

May 4, 2017

Dr. Monique Chism
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Chism:

On behalf of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department), I am writing in accordance with Section 8401(a)(1) to request a waiver of the requirement in Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(i)-(iii) of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to allow Missouri to continue its “right test, right time” administration of end-of-course (EOC) assessments.

The state’s plan encourages local education agencies (LEAs) to offer students access to courses that prepare them for college and a career, and similarly to offer elementary students access to courses that prepare them for high school. For many students, this accelerated course pattern is optimal in that it keeps them engaged in rigorous content and allows room in high school schedules for advanced mathematics and/or advanced career and technical opportunities. It is imperative that students be provided the opportunity to move into the advanced content once individual readiness has been established.

As such, the Department wishes to continue the process that it outlined in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Flexibility Waiver. The following will be used for accountability purposes:

- Proficient Algebra I in middle school + Algebra II in high school
- Proficient Algebra I and Geometry in middle school + Algebra II in high school
- Proficient Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II in middle school + plan from district

The students will be able to participate in the assessment that is most appropriate to the content they are provided in the middle school/junior high level. If a student who takes the Algebra I EOC as a sixth grader and is subsequently provided with either Geometry or Algebra II content, he or she would participate in the appropriate EOC. Since we believe it is imperative that ALL students be provided the opportunity to move into the advanced content once individual readiness has been established, the state accountability system has been designed so that LEAs and schools may not earn all of their points in the state’s accreditation system if students do not complete advanced

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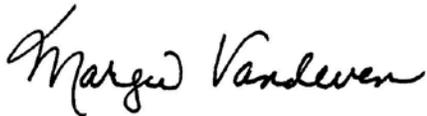
courses in mathematics. This system of accountability provides an incentive for LEAs to offer expanded access to Algebra I course content prior to high school.

The Department is providing all LEAs in the State with notice of the waiver request and a reasonable opportunity to comment. The Department is accepting comments through May 31, 2017. Any comments received in response to this request will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education.

Please contact Jocelyn Strand, Coordinator of School Improvement, at (573) 751-1014 or by email at jocelyn.strand@dese.mo.gov if you have any questions regarding this request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margie Vandeven". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Margie Vandeven

Commissioner of Education

- c: Stacey Preis, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services
- Roger Dorson, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Financial and Administrative Services
- Chris Neale, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Quality Schools
- Craig Rector, Coordinator, Grants and Resources
- Jocelyn Strand, Coordinator, School Improvement