



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

**APR 12 2018**

The Honorable Steven Paine  
State Superintendent of Schools  
West Virginia State Department of Education  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Charleston, WV 21201

Dear Superintendent Paine:

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department) assessment peer review process under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which governed State assessments through the 2016-2017 school year. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which governs State assessments beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, maintains the essential requirements from NCLB that each State annually administer high-quality assessments in at least reading/language arts, mathematics and science that meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards with a few additional requirements. I appreciate the efforts of the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) to prepare for the review, which occurred in February 2018 and which was a follow up to a review that occurred in 2016.

State assessment systems provide essential information that States, districts, principals and teachers can use to identify the academic needs of students, target resources and supports toward students who need them most, evaluate school and program effectiveness and close achievement gaps among students. A high-quality assessment system also provides useful information to parents about their children's advancement against and achievement of grade-level standards. The Department's peer review of State assessment systems is designed to provide feedback to States to support the development and administration of high-quality assessments.

External peer reviewers and Department staff carefully evaluated WVDE's submission and the Department found, based on the evidence received, that the components of your assessment system for reading/language arts and mathematics alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) in grades 3-8 and high school (Dynamic Learning Maps-Year-End Model (DLM-YE)) meet all of the statutory and regulatory requirements of section 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA, as amended by NCLB. Congratulations on meeting these important ESEA requirements; an assessment system that produces valid and reliable results is fundamental to a State's accountability system.

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.*

Based on the recommendations from this peer review and the Department’s analysis of the State’s submission, I have determined the following:

- Reading/language arts and mathematics AA-AAAS in grades 3-8 and high school (DLM-YE):  
**Meets requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB.**

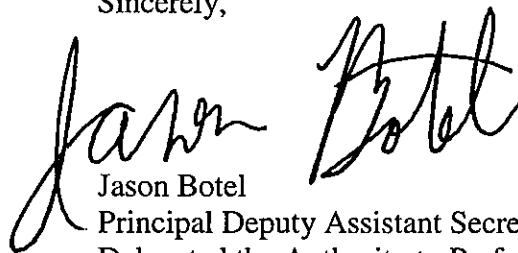
Please note that the assessment requirements for ESEA, as amended by the NCLB, were in effect through the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The WVDE peer review was conducted under the requirements of this statute. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the assessment requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will apply to State assessments. Department staff carefully reviewed the WVDE evidence and peer review recommendations in light of the updated requirements for State assessments under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. As a result of this additional review, I have determined that the WVDE administration of the DLM-YE assessments needs to meet one additional requirement related to alternate academic achievement standards. This requirement is listed under critical element 6.3. Under the orderly transition authority in section 4(b) of the ESSA, I am granting WVDE until December 15, 2020, to submit evidence of an AA-AAAS that meets this ESSA requirement.

Please be aware that approval of WVDE’s DLM-YE assessments 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 WVDE makes other significant changes in its DLM assessments, the State must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students. I look forward to our continued partnership as we move ahead with this critical work. I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in West Virginia.

If you have any questions, please contact Denise M. Joseph of my staff at: [OSS.WestVirginia@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.WestVirginia@ed.gov).

Sincerely,



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

cc: Vaughn Rhudy, Executive Director, Office of Assessment

Enclosures

**Critical Elements Where Additional Evidence is Needed to Meet the Requirements for West Virginia’s Assessment System**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Additional Evidence Requested</b>
<b>Challenging and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards (additional requirement under section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA)</b>	For the Dynamic Learning Maps-Year-End Model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="472 388 1308 493">• Evidence that the alternate academic achievement standards ensure that a student who meets these standards is on track to pursue post-secondary education or employment.</li></ul>