



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

January 28, 2022

The Honorable Kurt Steinhaus  
Secretary of Education  
New Mexico Public Education Department  
300 Don Gaspar Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501-2786

Dear Secretary Steinhaus:

I am writing regarding the reporting of statewide science assessment results in New Mexico for the 2020-2021 school year. As you know, sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(x) and (xii) and 1111(h) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) require that results of statewide science assessments be made available to parents, educators and the general public. This requires a State educational agency to include these results on State and local report cards and to report the data to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) via the *EDFacts* data reporting system. I know that we agree that it is critical that the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) report results for statewide science assessments so that educators, students, parents, and the public have clear, consistent feedback about how students are achieving the State's rigorous science standards.

In 2019-2020, NMPED requested and received a waiver to field test new statewide science assessments in lieu of the previous State science assessment. As is common after the first operational administration of a new assessment, which would have occurred in 2020-2021, NMPED planned to set achievement standards. In this case, the impact of COVID-19, including widespread school disruptions resulted in the waiver that the U.S. Department of Education (Department) granted NMPED, and all States, from administering statewide assessments in 2019-2020. As a result, NMPED did not conduct its science field test but indicated that it still planned to set achievement standards in 2020-2021. However, due to the impact of COVID-19, in which many schools remained virtual for the 2020-2021 school year, the Department understands that NMPED determined it did not have sufficient data to establish science achievement standards and report those results, both on State and local report cards and to the Department's *EDFacts* data system. Because NMPED has not met an integral component of the ESEA for its new science assessments, I am placing a condition on NMPED's Title I, Part A grant award.

In order to remove this condition, NMPED must provide:

- Within 30 days of receiving this letter: A plan and timeline for setting science achievement standards following the 2021-2022 administration of the State science assessments.
- By December 16, 2022: Samples of local report cards for the 2021-2022 that include results from the State's science assessments for grades 5, 8, and high school or a link to the location on the State's web site where such report cards are located.

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.*

- By December 16, 2022: Sample copies of reports provided to parents, teachers and principals for 2021-2022 that include results from the State’s science assessments for grades 5, 8 and high school.

If NMPED does not provide this information as requested, the Department may take additional action. We appreciate our continued relationship with NMPED and remain committed to working with you. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at: [ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov](mailto:ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov).

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

Sincerely,



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

cc: Lynn Vasquez, Director of Assessment