



April 1, 2021

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
c/o Frank Brogan, Assistant Secretary
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Brogan,

For the sake of Montana students and families, MFPE supports the Montana Office of Public Instruction's request for a second one-year assessment waiver under ESSA. Clearly the pandemic requires maximum flexibility for the 2020-2021 school year so Montana can continue to focus on keeping students, educators, and families safe and focus on supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development.

High stakes standardized tests, after a year of unprecedented upheaval, are the last thing students, families, or educators need to recover and move forward. During the most tumultuous school year ever experienced by students or teachers, not one minute of instruction time should be sacrificed to administer a statewide assessment. Instead, intensifying instruction and support for students traumatized by the impact of the coronavirus should be Montana's top priority.

As the professionals in the field, educators know that standardized tests are not the best way to measure a child's development, nor do they particularly help kids or inform best practices for teaching and learning. Montana has an opportunity at this moment in time to shift away from one-size-fits-all testing and utilize professional educator input to create and implement locally developed, authentic assessments for use this summer and in future school years.

Thank you for your consideration of the Montana Office of Public Instruction's assessment waiver request.

Sincerely,

Amanda Curtis
President, MFPE