



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

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March 31, 2015

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Delisle:

On behalf of Montana's public school students, I am submitting a request to waive accountability determinations based on achievement results for assessments administered during the 2014-2015 school year as outlined in a letter received from you February 27, 2015. As Montana implements the Smarter Balanced Assessment for the first time this spring, there are many unknown factors. The testing window was delayed two weeks due to problems with programming code and did not open until March 30, 2015. Our testing window does not close until June 12, 2015. We expect to receive the testing data back from the contractor between June 20 and July 3, 2015. Therefore, the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must be delayed.

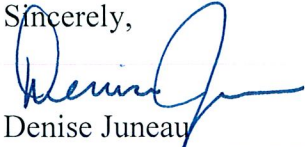
The approval of this waiver will allow Montana schools and districts to continue current interventions in the 2015-2016 school year until AYP determinations are completed. If the reason for missing AYP based on 2014-2015 assessments is due to achievement in reading/language arts or mathematics, schools and districts will continue the same interventions for the remainder of the 2015-2016 school year. Schools and districts that do not make AYP based on participation rate, graduation rate, or attendance will advance to offer the next level of interventions. Montana will publicly report the 2014-2015 assessment information and AYP determinations. In calculating AYP, Montana will use the Annual Measureable Objectives in reading/language arts and mathematics as identified in the Montana Accountability Workbook, approved August 26, 2011.

Montana will resume annual accountability determinations in the 2016-2017 school year based on state assessments administered in the 2015-2016 school year. The annual AYP reports will be issued to meet reporting requirements as presented in the approved Montana Accountability Workbook.

The new testing implementation also poses problems in meeting the U.S. Department of Education reporting deadlines for EDFacts and Special Education. The AYP and assessment data are requirements of these reports. The Consolidated State Performance Report is due in December, and the Special Education Annual Performance Report, while due in February, relies on the same assessment data. It is doubtful these deadlines can be met this year.

I appreciate the willingness of the U.S. Department of Education to consider waivers as states begin the implementation of new assessment systems. If you require additional information regarding the amendment request, please contact Deputy Superintendent Dennis Parman. You may contact Dennis by telephone at (406) 444-5643 or by email at dparman@mt.gov. I look forward to working with you and your staff concerning the accountability decisions for Montana public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Denise Juneau", written over a horizontal line.

Denise Juneau
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Enclosure: Montana AYP Timeline