



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SEP 1 1 2008

The Honorable Susan Castillo
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Public Service Building
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Superintendent Castillo:

I am writing regarding our review of Oregon's science assessments under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

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. After reviewing the evidence submitted, I am pleased to inform you that Oregon has met these requirements for 2007–08.

In 2008–09, Oregon must provide evidence for peer review that demonstrates full compliance of its science standards and assessments. In anticipation of that required peer review, Oregon 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 provides useful feedback that will support Oregon's efforts to monitor student progress toward meeting challenging science standards.

Based on the evidence received from Oregon, which was reviewed by the peers and Department staff, we have concluded that Oregon's science standards and 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 alternate academic achievement standards for science, comparability among English and side-by-side dual-language science test items and forms (for both Spanish and Russian), and the technical quality and alignment of the high school Extended Science assessment to Oregon's grade-level science content standards and re-established academic achievement standards. The complete list of evidence needed to address these concerns is enclosed with this letter. We have scheduled peer reviews for states' science assessments for the weeks of October 25 through November 2, 2008, and March 23 through 27, 2009. All materials for review must be provided to the Department three weeks before the scheduled peer review.

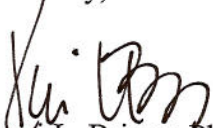
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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Please keep in mind that science assessments represent one piece of a state's complete standards and assessment system, which also includes regular and alternate assessments for reading and mathematics. As stated in my letter to you on December 3, 2007, Oregon's standards and assessment system is currently designated Approval Pending. In order to be fully approved, Oregon must demonstrate that all components of its standards and assessment system, including general and alternate assessments for reading, mathematics, and science, comply with all ESEA requirements for standards and assessment systems as administered in 2008-09.

We look forward to working with Oregon 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 David J. Harmon (David.Harmon@ed.gov) or Patrick Rooney (Patrick.Rooney@ed.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,



Keri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Governor Ted Kulongoski
Doug Kosty
Tony Alpert

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT OREGON MUST SUBMIT TO MEET ESEA REQUIREMENTS FOR SCIENCE STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

2.0 – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

1. Oregon State Board of Education (SBOE) approval of academic achievement standards for the Extended Science assessments at grades 5, 8 and 10.
2. Reported separately for 2007–08, the number and percentage of students with disabilities assessed in science against alternate academic achievement standards and those included in the science Knowledge and Skills Tests with and without accommodations.

3.0 – FULL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

1. Evidence of comparability among English and side-by-side dual-language science test items and forms (for both Spanish and Russian).

4.0 – TECHNICAL QUALITY

1. Evidence of the reliability and validity of the high school science alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards.
2. Documentation from the 2007–08 Extended Science assessments standards-setting process, including the selection of judges, methodology employed, and final results.

5.0 – ALIGNMENT

1. Evidence of alignment of the high school (grade 10) Extended Science assessment to the state's academic content standards and to the re-established student academic achievement standards.

7.0 – REPORTING

1. 2007–08 Extended Science sample individual student report or report “shell”.