



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JAN 8 2009

The Honorable Deborah S. Delisle
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Ohio Department of Education
25 South Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4163

Dear Superintendent Delisle

As we approach our seventh year of implementing the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), I want to take a moment to thank you and your colleagues for all your hard work to help realize the goals of 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 to 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 Ohio. 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 all public schools and districts accountable for educating all students. Please accept my congratulations on Ohio's standards and assessment system meeting all statutory and regulatory provisions required for reading/language arts, mathematics, and science as of 2007-08.
- Accountability components: The Department's new Title I regulations provide for greater scrutiny of states' accountability systems, including establishing a uniform and more accurate measure of calculating high school graduation rate 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 Ohio's minimum group size, annual measurable objectives, confidence interval, full academic year definition, performance index, 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 Ohio is participating in several of these endeavors.
 - Teacher Incentive Fund Grant: Implementing the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) in the Cincinnati and Columbus City Schools, expanding the Toledo Review and Alternative Compensation System (TRACS) in the Toledo City Schools, and developing and implementing the Cleveland Teacher Incentive System, a program modeled on TRACS, in the Cleveland City Schools; Year 1: \$5,510,860; Year 2: \$5,739,063; and Year 3: \$2,944,338

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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.

- Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant: The Data-Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2) project is Ohio's long-term data system initiative being designed to provide systemic access to timely, quality data and educational resources. Amount: \$5,670,100
- Growth Model Pilot: In July 2008 Ohio's growth model was approved for implementation in the 2008–09 school year using the assessment results from the 2007–08 school year and on December 22, 2008 granted a four year extension for use of the growth model through 2011–12.
- Differentiated Accountability Pilot: On August 1, 2008 Ohio was granted a waiver to include its differentiated accountability model as part of its interventions for a period of up to four years.
- General Supervision Enhancement Grant: Ohio Department of Education, along with Oregon and Minnesota is working towards the development of an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. (Year 1: \$1,075,314; Year 2: \$840,567; and Year 3: \$887,319)

In addition, for your information, I am enclosing a file that provides information across all states on the current assessment status, participation in flexibilities offered by the Department, AYP information, and discretionary grants. I wish you continued success in raising the achievement in Ohio. NCLB has focused our attention on closing achievement gaps and increasing the awareness of those students who have often been left behind: economically disadvantaged students, students from racial and ethnic minorities, limited English proficient students, 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 Ted Strickland
Paolo DeMaria
Jeanine Molock
Matt Cohen

Assessment System

Your assessment system met the requirements to be considered *Fully Approved*. This means that Ohio's assessment system includes assessments in grades 3-8 and high school in reading/language arts and mathematics and assessments in three grade spans (grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12) in science. For additional detail, please see the enclosed fact sheet.

Accountability System

- Minimum group size (the state-defined minimum number of students necessary to have valid and reliable AYP determinations): Ohio's minimum group size is 30 students. (The average across all states is approximately 30 students.)
- 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: Ohio's AMOs for students proficient in grades 3-8 and in high school in reading/language arts and mathematics are as follows:

| | | |
|---------|----|-----|
| Math | 3 | 69% |
| Math | 4 | 74% |
| Math | 5 | 60% |
| Math | 6 | 64% |
| Math | 7 | 58% |
| Math | 8 | 58% |
| Math | 10 | 68% |
| Reading | 3 | 77% |
| Reading | 4 | 75% |
| Reading | 5 | 75% |
| Reading | 6 | 81% |
| Reading | 7 | 75% |
| Reading | 8 | 79% |
| Reading | 10 | 77% |

- AMO type: Ohio set its AMOs consistent with the statutory requirements, using a mixed method. This means that Ohio's AMOs first increased after two years, then three years, then annually beginning in 2011–2012 through 2013–2014 to reach 100 percent proficient.
- Full academic year definition (for purposes of determining whether a student's score must be included in AYP determinations): In Ohio, a student must be enrolled during the October enrollment count and through the test administration in order to be included in AYP determinations for the school.
- Graduation rate:
 - Currently, Ohio is using a graduation rate that can be described as a completer rate, which means that Ohio divides the number of graduates by the number of graduates plus dropouts from the previous four years.
 - 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 Ohio requires for a district or school to make AYP is 73.6 percent or improvement from the previous year.
 - According to the National Governor's Association 2008 report *Implementing Graduation Counts: State Progress to Date, 2008*, "Ohio is taking steps to report the NGA Compact 4-year graduation rate by 2011."