



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

AUG 6 2008

The Honorable Terry Bergeson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Washington Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, Washington 98504-7200

Dear Superintendent Bergeson:

I am pleased to approve Washington's standards and assessment system under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). I congratulate you on meeting this important NCLB requirement; an assessment system that produces valid and reliable results is fundamental to a state's accountability system.

My decision is based on input from peer reviewers external to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) and Department staff who reviewed and carefully considered the evidence submitted by Washington. I have concluded that the evidence demonstrates that Washington's standards and assessment system satisfies the ESEA requirements. Specifically, Washington's system includes academic content and student academic achievement standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in those subjects; assessments in each of grades 3 through 8 and grade 10 in reading/language arts and mathematics; and alternate assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Accordingly, Washington's system warrants *Full Approval with Recommendations*. This status means that Washington's standards and assessment system meets all statutory and regulatory requirements for reading/language arts and mathematics. There is, however, one component of the Washington assessment system that we believe could be strengthened. We recommend that Washington develop and implement a plan to continue the progress made and further improve the alignment of the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards, the WAAS-Portfolio, with Washington's content standards, the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), and Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) through continued training of participating teachers and periodic reviews of alignment evidence.

Please be aware that approval of Washington's standards and assessment system under the ESEA is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and requirements under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Please remember that, if Washington makes significant changes to its assessment system, the state must submit

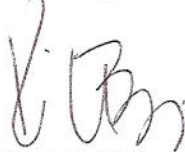
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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

information about those changes to the Department for review and approval. Finally, I know that Washington recently submitted evidence of its science assessments. The Department recently conducted a technical assistance peer review of that evidence and we will be in touch shortly with the results from that review.

We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. Please accept my congratulations on your state's approved standards and assessment system under the ESEA. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Briggs', written in a cursive style.

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

cc: Governor Christine Gregoire
Bob Harmon
Joe Willhoft