

January 23, 2014

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Secretary Duncan:

As chief state school officers in states participating in the two common assessment consortia, we appreciate your continued leadership and collaboration with states as we work to raise our standards, improve our assessments, and strengthen our accountability systems.

Our states have been collaborating for the last three years to design and develop next generation, computer-based assessment systems that will give students, parents and educators better information about children's progress toward preparation for college and careers. This work is critically important, and we are committed to the success of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

Over the last several months, some concerns have been raised about whether states' transition to the consortia assessments will create new requirements for states to provide student information to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) or any agency of the federal government.

We are writing today to confirm that the consortia will not share any personally identifiable information about K-12 students with USED or any federal agency. Our states have not submitted student-level assessment data in the past; the transition to the new assessments should not cause anyone to worry that federal reporting requirements will change when, in fact, the federal government is prohibited from establishing a student-level database that would contain assessment data for every student. As we have historically done, our states will continue to provide USED with school-level data from our state assessments as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended in 2002. Our states and local education agencies will continue to retain control over student assessment data and will continue to comply with all state and federal laws and regulations with regard to the protection of student privacy.

We understand that it has long been USED's practice not to require states to provide information from assessments about individual K-12 students. We are confirming that our states will not provide such information to USED and that everything we have said here is consistent with our understanding of the cooperative agreement between the consortia and USED.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to our states' success.

Sincerely,



June St. Clair Atkinson
State Superintendent
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction



Richard Crandall
Director
Wyoming Department of Education



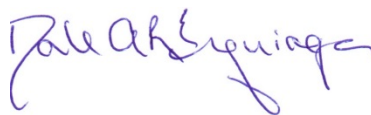
Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction



Randy I. Dorn
Washington State Superintendent
of Public Instruction



Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education
New Hampshire Department of Education



Dale Erquiaga
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Nevada Department of Education



Brad A. Buck
Director
Iowa Department of Education



Tony Evers
State Superintendent
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Chris Cerf
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education



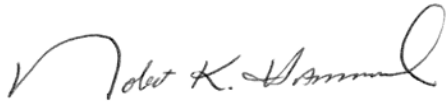
Michael P. Flanagan
State Superintendent
Michigan Department of Education



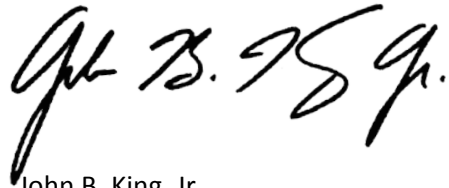
Mitchell Chester
Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education



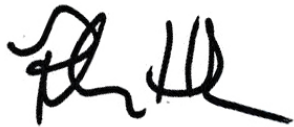
Deborah Gist
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education



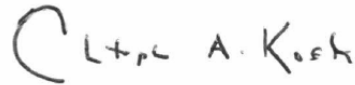
Robert K. Hammond
Commissioner
Colorado Department of Education



John B. King, Jr.
Commissioner
New York State Education Department



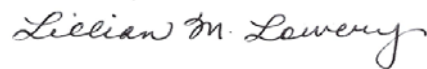
Rebecca Holcombe
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Vermont Agency of Education



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Kevin Huffman
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Tennessee Department of Education



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Superintendent of Schools
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