From: Mark Halgren
To: OPI Waivers
Subject: Waiver Support
Date: Tuesday, October 01, 2013 8:45:04 AM

This letter is in support of 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 students 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 in Montana:

- Add instructional time for students by eliminating double testing of students;
- Test computer hardware and network infrastructure to determine gaps and needs;
- Provide professional development for teachers as they review the delivery, content, vocabulary, and structure of the SBAC assessment;
- Provide a more effective and efficient transition to the 2014-2015 assessment; and
- Students will be assessed on the standards being taught in Montana classrooms.

I am also in favor of duplicating the current AYP status for the 2014-15 school year. It is an educationally sound move and is worthy of support by those who believe in student learning. I would hope that we can make decisions based on educational rationale and not political reaction.

Thanks for your consideration,

Mark Halgren

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BELGRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT