



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Kathy Hoffman
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

July 28, 2020

Dear Superintendent Hoffman:

I am writing in response to the Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) request on June 23, 2020, for a waiver to permit ADE to field test a new science assessment in grades 5, 8 and 11 in school year (SY) 2020-21.

ADE requested a one-year waiver of certain Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requirements to support its development of new general and alternate science assessments aligned with the new Arizona science content standards. Arizona 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 11. ADE will not administer the current general science assessments and will not report individual assessment field test results to parents, educators or the public. However, ADE will hold districts and schools accountable for participation in the field test and will report participation data to the Department.

After reviewing ADE's request, I find that the waiver will benefit school children in Arizona, so I am approving ADE'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 2021-22 school year that meet all requirements would result in ADE 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 ADE and remain committed to working with you. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at: ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

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<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.

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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: Audra Ahumada, Deputy Associate Superintendent
Kelly Koenig, Associate Superintendent