

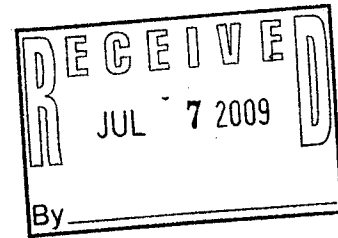
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 24 2009



Honorable Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education
Rhode Island Department of Education
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Commissioner McWalters:

I am pleased to approve Rhode Island's standards and assessments, including its science assessments, under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended. I congratulate you on meeting this important requirement.

My decision is based on input from peer reviewers external to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and Department staff who reviewed and carefully considered the evidence submitted by Rhode Island in March 2009. I have concluded that the evidence provided demonstrates that Rhode Island's standards and assessment system satisfies the ESEA standards and assessment requirements. Accordingly, Rhode Island's standards and assessment system warrants *Full Approval*. This status means that Rhode Island meets all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for standards and assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. Specifically, Rhode Island's system includes academic content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; student academic achievement standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; alternate academic achievement for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; general assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and one grade in high school and general science assessments for each of three grade spans (grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12); and alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards in the corresponding grades in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. I have enclosed detailed comments from the peer team that evaluated Rhode Island's submission for your information.

Please be aware that approval of Rhode Island'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*. Finally, please remember that if Rhode Island makes significant changes to its standards and assessment system, the state must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval.

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202
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.

We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. Please accept my congratulations for Rhode Island's approved standards and assessment system in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Rhode Island. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sue Rigney (sue.rigney@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Conaty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" being the most prominent.

Joseph C. Conaty
Delegated Authority to Perform the Functions and
Duties of the Assistant Secretary for Elementary
and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Mary Ann Snider



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

JUL 27 2008

The Honorable Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education
Rhode Island Department of Education
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER

Dear Commissioner McWalters:

Thank you for submitting evidence on Rhode Island's science assessment by April 21, 2008. We appreciate the work you did to prepare the required evidence.

As I noted in my letter on February 28, for the 2007-08 school year, each state was required to demonstrate that it satisfied the following basic requirements: (1) it has approved content standards in science; (2) it administered a general and alternate science assessment in each grade span (3-5, 6-9, and 10-12); (3) it included all students in one of the science assessments (*i.e.*, either the general or the alternate); and (4) it reported the results of the general and alternate science assessments on state, district, and school report cards.

My staff has reviewed the evidence you submitted and determined that, based on the evidence submitted to date, it appears that Rhode Island has met the basic requirements for administering science assessments in 2007-08. However, Rhode Island has not yet submitted data to the Department demonstrating that all students were included in the science assessments for 2008. Please let us know within 10 days of receipt of this letter when Rhode Island will have those data available so that we can confirm that Rhode Island has, in fact, met the basic requirements for administering science assessments in 2007-08. States that do not provide the outstanding evidence to verify that they have met the four criteria for the 2007-08 school year have not met the basic requirements of the statute and will be subject to consequences, such as withholding of Title I, Part A administrative funds.

In 2008-09, Rhode Island must submit complete evidence of its science standards and assessments for peer review. We have scheduled peer reviews for science standards and assessments for the weeks of October 25 through November 2, 2008, and March 23 through 27, 2009. Please plan accordingly. All materials for review must be provided to the Department three weeks before peer review is scheduled.

The Department remains committed to working with Rhode Island to help it meet the full requirements of NCLB. If you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or would like to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Sue Rigney (Sue.Rigney@ed.gov) or Abigail Potts (Abigail.Potts@ed.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

cc: Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Mary Ann Snider

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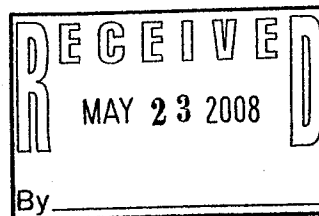


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MAY 20 2008

The Honorable Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education
Rhode Island Department of Education
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903



Dear Commissioner McWalters:

I am pleased to approve Rhode Island's 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.

My decision is based on input from peer reviewers external to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and Department staff who reviewed and carefully considered the evidence submitted by Rhode Island. I have concluded that the evidence demonstrates that Rhode Island's standards and assessment system satisfies the NCLB requirements. Specifically, Rhode Island's system includes academic content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; student achievement standards in reading/language arts and mathematics; alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in reading/language arts and mathematics; and assessments and alternate assessments in each of grades 3 through 8 and one grade in high school in reading/language arts and mathematics. Accordingly, Rhode Island's system warrants **Full Approval**. This status means that Rhode Island's standards and assessment system meets *all* statutory and regulatory requirements for reading/language arts and mathematics.

Please be aware that approval of Rhode Island's assessment system under NCLB 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*. Finally, please remember that, if Rhode Island makes significant changes in its assessment system, the State must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval.

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 NCLB. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

cc: Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Mary Ann Snider

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