



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

JUN 6 2008

The Honorable Christopher Koch
State Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

Dear Superintendent Koch:

I am writing in response to Illinois' request to amend its state accountability plan 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). Following discussions between the Department and your staff, you made certain changes to Illinois' accountability plan, which are now included in the amended state accountability plan that Illinois submitted to the Department on June 5, 2008. I am pleased to fully approve Illinois' amended plan, which we will post on the Department's website. A summary of the amendments submitted for the 2007-08 school year is enclosed with this letter. As you know, any further requests to amend Illinois' accountability plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval, as required by section 1111(f)(2) of Title I of the ESEA.

Please also be aware that approval of Illinois' accountability plan for Title I, including the amendments approved herein, 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 hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students. I wish you well in your school improvement efforts. If you need any additional assistance in implementing the standards, assessment, and accountability provisions of NCLB, please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Rooney (Patrick.Rooney@ed.gov) or Grace Ross (Grace.Ross@ed.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D.

Enclosure

cc: Governor Rod Blagojevich
Melina Wright
Connie Wise

Amendments to Illinois' Accountability Plan

The following is a summary of Illinois' amendment requests. Please refer to the Department's website (www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplans03/index.html) for Illinois' complete Accountability Plan.

Acceptable amendments

The following amendments are aligned with the statute and regulations:

- **Including students with disabilities in AYP determinations (Element 5.3)**

Revision: Illinois will use the "proxy method" (option 1 in our guidance dated December 2005) to take advantage of the interim flexibility regarding calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the students with disabilities subgroup, as offered by the Department pursuant to its authority under 34 C.F.R. § 200.20(g). See <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/modachieve-summary.html>. 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 score proficient or above. Illinois will use this adjusted percent proficient to re-examine if a school or district made AYP for the 2007-08 school year only for a school or district that did not make AYP solely due to its students with disabilities subgroup.

- **Assessments used for AYP determinations (Elements 5.4, 6.1, and attachment C)**

Revision: Illinois removed references to the IMAGE assessment because it removed the IMAGE assessment, which was previously given to LEP students in Illinois, from its assessment and accountability system. Illinois also noted that it assesses students in grades 4 and 7, and in biological and physical sciences.