

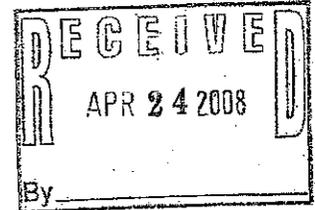


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

APR 24 2008

The Honorable Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner
State of Maine Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0023



Dear Commissioner Gendron:

I am pleased to approve Maine'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 Maine. I have concluded that the evidence demonstrates that Maine's standards and assessment system satisfies the ESEA requirements. Specifically, Maine's system includes academic content and student achievement standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science; alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in those subjects; assessments in each of grades 3 through 10 in reading/language arts and mathematics; and alternate assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Accordingly, Maine's system warrants *Full Approval with Recommendations*. This status means that Maine's standards and assessment system meets all statutory and regulatory requirements for reading/language arts and mathematics. There is, however, one component of the Maine assessment system that we believe could be strengthened. We recommend that Maine continue to examine and strengthen the alignment of its high school assessments (the SAT assessment augmented with additional items) with the Maine academic content standards.

Please be aware that approval of Maine's standards and assessment system under 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 Maine

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makes significant changes to 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 ESEA. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Maine.

Sincerely,



Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

cc: Governor John Baldacci
Valerie Seaberg