



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Michael Johnson
Commissioner
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500

July 28, 2020

Dear Commissioner Johnson:

I am writing in response to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development's (DEED) request on June 11, 2020, for a waiver to permit DEED to field test a new science assessment in grades 5, 8 and 10 in school year (SY) 2020-21.

DEED requested a one-year waiver of certain Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requirements to support its development of a new science assessment aligned with the new Alaska science content standards. Alaska proposed to administer a census field test of the new science assessment in spring 2021 for all eligible students enrolled in grades 5, 8 and 10. DEED requested to not administer the current general science assessments and not report individual assessment field test results to parents, educators or the public. DEED will hold districts and schools accountable for participation in the field test and report that data to the Department.

After reviewing DEED's request, I find that the waiver will benefit school children in Alaska, so I am approving DEED's request for the 2020-21 school year and waiving the following statutory requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act:

- Sections 1111(b)(1)(A) and (C) and 1111(b)(2)(B)(ii) and (v)(II), which require the State to establish student academic achievement standards in science and implement high-quality, yearly student academic assessments in science that are aligned with those standards to measure student achievement and to inform instruction.
- Sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(x) and (xii) and 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) and (2)(C), which require the State and local educational agencies to provide individual student reports to parents, teachers and principals and to include the results of science assessments on State and local report cards.

Please note that this waiver is only applicable for the 2020-21 school year during the administration of the statewide field test of the new science assessment. Failure to administer general science assessments in the 2021-2022 school year that meet all requirements would result in DEED being out of compliance with Title I of the ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which could result in a number of enforcement actions, including withholding of funds.

We appreciate our continued relationship with DEED and remain committed to working with you. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at: ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

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

Page 2 – The Honorable Michael Johnson

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education.

Sincerely,

/s/

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary
for Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Isaac Paulson, Administrator of Assessments