



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SEP 15 2005

Dr. Randy J. Dunn
Interim Superintendent of Education
Illinois Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777

Dear Superintendent Dunn:

I am writing in response to Illinois' request to amend its State accountability plan under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The changes you requested are aligned with NCLB and are now included in an amended State accountability plan that Illinois submitted to the Department on August 28, 2005. The changes are listed in an attachment to this letter. I am pleased to fully approve Illinois's amended plan, which we will post on the Department's website.

If, over time, Illinois makes additional changes to the accountability plan that has been approved, Illinois must submit information about those changes to the Department for review and approval, as required by section 1111(f)(2) of Title I. Please note that approval of Illinois' accountability plan is not an approval of Illinois's standards and assessment system. As Illinois makes changes in its standards and assessments to meet requirements under NCLB, Illinois must submit information about those changes to the Department for peer review through the standards and assessment process.

Please also be aware that approval of Illinois' accountability plan for Title I, including the amendments approved above, does not indicate that the plan 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.

I am confident that Illinois will continue to advance its efforts to hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students. I wish you well in your school

400 MARYLAND AVE., S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202
www.ed.gov

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation.

improvement efforts. If I can be of any additional assistance to Illinois in its efforts to implement other aspects of NCLB, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Henry L. Johnson
Henry L. Johnson

Attachment

cc: Governor Rod Blagojevich

ATTACHMENT: Amendments to the Illinois Accountability Plan

This attachment is a summary of the amendments. For complete details, please refer to the Illinois accountability plan on the Department's website: www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplans03/index.html.

Full academic year (Element C1 (2.2))

Revision: Illinois will define a full academic year as a student enrolled in the school district or school as of May 1st who remains in the school district or school through the next year's state assessment.

District identification (Element A3 (3.2))

Revision: Illinois will identify districts for improvement that miss AYP in all three grade spans in the same subject or additional indicator for two consecutive years. In implementing this provision, Illinois should 1) monitor districts that have not made AYP in one grade span but have not been identified for improvement to ensure they are making the necessary curricular and instructional changes to improve achievement, and 2) take steps to ensure supplemental services are available to eligible students from a variety of providers throughout the state (including in districts that have not been identified for improvement but that have schools that have been in improvement for more than one year).

Including students with disabilities in adequate yearly progress (Element C2 (5.3))

Revision: Illinois will use the "proxy method" (Option I in ED's guidance dated May 7, 2005) to take advantage of the Secretary's flexibility regarding the calculation of adequate yearly progress for students with disabilities. Illinois will calculate a proxy to determine the percentage of students with disabilities that is equivalent to 2.0 percent of all students assessed. For this year only, this proxy will then be added to the percent of students with disabilities who are proficient. For any school or district that did not make AYP solely due to its students with disabilities subgroup, Illinois will use this adjusted percent proficient to reexamine if the school or district made AYP for the 2004-05 school year.

Including limited English proficient students in AYP (Element C2 (5.4))

Revision: Illinois clarifies that recently arrived students to the U.S. who are limited English proficient will be counted for participation but not counted in the AYP proficiency determination for one year.

Subgroup size (Element A6 (5.5))

Revision: Illinois will use a subgroup size of 45 with a 95% confidence interval.