



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 24 2009

Honorable Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education
Rhode Island Department of Education
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Commissioner McWalters:

I am pleased to approve Rhode Island's standards and assessments, including its science assessments, under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended. I congratulate you on meeting this important requirement.

My decision is based on input from peer reviewers external to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and Department staff who reviewed and carefully considered the evidence submitted by Rhode Island in March 2009. I have concluded that the evidence provided demonstrates that Rhode Island's standards and assessment system satisfies the ESEA standards and assessment requirements. Accordingly, Rhode Island's standards and assessment system warrants *Full Approval*. This status means that Rhode Island meets all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for standards and assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. Specifically, Rhode Island's system 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 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 through 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. I have enclosed detailed comments from the peer team that evaluated Rhode Island's submission for your information.

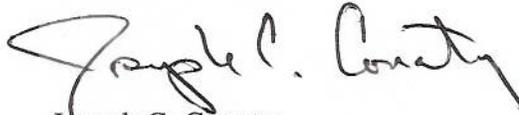
Please be aware that approval of Rhode Island's standards and assessment system under the ESEA is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, Section 504 of the *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 if Rhode Island makes significant changes to its standards and assessment system, the state must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval.

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202
www.ed.gov

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. Please accept my congratulations for Rhode Island's approved standards and assessment system in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in Rhode Island. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sue Rigney (sue.rigney@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph C. Conaty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" being the most prominent.

Joseph C. Conaty
Delegated Authority to Perform the Functions and
Duties of the Assistant Secretary for Elementary
and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Mary Ann Snider