



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Ken Wagner, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of Education  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Dear Commissioner Wagner:

I am writing in response to the Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE) request on December 22, 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 RIDE's implementation of new general science assessments.

RIDE requested a one-year waiver of certain ESEA requirements to support its transition to new general science assessments aligned with the State's new academic content standards, the Next Generation Science Standards. During the 2017-2018 school year, RIDE will administer a statewide field test of its new general assessments to all students in the grades in which science tests are administered. RIDE will not administer its current general science assessment and will not report assessment results to parents, educators or the public. However, RIDE will hold districts and schools accountable for participation in the field test. Students eligible for the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards will be assessed using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) science assessment and, as this assessment is not part of RIDE's waiver request, RIDE will continue to report progress and participation data to schools and parents on the DLM.

After reviewing RIDE's request, I find that the waiver will benefit school children in Rhode Island, so I am approving RIDE's request for the 2017-2018 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.

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*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 this waiver is only applicable for the 2017-2018 school year during the administration of the statewide field test of Rhode Island's new general science assessments. Please note that a failure to administer general science assessments in the 2018-2019 school year that meet all requirements would result in RIDE 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.

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

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

Sincerely,

/s/

Jason Botel  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,  
Delegated the Authority to Perform the  
Functions and Duties of the Position of  
Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

cc: Phyllis Lynch, Director, Office of Instruction, Assessment & Curriculum