UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

DEC - 5 2012

The Honorable Michael L. Williams
Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Dear Commissioner Williams:

I am writing in response to Texas' request to amend its state accountability plan under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended. I am pleased to approve Texas' amended plan, which we will post on the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) website. A summary of Texas' requested amendments is enclosed with this letter. As you know, any further requests to amend Texas' accountability plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval as required by section 1111(f)(2) of Title I of the ESEA.

Please also be aware that approval of Texas' accountability plan for Title I, including the amendments approved herein, does not indicate that the plan complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Education Amendments of 1972*, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and requirements under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

I am confident that Texas will continue to advance its efforts to hold schools and school districts accountable for the achievement of all students. If you need any additional assistance to implement the standards, assessments, and accountability provisions of the ESEA, please do not hesitate to contact Grace Ross (Grace.Ross@ed.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc: Criss Cloudt, Associate Commissioner

Amendments to Texas' Accountability Plan

The following is a summary of the State's amendment requests. Please refer to the Department's website (www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplans03/index.html) for Texas' complete accountability plan.

Acceptable amendments
The following amendments are aligned with the statute and regulations:

<u>**Changes to assessments (Elements 1.2, 1.3, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, and 10.1)**</u>

> <u>Revision:</u> Texas has updated its workbook to reflect its transition from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to its new assessment system, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Please note that the approval of these amendments does not constitute approval of the STAAR under the standards and assessments requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA).

<u>**Accountability and adequate yearly progress (AYP) decisions (Element 1.4).**</u>

> <u>Revision:</u> Texas has clarified that, in making 2011–12 AYP determinations, it will use a bridge study to identify the existing TAKS performance standards on the new STAAR assessments for tests in grade 3–8 because performance standards will not be available for STAAR assessments in time to make AYP determinations.

<u>**Minimum n-size for disaggregated graduation rate calculations in AYP determinations (Element 5.5)**</u>

> <u>Revision:</u> Texas updated its workbook to clarify the applicability of its approved minimum "n-size" to the disaggregated student subgroups that will be evaluated for the graduation rate indicator in AYP determinations beginning in 2012.

<u>**Graduation rate targets (Element 7.1)**</u>

> <u>Revision:</u> Texas will increase its annual graduation rate targets by three percent. Specifically, Texas will increase its targets to 78 percent for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and 83 percent for the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate effective with the 2012–13 school year. Texas must submit targets for subsequent years that reflect continuous and substantial improvement toward meeting the State's graduation rate goal of 90 percent.

<u>**General updates (various elements)**</u>

> <u>Revision:</u> Throughout the workbook, Texas has updated dates and links to supporting evidence that are included in the critical elements.