



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

NOV 13 2008

The Honorable Patricia Hamamoto  
Superintendent of Education  
Hawaii Department of Education  
1390 Miller Street, #307  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Superintendent Hamamoto:

I am writing regarding our review of Hawaii's general science assessments under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). I know that Hawaii submitted evidence in September of its general assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics and Hawaiian language assessment in reading/language arts. We are still reviewing that evidence and the peers' recommendations and will be in touch soon with the results of that review.

As outlined in my letter of February 28, 2008, states had to meet four basic requirements in science for the 2007–08 school year. In particular, each state was required to: (1) have approved content standards in science; (2) administer a regular and alternate science assessment in each of three grade spans; (3) include all students in those assessments; and (4) report the results of the regular and alternate science assessments on state, district, and school report cards. Based on the evidence submitted to date, Hawaii appears to have met these requirements for 2007–08; however, Hawaii has not yet submitted data to the Department demonstrating that all students were included in the science assessments for 2008. Please let us know within 10 days of receipt of this letter when Hawaii will have that data available so that we can confirm that Hawaii has, in fact, met the basic requirements for administering science assessments in 2007–08. States that do not provide evidence to verify that they have met the four criteria for the 2007–08 school year have not met the basic requirements of the statute and will be subject to consequences, such as withholding of Title I, Part A administrative funds.

In 2008–09, Hawaii must provide evidence for peer review that demonstrates full compliance of its science standards and assessments. In anticipation of that required peer review, Hawaii chose to participate in an optional technical assistance peer review in May 2008. I appreciate the efforts that were required to prepare for the technical assistance peer review and hope that the process provided useful feedback to support Hawaii's efforts to monitor student progress toward meeting challenging science standards.

Based on the evidence received from Hawaii, which was limited to evidence related to Hawaii's general assessments for science and which was reviewed by the peers and Department staff, we have concluded that Hawaii's general science assessments do not yet meet all the statutory and regulatory requirements of section 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA. Specifically, we have concerns with the technical quality of the Hawaii State Assessment (HSA) for science. The complete list of evidence needed to address these concerns is enclosed with this letter. The next scheduled peer review for states' science assessments is scheduled for the week of March 23 through 27, 2009. All materials for review must be provided to the Department three weeks before the scheduled peer review.

Please keep in mind that science assessments represent one piece of a state's complete standards and assessment system, which also includes general and alternate assessments for reading and mathematics.

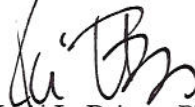
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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

As you know, on August 29, 2008, the Hawaii Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education entered into a three-year compliance agreement, which allows Hawaii to continue to receive Title I funds while it works to resolve issues related to its alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

We look forward to working with Hawaii to support a high-quality standards and assessment system, of which science standards and assessments are an integral part. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Valeria Ford ([Valeria.Ford@ed.gov](mailto:Valeria.Ford@ed.gov)) or Patrick Rooney ([Patrick.Rooney@ed.gov](mailto:Patrick.Rooney@ed.gov)) of my staff.

Sincerely,



Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Governor Linda Lingle  
Cara Tanimura  
Kent Hinton  
Sarah Gronna

## **SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT HAWAII MUST SUBMIT TO MEET ESEA REQUIREMENTS FOR ITS GENERAL SCIENCE STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS**

### **2.0 – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS**

1. Evidence that standards-setting panels have science teaching experience at the applicable grade levels.
2. Evidence of Board approval of the science achievement descriptors.

### **3.0 – FULL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM**

1. Evidence that the assessments measure higher-order thinking skills.

### **4.0 – TECHNICAL QUALITY**

1. A detailed technical manual.
2. Evidence that decisions based on science assessment results are consistent with the purposes of the assessment.
3. A plan and timeline for the science validity study.
4. Documentation of the availability of appropriate accommodations on the science assessment for limited English proficient (LEP) students, including some linguistic accommodations.
5. Evidence related to the meaningfulness of results from accommodated scores, especially those for LEP students.
6. Evidence on the coordinated approach used to monitor the availability of accommodations during science testing.
7. Test development procedures designed to maintain consistency of the science assessment over time, given the three-year test cycle, and documentation of equating once it is completed.
8. Information on how sub-scores are derived).
9. Procedures and documentation on how the Technical Issues in Large Scale Assessment (TILSA) quality checklist is applied to assessment and process details on the implementation of monitoring within each assessment cycle.

### **5.0 – ALIGNMENT**

1. Evidence of alignment of the science assessments, including:
  - Objective evidence of alignment addressing each Critical Element in this section;
  - Documentation concerning the procedures that will be used to address alignment issues/findings from external and/or internal alignment studies/reviews; and
  - Detailed procedures used during the item development process to ensure alignment.

### **6.0 – INCLUSION**

1. Non-participation rates on the public reports about schools, area complexes, and the state as a whole.
2. Disaggregated participation rates on the science assessment for each student subgroup.

### **7.0 – REPORTING**

1. Individual student score reports that provide interpretive guidance and information for parents and school staff.
2. The policy or procedural documentation ensuring the timely dissemination of science reports.