



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Randy I. Dorn Old Capitol Building · PO BOX 47200 · Olympia, WA 98504-7200 · <http://www.k12.wa.us>

April 11, 2016

Ann Whalen
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Delegated the Duties of Assistant
Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Ms. Whalen:

I am writing to request a waiver, pursuant to section 8401(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), of section 1111(b)(3)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), that Washington's assessment system measure the full range of the state's academic content standards. As part of its *Washington State K-12 ELA Learning Standards*, Washington measures the assessable elements of its listening standards. Washington, however, is not yet ready to measure some elements of the standards included in the speaking and listening strand. Washington, therefore requests this waiver only with respect to measuring the content in the state's speaking and listening strand that is not otherwise currently assessed by the state. Washington requests this waiver because it is not practicable at this time for Washington to administer a large-scale summative assessment that includes measures of the full range of the standards included in the speaking and listening strand. This waiver will advance student achievement by permitting Washington to have a valid and reliable assessment system that measures the full range of the rest of the state's academic content standards while providing time to complete the work necessary to have a valid and reliable measure of the full range of the standards included in the speaking and listening strand.

Washington requests this waiver to allow for continued state and local receipt of Title I, Part A funding in good standing while Washington completes additional work to develop accurate, valid, reliable, and instructionally useful assessments related to additional content within the speaking and listening strand. This waiver is requested for the 2015–16 through the 2016–17 school years. Washington assures that, if it is granted the requested waiver:

- It will continue to meet all other requirements of section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, and implementing regulations with respect to all state-determined academic content standards and assessments, including reporting student achievement and school performance, disaggregated by subgroups, to parents and the public.
- It will continue to work toward assessing additional content within the speaking and listening strand consistent with the state's academic content standards.

Ann Whalen, Senior Advisor to the Secretary

Page 2

April 11, 2016

Prior to submitting this waiver request, Washington provided all LEAs in the state with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this request. Washington provided such notice by sending an email to each LEA in the state on March 28 (*see* copy of notice attached). Copies of all comments that Washington received from LEAs in response to this notice are attached hereto. Washington also provided notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment regarding this waiver request to the public in the manner in which Washington customarily provides such notice and opportunity to comment to the public by posting information regarding the waiver request on the OSPI website. (See attached copy of public notice).

Please feel free to contact me by phone or email at 360-725-6334 if you have any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin G. Munson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Robin G. Munson, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Assessment and Student Information

Copy of School District Notice

From: Karen Conway
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 12:04 PM
To: OSPI School District Superintendents (OSPI_SD_SUPERINTENDENTS@listserv.wa.gov); OSPI All Principals (OSPI_ALL_PRINCIPALS@LISTSERV.WA.GOV)
Cc: Judy Decker
Subject: Notice to Public Schools Districts of OSPI Intent to Apply to USDE for Speaking and Listening Assessment Waiver for 2015-16 and 2016-17

Sent on behalf of Dr. Robin G. Munson, Assistant Superintendent of Assessment and Student Information.

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
Educational Service District Assistant Superintendents
School District Superintendents
High School Building Principals
School District Curriculum Directors
School District Assessment Coordinators

On behalf of the State of Washington, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will submit the waiver application request, specified below, to the U.S. Department of Education regarding section 1111(b)(3)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

- Request to waive for the 2015–16 and 2016–17 school years measuring the content included in Washington’s speaking and listening strand that is not otherwise currently assessed by the state and is part of the state’s English language arts academic content standards.

The U.S. Department of Education requires states to provide all districts and interested parties in the state with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this waiver request. We are providing this notice by sending an email over OSPI’s distribution lists and posting the waiver application on the OSPI’s public website. Any public comments must be submitted prior to 5:00 p.m. on April 6, 2016.

To review an electronic copy of this waiver request, refer to <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/PublicNoticesWaivers.aspx>.

Please submit any written comments regarding this waiver application on the survey provided at <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2663264/Speaking-Waiver-Request-Comment-Survey>. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Robin G. Munson, Ph.D.

Assistant Superintendent of Assessment and Student Information
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
600 Washington St. SE | Olympia, WA 98504-7200
P.O. Box 47200 | Olympia, WA 98504-7200
office: 360-725-6336 | tty: 360-664-3631
robin.munson@k12.wa.us
www.k12.wa.us

For immediate assistance:
Judy Decker, 360-725-6334
Judy.Decker@k12.wa.us

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT COMMENTS

I support the waiver for two reasons: 1) I have personally funded earbuds for students so that they have access to sound on the SBA. Without state financial support for this initiative, it is reasonable to allow districts time to fund the necessary equipment for the test. 2) Teachers need additional training for teaching to the Listening Strand in order to prepare students sufficiently for success.

Sharon Connally, Principal
Tenino School District

I support waiving the speaking and listening assessments. We provide students ample opportunity to develop these skills in the classroom.

Whitney Meissner, Principal & Assessment Director
Chimacum School District

Thank you so much for going for this waiver. Speaking and Listening are the foundation skills for all academics and there is little validity in the assessments used for this. Do we need to teach it Yes - Are we teaching many items that are not assessed – yes

Linda Sullivan-Dudzic, Director of Elementary and Special Programs
Bremerton School District

I support the limited waiver request through SY1617 not to assess the full breadth of the speaking and listening strand within the adopted ELA standards. As a member state of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, Washington has demonstrated progress towards assessing speaking and listening standards in sophisticated and innovative ways far exceeding prior state assessments (where listening wasn't ever assessed at all). An opportunity to extend the waiver beyond the SY1617 would also be appreciated to ensure appropriate and comprehensive assessments and the infrastructure to operationalize the assessments at the school and classroom level.

Kimberly Sullivan, Director of Assessment, Grants, and Student Data Management
Yelm Community Schools

I recommend the state requests a waiver due to the potential costs involving technology and the newest of our state assessment.

Joanne Mabbott, Executive Director of Student Support
Tenino School District

Here's a thought--My district has 3 MAP assessments, 3 major Writing Performance Tasks, as well as the SBA. Perhaps a Listening-Speaking Assessment is just too much. The reality--leave this as a classroom assessment, for our students are expected to listen and to sometimes speak everyday.

Tony Minaker, Teacher
Riverview School District

We support the request to waive both listening and speaking. The language above does not include the listening strand?

Joshua Garcia, Deputy Superintendent
Tacoma School District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice of OSPI Speaking and Listening Waiver Request to the U.S. Department of Education for the 2015–16 and 2016–17 School Years.

On behalf of the State of Washington, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will submit the waiver application request, specified below, to the U.S. Department of Education regarding section 1111(b)(3)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.