



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

April 6, 2021

The Honorable Chris Reykdal
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
47200 Old Capitol Building
PO Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Superintendent Reykdal:

I am writing in response to the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI's) request on March 25, 2021, for a waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) that the State administer the same academic assessments to all public elementary and secondary school students in the State. OSPI requested this waiver so that it would administer its statewide reading/language arts assessments in grades 3 and 7, mathematics assessments in grades 5 and 10, and science assessments in grade 8. The State proposes sampling schools so that only 10,000 students are assessed in each grade. The State indicates that this sampling plan would provide the ability to report disaggregated State-level data but would not provide data at the school or local educational agency (LEA) levels. OSPI indicated that it also plans to administer a COVID-19 survey to students in grades 6-12 that focuses on remote learning experiences, mental and physical health, COVID-19 precautions, and social supports during the pandemic. I appreciate the information that OSPI submitted in its request and shared in conversation between our staff.

The Department appreciates OSPI's consideration of its plan, including the COVID-19 survey and proposal to sample students across grades to provide State-level analysis on how the educational system in Washington performed this year. However, in accordance with the ESEA, this information should complement and not replace the data from statewide summative assessments that provide information on student learning at the individual student and school, district, and State levels. Accordingly, as we continue to review OSPI's request, we are offering this initial feedback for your consideration.

We remain committed to supporting Washington and all States in assessing the learning of all students, while we recognize that we are in the midst of a pandemic that requires real flexibility and creativity. We are eager to continue to work with OSPI on a plan that addresses your State's specific circumstances and maximizes the amount of comparable, reliable, and valid student learning data.

As always, you can contact me or my staff at ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ian Rosenblum
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
Delegated the Authority to Perform the Functions and Duties of
the Assistant Secretary Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education

cc: Michaela Miller, Deputy Superintendent, OSPI

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