



Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.
DATE: April 26, 2016
SUBJECT: Maryland's Request to Waive the Speaking and Listening Requirement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide information about a waiver of the Speaking and Listening requirement under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is requesting from the United States Department of Education (USED).

BACKGROUND:

On March 2, 2016, USED sent Chief State School Officers a letter providing States the opportunity to request a limited waiver of the requirement that its assessment system cover the full range of its academic content standards for speaking and listening. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments measure many aspects that are key to the speaking and listening standards through multimedia texts to measure comprehension for students taking its tests online. As required, Maryland is in the process of peer review with USED to ensure that all content standards are covered for all students. To ensure that Maryland has the necessary waiver should this measure not meet the need for all students or all standards which Maryland has adopted, Maryland is requesting a limited waiver of the requirement that its assessment system cover the full range of its academic content standards for speaking and listening.

PROCESS:

Local Superintendents were informed through notification in the Weekly Transmittal for Maryland Local School System Superintendents on March 25, 2016. This notice was to inform Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that the State intends to apply for this waiver as well as give them an opportunity to comment. Additionally, MSDE posted an announcement of the request for the waiver on its website on March 28, 2016 to provide notice to the public and solicit feedback and input. Comments or concerns regarding the request for the waiver were due to be submitted to Mary L. Gable, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Academic Policy and Innovation, by April 8. Only one question was received from a local school system asking for clarification of the meaning of the request and if there was anything that the local system needed to complete. Mrs. Gable responded to the inquiry.

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Upon review by the State Board, MSDE will send information on the request to the Legislative Policy Committee of the General Assembly as required by the Annotated Code §2-107 Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act – Waiver Requests. Once the Legislative Policy Committee has had 30 days to review the request for the waiver and MSDE addresses any questions, the waiver will be submitted to USED for approval.

ACTION:

For information only.