



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

NOV 10 2009

The Honorable Kathy Cox
State Superintendent of Schools
Georgia Department of Education
2062 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Superintendent Cox:

Thank you for submitting additional assessment materials for peer review under the standards and assessment requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended. We appreciate the efforts that were required to prepare for the latest peer review that occurred in October 2008.

In an October 5, 2007 letter to you, then-Assistant Secretary Kerri L. Briggs approved your standards and assessment system. However, since that time, you implemented science standards and assessments, a new assessment in mathematics in grades 3-5 and 8, and new high school English/language arts assessments, evidence of which you were obligated to submit for peer review. In May 2008, you submitted evidence of Georgia's science standards and assessments for peer review, and in a September 18, 2008 letter to you, then-Assistant Secretary Briggs enumerated the evidence required for Georgia's science standards and assessments to be fully approved. Subsequently, in October 2008, you submitted additional evidence of Georgia's science standards and assessments, as well as evidence of the new mathematics and English/language arts assessments, for peer review. Outside peer reviewers and Department staff have evaluated Georgia's additional submissions.

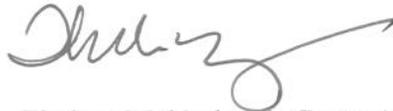
I have concluded that the evidence provided demonstrates that Georgia's science standards and assessments, mathematics assessments in grades 3-5 and 8, and high school English/language arts assessments satisfy the statutory and regulatory requirements under section 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA. As a result, Georgia's standards and assessment system now 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 standards 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 3-8 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. Accordingly, Georgia's standards and assessment system warrants *Full Approval with Recommendations*. This status means that, although Georgia's standards and assessment system meets all statutory and regulatory

requirements, it could be strengthened in certain respects. In particular, we recommend that Georgia improve the academic achievement descriptors for the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) in English/language arts. I have enclosed detailed comments from the peer review team that evaluated Georgia's submission for your information.

Please be aware that approval of Georgia'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, as Georgia continues to make significant changes to its standards and assessment system, Georgia 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 for Georgia's approved standards and assessment system in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Grace A. Ross at grace.ross@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Governor Sonny Perdue
Dr. Melissa Fincher