



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

PENDER MAKIN
COMMISSIONER

October 15, 2020

The Honorable Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education,
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Brogan:

I am writing to formally request a waiver, pursuant to section 8401(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), from the following statutory provisions:

- Sections 1111(b)(2)(B) (v)(ii) that require states to test all students in science not less than one time during Grades 3 through 5; Grades 6 through 9; and Grades 10 through 12.
- Section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(x) which requires reporting of results for students, schools, and districts.

The Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) is planning a census field test for both its general and alternate assessments in science during spring 2021 in Grades 5, 8, and 3rd year of high school. This waiver will enable the Maine DOE to administer the field test statewide in spring 2021. Additionally:

- It provides the opportunity to determine if there are any technical issues with the platform, testing environment, user interface, and overall operations of administration in a real-life environment.
- The item performance and function can be analyzed and verified.
- It will enable teachers to continue teaching the new science standards without the pressure of also preparing students for the operational assessment.
- A census field test will prepare students and educators for both the technical and academic expectations of this assessment for 2022 and beyond.

Districts and schools will be provided participation data from the 2020-2021 Maine field test. Acquisition of a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education will provide the opportunity to collect the information gained through the customary process of field testing as well as the opportunity to analyze the data for the purpose of improving the function, reliability, and validity of the assessment and its items.

Per the request of the U.S. Department of Education, an additional public comment period was implemented beginning October 15, 2020 through November 13, 2020. This notice regarding the opportunity for public comment was distributed via email, the Maine DOE newsroom, and relevant listservs to various stakeholders for 30 days. These approaches provided stakeholders with ample opportunity to comment on this waiver request. A summary of the public comments received from the revised and specific science public comment period is attached.

Please contact us if you require any further information. We look forward to a favorable response to this request.

Sincerely,



Pender Makin

Commissioner of Education