



JANET BARRESI

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

November 10, 2014

Dear Assistant Secretary Delisle:

I am writing on behalf of Oklahoma to request a waiver of the Title I, Part A requirement for the State, in collaboration with local educational agencies (LEAs), to measure the achievement of students against the challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards in each of grades 3 through 8 in mathematics (20 U.S.C. § 6311[b][3][C][v][I][bb] and 6311[b][3][C][vii]). This waiver was previously granted by the United State Department of Education (USDE) for school year 2013-2014. The waiver would apply only with respect to students who are completing advanced high school mathematics courses prior to ninth grade (for example, Algebra I completed in the eighth grade).

Oklahoma Statutes allow students to earn credit for high school courses taken prior to ninth grade and require students who do so to take the associated End-of-Instruction exams.

Credit for the units or sets of competencies required in subsection B or D of this section shall be given when such units or sets of competencies are taken prior to ninth grade if the teachers are certified or authorized to teach the subjects for high school credit and the required rigor is maintained. (70 O.S. § 11-103.6)

Any student at the middle school level who completes the instruction in a secondary course specified in this paragraph shall be administered the appropriate end-of-instruction test. (70 O.S. § 1210.508)

Oklahoma seeks a waiver of the provision to assess students on grade-level content when the student is completing coursework above grade level because students are currently required to complete two mathematics tests during a limited period of time, assessing two different bodies of mathematics content. It is Oklahoma's belief that the more advanced test demonstrates each student's level of competence on the less advanced content as well. The repeated test is duplicative and burdensome on students, teachers, administrators, and the State.

Thus, a waiver of the requirement to assess students on grade-level mathematics content is necessary to give Oklahoma and its LEAs sufficient time to focus on instruction in the advanced content area and sufficient accountability on content taught. Oklahoma must be able to ensure valid and reliable accountability determinations, recognitions, and supports so that schools and LEAs can properly implement continuous improvement activities to increase the quality of instruction for students and ultimately improve the academic achievement of students in mathematics.

Based on prior year data, it is approximated that the following numbers of students would be affected by the approved waiver:

- 6th Grade and Below: 62 (0.1% of total students tested)
- 7th Grade: 1200 (2.5% of total students tested)
- 8th Grade: 9820 (20.8% of total students tested)

It is approximated that the following numbers of school sites and LEAs would be affected by the approved waiver:

- Elementary and Middle Level Sites: 414 (73% of Sites)
- LEAs with One or More Elementary or Middle Level Sites Affected: 299 (54.7% of LEAs)

Oklahoma ensures students affected by this waiver will enroll in and complete high school mathematics courses higher than Algebra I, as well as participate in the End-of-Instruction assessments for those particular courses. Oklahoma students are required by the Achieving Classroom Excellence Act of 2005 (ACE), *Title 70 O.S. § 11-103.6* to complete at least three mathematics components to graduate high school:

Mathematics - 3 units to consist of 1 unit of Algebra I and 2 units from the following mathematics electives - Algebra II or Geometry, Trigonometry, Math Analysis or Precalculus, Calculus, Statistics and/or Probability, Mathematics of Finance, Applied Mathematics I and II, or Computer Science.

We will also ensure that if a student takes an advanced high school level statewide mathematics assessment in middle school, the results will be counted solely in middle school calculations and not high school for Federal accountability purposes.

Prior to submitting this waiver request, Oklahoma provided all LEAs in the State with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this request. Oklahoma provided such notice by sending an e-mail to each LEA on Friday, October 24, 2014 (see copy of notice attached). A compilation of all comments that Oklahoma received from LEAs in response to this notice is attached hereto. Oklahoma has also provided notice and information regarding this waiver request to the public in the manner in which Oklahoma customarily provides such notice and information to the public by posting information regarding the waiver request on its Web site (see attached copy of public notice). A compilation of all comments received from the public is also attached hereto.

Oklahoma hereby assures that, if it is granted the requested waiver, its LEAs will meet the following conditions:

- LEAs will continue to offer opportunities for advanced coursework for capable students.
- LEAs will ensure that affected students are assessed on the advanced mathematics content.
- LEAs will report to the State the number of students affected by the waiver annually.

Oklahoma will ensure compliance with these conditions by providing appropriate guidance regarding these conditions. In particular, Oklahoma intends to provide guidance through statewide assessment training sessions, assessment manuals, and communications with superintendents, district test coordinators, and mathematics teachers.

Oklahoma further assures that if it is granted the requested waiver, it will submit to the USDE an annual report that provides the total number of LEAs that had schools that took advantage of the waiver and provided only the assessment on advanced content to students enrolled in an advanced mathematics course.

Please feel free to contact Sonya Fitzgerald, Executive Director of State Testing, at 405-521-3341 or Sonya.Fitzgerald@sde.ok.gov or Lisa Chandler, Assistant State Superintendent of Assessments, at 405-522-6250 or Lisa.Chandler@sde.ok.gov if you have any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Janet C. Barresi
State Superintendent of Public Instruction