



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Dianna R. Wentzell  
Commissioner of Education  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
PO Box 2219  
Hartford, CT 06145

October 13, 2017

Dear Commissioner Wentzell:

I am writing in response to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) request on August 10, 2017, for a waiver under section 8401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) related to CSDE's implementation of new general and alternate science assessments.

CSDE requested a one-year waiver of certain ESEA requirements to support its transition to new general and alternate science assessments aligned with the State's new academic content standards, the Next Generation Science Standards. During the 2017-2018 school year, CSDE will administer a statewide field test of its new general and alternate assessments to all students in the grades in which science tests are administered. CSDE will not administer its current science assessments (either the general or alternate assessments) and will not report assessment results to parents, educators, or the public. However, CSDE will hold districts and schools accountable for participation in the field test.

After reviewing CSDE's request, I find that the waiver will benefit school children in Connecticut, so I am approving CSDE's request for the 2017-2018 school year and waiving the following statutory requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act:

- Sections 1111(b)(1)(A) and (C) and 1111(b)(2)(B)(ii) and (v)(II), which require the State to establish student academic achievement standards in science and implement high-quality, yearly student academic assessments in science that are aligned with those standards to measure student achievement and to inform instruction.
- Sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(x) and (xii) and 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) and (2)(C), which require the State and local educational agencies to provide individual student reports to parents, teachers and principals and to include the results of science assessments on State and local report cards.

Please note that this waiver is only applicable for the 2017-2018 school year during the administration of the statewide field test of Connecticut's new general and alternate science assessments.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202  
<http://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.*

Please note that a failure to administer general and alternate science assessments in the 2018-2019 school year that meet all requirements would result in CSDE being out of compliance with Title I of the ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which could result in of a number of enforcement actions, including withholding of funds.

We appreciate our continued relationship with CSDE and remain committed to working with you. If you have any questions, please contact Tanesha Hembrey of my staff at: [OSS.Connecticut@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.Connecticut@ed.gov).

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education.

Sincerely,

/s/  
Jason Botel  
Acting Assistant Secretary

cc: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education