



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Matthew Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

May 15, 2019

Dear Commissioner Blomstedt:

I am writing in response to the Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE) request on March 1, 2019, for a waiver of certain requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), related to Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for Science (NCCRS-S) aligned assessment for School Year 2019-2020.

NDE is requesting to administer the full-census field test of NCCRS-S aligned assessment for all students in grades 5 and 8 in the 2019-2020 school year to prepare for an operational assessment in 2020-2021 instead of its previous science assessment, the Nebraska summative assessments (NeSA).

After reviewing NDE's request, I find that the waiver will benefit school children in Nebraska, and so I am approving NDE's request for the 2019-2020 school year and waiving the following statutory requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA:

- 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 2019-2020 school year during the administration of the statewide field test of the NCCRS-S aligned assessment. Please also note that a failure to administer general science assessments in the 2020-2021 school year that meet all requirements would result in NDE being out of compliance with Title I of the ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which could result in a number of enforcement actions, including withholding of funds.

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<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.

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We appreciate our continued relationship with NDE and remain committed to working with you. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at: Nebraska.OESE@ed.gov.

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

Sincerely,

/s/

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary
for Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Jeremy Heneger, Director of Statewide Assessment