



April 20, 2012

JOHN A. KITZHABER, MD
Governor

Assistant Secretary Michael Yudin
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Yudin,

Thank you for your letter of April 17. Like the U.S. Department of Education, we are confident that we'll be able to work together to revise Oregon's request for ESEA flexibility and secure a waiver before the end of the 2011-12 school year.

Having observed Round One of the waivers, we know that states engaged with the U.S. Department of Education and used the process to develop stronger plans for implementation. We look forward to clarifying and further developing our proposal with you in the coming weeks.

We also note that Oregon has made significant progress on education reforms since submitting our proposal in January. We have learned from Round One states, passed strong implementation legislation, convened further work groups and benefitted from the questions posed by reviewers in March. These efforts lay the groundwork for us to address issues raised by the peer review panel.

For example, the Oregon Department of Education has convened stakeholder work groups in March and April to:

- 1) Move forward on developing a framework for teacher evaluation, consistent with Oregon Senate Bill 290 and implementing rules;
- 2) Strengthen interventions at focus and priority schools and provide more detail regarding Oregon's plans for a system of continuous improvement; and
- 3) Create a transition plan and additional detail regarding a new Oregon Report card, including ensuring a strong system of accountability for the performance of disadvantaged student groups.

In addition, this winter the 2012 Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 1581, requiring school districts to enter achievement compacts with the Oregon Education Investment Board. These achievement compacts focus state and local efforts and investments on improving key student outcomes. The OEIB will ensure that each district has set ambitious but achievable goals that represent the progress needed to reach the state's 40/40/20 Goal in a way that is equitable across districts and student populations.

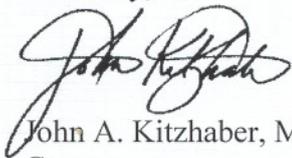
Assistant Secretary Michael Yudin
U.S. Department of Education
April 20, 2012
Page 2

Oregon has advanced an innovative system of accountability that improves, rather than simply replaces, No Child Left Behind.

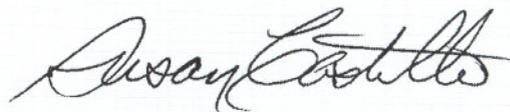
We are committed to creating a local accountability system that informs, supports and motivates students, educators, parents and communities. We will look beyond standardized test scores and punitive one-size-fits all interventions, instead providing support to struggling schools on the basis of a diagnosis. We will ensure that every district in the state is sharply focused on closing the achievement gap and improving outcomes for all students.

We appreciate the U.S. Department of Education's support for Oregon's theory of action, and we are dedicated to demonstrating its value and feasibility to the satisfaction of Secretary Duncan.

Sincerely,



John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Governor



Susan Castillo
Superintendent of Public Instruction