

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

STATE OF MONTANA

Denise Juneau
Superintendent



www.opi.mt.gov
(406) 444-5643

July 22, 2013

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Delisle:

On behalf of Montana's public school students, I am submitting proposed amendments to the Montana Accountability Workbook. These proposed amendments will make meaningful improvements in Montana's Adequate Yearly progress (AYP) determinations for schools and districts for School Year 2014-2015 in light of the implementation of new Montana English-Language Arts and Mathematics Standards and testing the new online assessment developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in 2014.

With the approval of the U.S. Department of Education, the Montana Office of Public Instruction would replace the administration of our current criterion referenced test (CRT) in the spring of 2014 with the field test created by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Approval of this request means that Montana students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 will be tested using new online SBAC, and not the CRT. Eliminating the requirement for the CRT provides the following benefits in Montana:

1. No double testing of students, which adds instructional time;
2. Assess readiness of computer hardware and network infrastructure to determine gaps and needs;
3. Provide valuable professional development opportunities for teachers as they review the delivery, content, vocabulary, and structure of the SBAC assessment;
4. Test data systems' interoperability;
5. Ensure Montana has everything in place for our special needs students as well as our general education students;
6. Provide a more effective and efficient transition to the 2014 – 2015 assessment; and
7. Students will be assessed on new standards that are currently being taught in Montana classrooms.

Deborah S. Delisle

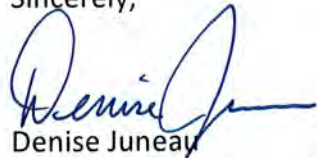
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If the CRT testing is replaced with the administration of the SBAC pilot test, my office would roll forward the CRT test results from spring 2013 to determine Adequate Yearly Progress for 2014. In other words, the School Year 2012-2013 CRT test results would be used to calculate AYP statuses to be applied in School Year 2014- 2015. My office would use the most current data to calculate graduation rate, would leave the participation rate as is (rolled forward), and would recalculate the elementary other indicator (attendance rate) from the 2013- 2014 new data.

I appreciate the willingness of the U.S. Department of Education to consider requests to lessen the negative impacts that double testing in spring 2014 would impose. If you need additional information concerning the amendment request, please contact Assistant Superintendent Nancy Coopersmith. You may contact Nancy by telephone at (406) 444-5541 or by email at ncoopersmith@mt.gov. I look forward to working with you and your staff to continue to improve the validity and reliability of accountability decisions for Montana public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Denise Juneau", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Denise Juneau
Superintendent of Public Instruction