaudin
Marlene Padernacht

Summary of Additional Evidence that Connecticut Must Submit to Meet ESEA Requirements for the Connecticut Assessment System

1.0 – ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

1. Confirmation of rigorous content in the reading/language arts and science curriculum frameworks.

2.0 – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

1. Board adoption/approval of academic achievement standards for the CMT4, and for the alternate assessment (when complete);
2. Description of the procedures used to establish achievement standards for all grades and subjects, including the qualifications of panelists;
3. Descriptors that include well-defined, grade-specific content competencies associated with each achievement level;
4. Evidence of alignment between academic content standards and academic achievement standards; and
5. Documentation that individuals representing students with disabilities and English language learners have been included in the committees setting the achievement standards.

3.0– FULL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

1. Connecticut will need to submit its new high school assessment for review when completed in 2007.

4.0 – TECHNICAL QUALITY

1. Results of content validation studies for all current tests;
2. Reliability data for all assessments (CMT4, CAPT2 and alternate assessments) for each reported subpopulation, including conditional standard error and student classification accuracy;
3. Evidence of ongoing monitoring and improvement of the quality of the CMT4 assessments including the administration, review, and analysis of the alternate assessment;
4. Evidence that the State has evaluated the use of the accommodations permitted; and
5. The completed technical manual for the CMT4 and alternate assessment.

5.0 – ALIGNMENT

1. Results of alignment studies to include determinations of whether the assessments align with the standards in terms of comprehensiveness and range, knowledge and process, degree and pattern of emphasis. Connecticut should submit analysis of

the data, and how the State will use the results to make any revisions to any of the assessments, if needed;

2. Documentation to show assessments yield scores that reflect the full range of achievement implied by the achievement standards for all assessments; and
3. Procedures the State plans to use to maintain or improve alignment between all assessments and standards over time.

6.0 – INCLUSION

1. Information on how it will address the issues of inclusion for all groups of students; and
2. Policies or practices in place to ensure the identification and inclusion of migrant and other mobile students in the assessment system. Connecticut should also provide evidence that these students are included.

7.0 – REPORTING

1. Disaggregated assessment reports that include migrant students;
2. Documentation that schools are instructed to provide parents with results from the assessments in a timely fashion; and
3. Sample reports for the new alternate assessments.