



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

NOV 25 2008

The Honorable Deborah Gist
State Superintendent for Education
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Government of the District of Columbia, One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 350 North
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Superintendent Gist:

Thank you for submitting a growth-based accountability proposal to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). Growth models show promise as fair, reliable, and innovative methods to measure student improvement and to hold schools accountable for academic achievement, and the Department welcomes thoughtful proposals from all states.

The Department has reviewed the District of Columbia's growth model proposal and has decided to forward it for peer review. However, as indicated in the Secretary's letter of August 2008, one of the core principles is that the state's assessment system must be *Fully Approved* or *Fully Approved with Recommendations* before it can incorporate a growth model. As stated in my letter from April 25, 2008, the District of Columbia's assessment system is currently *Approval Pending* and is currently in a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the steps to have a fully compliant assessment system (<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/dc4.html>).

In addition, I want to provide you with information about how we will handle the next steps in the review and approval process. The peers will independently review each state's proposal. Simultaneously, we will post the submissions on our website at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/index.html>. This step will help ensure the process is open and transparent to all those concerned. As the peers review each proposal, they may seek clarifications. Consequently, to the extent necessary, we may facilitate a conference call between your staff and the peer review team prior to the peer review.

The peer reviewers will meet in Washington, DC on December 2-3 to discuss each proposal. Following their review, the peers will make recommendations to the Secretary. The Department expects to make final decisions by the end of the year.

Again, I appreciate your work on the proposal and your continued efforts to ensure quality education for all children.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

cc: Mayor Adrian Fenty
Bill Caritj

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