



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

JAN 02 2020

The Honorable Kevin Brown
Interim Commissioner of Education
Kentucky Department of Education
300 Sower Boulevard
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Interim Commissioner Brown:

I am writing in response to the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE) request on August 6, 2019, for an extension of the State's waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), of the requirement that a State may not assess using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State. KDE requested this waiver because, based on State data for the 2018-2019 school year, KDE has concluded that it will need to assess more than 1.0 percent of students using an AA-AAAS in the 2019-2020 school year.

After reviewing KDE's request, I am granting, pursuant to my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA, for school year 2019-2020, a one-year extension of the State's waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the ESEA so that the State may assess with an AA-AAAS more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. KDE has demonstrated substantial progress in carrying out the plan that was submitted when the State initially requested this waiver two years ago and has made progress in reducing the rates of AA-AAAS participation in reading/language arts and mathematics.

As part of this waiver, KDE assured that it:

- Will continue to meet all other requirements of section 1111 of the ESEA and implementing regulations with respect to all State-determined academic standards and assessments, including reporting student achievement and school performance, disaggregated by subgroups, to parents and the public.
- Assessed in the prior school year (2018-2019) at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of students with disabilities who are enrolled in grades for which an assessment is required.
- Will require that a local educational agency (LEA) submit information justifying the need of the LEA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any such subject with an AA-AAAS.
- Will provide appropriate oversight of an LEA that is required to submit such information to the State, and it will make such information publicly available.
- Will verify that each LEA that is required to submit such information to the State is following all State guidelines in 34 CFR § 200.6(d) (with the exception of incorporating principles of

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universal design) and will address any subgroup disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS.

- Will implement, consistent with the plan submitted in KDE's waiver request, system improvements and will monitor future administrations of the AA-AAAS to avoid exceeding the 1.0 percent cap.

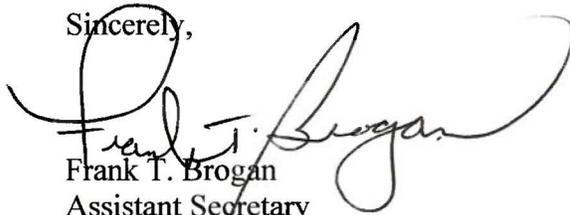
I note that Kentucky made progress in reducing the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS in reading/language arts and mathematics but not science. I am granting this extension despite the fact that Kentucky has yet to demonstrate progress in reducing the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS in science. Given the significant work underway, I expect to see the results of these efforts in the 2019-2020 school year and beyond. Any future requests for an extension of this waiver will be contingent on both continued progress implementing your plan and progress in reducing the percentage of students taking the AA-AAAS in all tested subjects.

In addition, I want to remind you of the requirement in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(3)(iv) that the State must make publicly available the information submitted by an LEA justifying the need of the LEA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students on the AA-AAAS, provided that such information does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. I also encourage you to make available your State's plan and timeline and your progress to date in reducing the percentage of students taking the AA-AAAS.

Finally, in order to help all States support implementation of the 1.0 percent participation threshold for AA-AAAS participation, the Department is supporting work by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). I note that Kentucky has participated in some of these efforts and encourage your State's continued involvement. In 2019, NCEO has published several resources that may be helpful to stakeholders in your State. They may be found online at https://nceo.info/Assessments/alternate_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 my staff at ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary
for Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Gretta Hylton, Director, Division of Learning Services, Office of Teaching and Learning