From: Gettel, Steve
To: OPI Waivers
Subject: USDE Waiver Request
Date: Tuesday, October 01, 2013 3:31:51 PM

To whom it may concern:

I write to support the waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education from Superintendent Denise Juneau to allow Montana students to participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) field test in the spring of 2014. The approved waiver would permit our students at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind to take the new online assessment rather than the Montana Criterion Referenced Test (CRT). Eliminating the requirement for the CRT would provide the following benefits to education at our school:

1. Add instructional time for students by eliminating double testing of students;
2. Test computer hardware and network infrastructure to determine gaps and needs;
3. Determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of accommodations that have been developed for students with vision and hearing loss, particularly for blind students who use Braille, since the Braille version of the test was not fully accessible when the pilot was administrated last spring.
4. Provide professional development for teachers as they review the delivery, content, vocabulary, and structure of the SBAC assessment;
5. Provide a more effective and efficient transition to the 2014-2015 assessment; and
6. Students will be assessed on the standards being taught in Montana classrooms.

Sincerely,

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