



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUL 1 2008

The Honorable Paul G. Pastorek  
Superintendent of Education  
Louisiana Department of Education  
P.O. Box 94064  
1201 North 3rd Street, 5th Floor  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9064

Dear Superintendent Pastorek:

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 Louisiana'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 peer reviewers recommended that the Department approve Louisiana's differentiated accountability proposal with conditions. I commend you on your hard work to develop a proposal consistent with the ten core principles of this pilot. Unfortunately, however, the Department cannot approve Louisiana to implement its differentiated accountability proposal for the 2008–09 school year because the state's assessment system is not currently approved and Louisiana will be unable to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all requirements for standards and assessment systems under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), until after the start of the 2008–09 school year. As such, Louisiana cannot satisfy one of the eligibility requirements for participation in the pilot. I look forward to receiving that evidence regarding the Louisiana assessment system and continuing to work with you to ensure Louisiana has a high-quality assessment system.

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 Louisiana to act promptly to bring its standards and assessment system into compliance with ESEA requirements so that it will be eligible to submit a revised proposal and 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 Louisiana'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 memorandum carefully, and to contact my staff so that we may discuss ways you may be able to refine Louisiana's proposal so that it may be even stronger when it is resubmitted.

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

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". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kerri" and the last name "Briggs" clearly distinguishable.

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D

Enclosure

cc: Governor Bobby Jindal  
Scott Norton