



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JAN 08 2009

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

Dear Superintendent Flanagan:

As we approach our seventh year of implementing the accountability provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, I want to take a moment to thank you and your colleagues for all your hard work to help realize the goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) which has led to real and meaningful improvements in student achievement. These outcomes are due, in no small part, to the efforts of the dedicated educators in your state. We have seen an increased attention on high expectations for every child, an improvement in student performance across the board and a decrease in achievement gaps.

As Secretary Spellings is fond of saying, "what gets measured, gets done." With that in mind, I want to take this opportunity to update you on the status of some NCLB cornerstones with respect to Michigan. Detailed information on specific components of your state's assessment and accountability system is contained in an attachment to this letter.

- Assessment system: An assessment system that produces valid and reliable results is fundamental to an accountability system that holds schools and districts accountable for educating all students. Information regarding both the reading/language arts and mathematics assessment system used in determining adequate yearly progress for schools and districts in your state as well as details of the 2007–08 administration of science assessments are attached.
- Accountability components: The Department's new Title I regulations provide for greater scrutiny to states' accountability systems, including establishing a uniform and more accurate measure of calculating high school graduation rates that is comparable across states and requiring that states ensure that statistical measures maximize the inclusion of students and student subgroups in accountability determinations. Hence, the regulations also require that all states submit portions of their Accountability Workbook for peer review. In the attachment to this letter you will find information on Michigan's minimum group size, annual measurable objectives, confidence interval, full academic year definition, and graduation rate.
- Departmental flexibilities: Over the past several years, the Secretary has offered several flexibilities to states, such as growth model and differentiated accountability pilots, assessing students with disabilities and recently arrived limited English proficient students, and discretionary grant programs, such as the Teacher Incentive Fund, Enhanced Assessment Grants, and State Longitudinal Data System Grants. I am pleased to note that Michigan is participating in several of these endeavors.
 - Growth Model Pilot: The Department approved Michigan a to use its growth model in making AYP determinations beginning with the 2007–08 school year and, on December 22, 2008, granted a four year extension for use of the growth model through 2011–12.
 - General Supervision Enhancement Grant:

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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.

- Michigan received funds to work toward development of an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. (Year 1: \$399,999; Year 2: \$300,000; Year 3: \$300,000)
- Michigan, in partnership with the Regents of the University of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, received funds to work toward the development of an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards. (Year 1: \$470,000; Year 2: \$450,000; Year 3: \$450,000)
- Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant: Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System; Award Amount: \$3,000,000.
- Two percent transition flexibility: Michigan was approved in 2007-08 to include a proxy calculation for any school or district that did not make AYP due to the students with disabilities subgroup in grades 3–8. Michigan is eligible for this flexibility because the SEA is developing an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (AA-MAAS) for certain students with disabilities.

I wish you continued success in raising the achievement in Michigan. NCLB has focused our attention on closing achievement gaps and increasing the awareness of those students who have often been left behind: economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and students with disabilities. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with you and all your colleagues across the country on such important issues.

Sincerely,


Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosures

cc: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm
MaryAlice Galloway
Joseph Martineau

Assessment System

Your assessment system met the requirements to be considered *Fully Approved* on September 13, 2006. However, since that date, Michigan has made substantive revisions to its assessment system. I encourage you to consider whether there are any areas in which the Department can provide or facilitate technical assistance to Michigan in meeting the statutory or regulatory requirements or as you consider changes to your current assessment system.

- Because your state has made changes to its assessment system, Michigan must submit evidence enclosed with this letter and that was originally sent on August 29, 2008.
- Michigan's science assessments are not yet fully compliant.
 - In 2007–08, the Department required that the state meet four minimal criteria related to the content area of science: have science content standards; have a general and alternate science assessment; include all students in one of the science assessments (i.e., either the general or alternate); and report the results of the science assessments. Michigan has met these requirements.
 - In 2008–09, the Department will conduct peer reviews of science assessments and expects the assessments to be fully compliant. Beginning with the 2008–09 school year, science assessments will be included in the states' assessment status. For additional detail, please see the enclosed fact sheet. I know Michigan submitted evidence regarding its science assessments for peer review in October 2008 and will receive feedback soon.

Accountability System

- Minimum group size (the state-defined minimum number of students necessary to have valid and reliable AYP determinations): Michigan's minimum group size is the greater of 30 or 1 percent (up to 200).
- Annual measurable objectives (AMO) (the yearly target for the percentage of students required to be proficient or above for a school to make AYP):
 - 2008–09: Michigan's goal for this year is 60, 59, 57, 56, 54, 53, and 61 percent of grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and high school students, respectively, scoring proficient in reading/language arts and 67, 65, 62, 60, 57, 54, and 55 percent of grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and high school students, respectively, scoring proficient in mathematics.
 - AMO type: Michigan set its AMOs consistent with the statutory requirements, using mixed method. This means that Michigan's AMO's increased in three-year increments through 2009–10 and then annually through 2013–14.
- Michigan applies a standard error of measurement to AYP determinations.
- Full academic year definition (for purposes of determining whether a student's score must be included in AYP determinations): In Michigan, a student must be enrolled for the two most recent semi-annual student count days—the fourth Wednesday in September and the second Wednesday in February in order to be included in AYP determinations.
- Graduation rate:
 - Currently, Michigan is using a graduation rate that can be described a longitudinal cohort rate, which means that Michigan tracks the same students across time from 9th through 12th grade.
 - As required by the recently issued Title I regulations, states must report graduation rate data, in the aggregate and disaggregated by subgroup, using the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate beginning with report cards providing assessment results for the 2010-11 school year
 - The graduation rate target Michigan requires for the district or school to make AYP is 85 percent.
 - According to the National Governor's Association (NGA) 2008 report *Implementing Graduation Counts: State Progress to Date, 2008*, Michigan started reporting the NGA Compact 4-year graduation rate beginning in 2008.

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

4.0 – TECHNICAL QUALITY

1. Final technical manual for the 2007–08MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence (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.