



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUL 1 2008

The Honorable Sandy Garrett
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oklahoma State Department of Education
Hodge Education Building
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4599

Dear Superintendent Garrett:

Thank you for submitting a proposal for the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) differentiated accountability pilot. I appreciate the work you and your staff have done to try to develop a more nuanced way of distinguishing between schools and districts in need of intensive intervention and those that are closer to reaching their goals.

As you know, the Department forwarded Oklahoma's differentiated accountability proposal to a group of outside peer reviewers who evaluated each proposal to determine whether it was technically sound and consistent with the core principles of the pilot. The peers identified several strengths in Oklahoma's proposal, such as the data on the effectiveness of the district support teams. However, the peers also raised significant specific concerns regarding Oklahoma's proposal. In particular, the peers found the differentiation between "targeted" and "comprehensive" schools to be confusing. The peers also noted a lack of detail and supporting evidence regarding the effectiveness of the interventions outlined. Finally, the peers were concerned about the proposed timetable for targeted schools' entry into corrective action and restructuring. Based on the peers' concerns and the Department's own analysis of Oklahoma's proposal, the Department is not approving Oklahoma to participate in the differentiated accountability pilot at this time.

In the fall, the Department will once again invite any interested state to submit a proposal to participate in the differentiated accountability pilot for 2009-10 based on assessments administered in 2008-09. Details about the timing of this review are forthcoming. I encourage Oklahoma to submit a revised proposal so that it may be considered for participation in the pilot in 2009-10. To aid you in this effort, I am enclosing a copy of the peer report regarding Oklahoma's proposal as well as a memorandum prepared by the peer reviewers that discusses some of the overarching issues the peers identified during their review of all of the proposals that were submitted for the pilot. Additionally, the Department will be hosting a roundtable later this summer to discuss methods of differentiation and evaluation, and I encourage you to participate in that discussion. Please note that the Department intends to continue to limit participation in the pilot to ten states. Accordingly, I encourage you to review the peers' report and

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memorandum carefully, and to contact my staff so that we may discuss ways you may be able to refine Oklahoma's proposal.

Again, I appreciate your interest in the differentiated accountability pilot and your continued efforts to ensure quality education for all children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kerri Briggs".

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosures

cc: Governor Brad Henry
Jennifer Stegman
Andy Young