



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MAY 20 2015

The Honorable Randall I. Dorn
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Washington Department of Public Instruction
PO Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Superintendent Dorn:

I am writing in response to the Washington Department of Public Instruction's request on March 31, 2015, to waive certain statutory and regulatory requirements of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). Specifically, Washington requested to waive accountability determinations based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year, because this is the first year that the State is administering new, more challenging State assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics aligned to the State's college- and career-ready content standards.

After reviewing Washington's request, I am pleased to grant, pursuant to my authority under ESEA section 9401, the following waiver for school year (SY) 2014–2015:

- A one-year waiver of ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A) and 1116(c)(1)(A) and the corresponding regulatory provisions to the extent they require a local educational agency (LEA) and a State educational agency (SEA), respectively, to use the results from the State's academic assessments to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations for schools and LEAs.

Under this waiver, Washington and its LEAs are not required to include results on State assessments administered in the 2014–2015 school year in making AYP determinations for LEAs and schools, respectively. I am granting this waiver because it is likely to increase the quality of instruction and improve the academic achievement of students by enabling Washington and its LEAs to focus on administering the new State assessments and setting high achievement standards for the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate they are ready for college and the workforce.

This waiver is granted to Washington on the condition that it will do the following:

- Washington will ensure that all students are included in the statewide assessment system in SY 2014–2015.

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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.

- Washington and its LEAs will meet all reporting obligations with respect to reporting the achievement and participation rate of students who take the State assessments in SY 2014–2015.
- Washington and its LEAs will report performance against the State’s annual measurable objectives (AMOs) using results from the State assessments administered in SY 2014–2015.
- Washington and its LEAs will calculate and report AYP for SY 2014–2015 with respect to participation rate and the other academic indicator, including graduation rate for high schools; LEAs and schools that do not make AYP in SY 2014–2015 based on participation rate, graduation rate for high schools, or the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools would advance to offer the next level of interventions.
- All other schools and LEAs in Washington that have been identified as in need of improvement will carry forward the accountability determinations in SY 2015–2016 that they have in SY 2014–2015; Washington and its LEAs will provide the necessary notice to parents as required in ESEA section 1116(c)(6) and (b)(6), respectively, prior to the start of SY 2015–2016.
- Washington will continue to administer its State assessments in SY 2015–2016 and will include those results in determining AYP. Washington and its LEAs will assign a new rating for 2016–2017 based on whether an LEA or school makes AYP that includes results from the SY 2015–2016 State assessments.

I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Bragdon at (202) 453-6817 or Ashlee Schmidt at (202) 401-9501 or OSS.Washington@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

cc: Gayle Pauley