



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

NOV 28 2011

The Honorable June St. Clair Atkinson  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
Education Building  
301 North Wilmington Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Dear Superintendent Atkinson:

I am writing in response to your letter regarding planned changes to North Carolina's high school assessments. In your letter, you indicated that North Carolina is transitioning to a new state accountability model and, as a part of this transition, seeks to eliminate its grade 10 writing assessment, which is currently used in conjunction with the North Carolina End-of-Course Test of English I to measure adequate yearly progress (AYP) for high school English language arts (ELA). You added that North Carolina intends to begin administering the ACT in 2011–2012 as an additional component of its state accountability system and will add a new English II End-of-Course Assessment for AYP in 2012–2013.

The elimination of the grade 10 writing test for the 2011–2012 school year for budget reasons is unfortunate and we look forward to the introduction of a new English II test that includes a writing component in 2012–2013. In the interim, under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, a state is not required to administer a separate writing assessment. The continued use of the North Carolina End-of-Course Test of English I in 2011–2012 is sufficient to meet the ESEA assessment requirements for high school reading/language arts.

As you know, North Carolina must submit a revised Accountability Workbook reflecting any changes to its accountability system to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) for review and approval. Although revisions applicable to the 2011–2012 school year may be submitted at any time, because North Carolina intends to submit an ESEA flexibility request, you may wish to submit all necessary Accountability Workbook revisions following the Department's evaluation of your request.

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**ACCOUNTABILITY  
SERVICES**

We support your transition to a standards and assessment system that will provide students and their parents with useful information about college and career readiness. I am confident that North Carolina will continue to advance its efforts to hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Yudin", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Yudin  
Acting Assistant Secretary

cc: William Harrison, Chairman, State Board of Education  
Angela Quick, Deputy Chief Academic Officer  
Lou Fabrizio, Federal Liaison  
Tammy Howard, Director of Accountability Operations