



August 14, 2013

Secretary Designee Hanna Skandera
New Mexico Public Education Department
Jerry Apodaca Education Building
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Secretary Designee Hanna Skandera,

Recently, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that he had listened to the concerns of educators about the need to really focus on implementation of the Common Core standards before rushing to use the results of the new Common Core-aligned assessments to make high stakes decisions. His announcement allows states to apply to delay for one year the use of the new assessments to inform personnel decisions while continuing their waiver from adequate yearly progress requirements.

Secretary Duncan created an opening for our state to spend the extra time getting Common Core implementation right. Today, we are writing to request that you take advantage of this offer of flexibility and apply for the flexibility waiver by September 30, 2013.

We also want to encourage you to use the extra time to work with educators, parents, and communities throughout our state. We need to continue the excellent work already underway across the state to develop and implement plans to ensure that we are really ready to teach the Common Core----that we have adequate professional development, necessary curriculum materials, appropriate technology, and time for educators to adapt instruction. Relief from a high-stakes assessment system tied to teacher evaluation would provide a much more conducive atmosphere for this work to continue.

The leaders of AFT New Mexico and NEA-New Mexico and our members stand ready to roll up our sleeves and continue to ensure that the Common Core is implemented in the best possible way for the success of our students. The best way for you to support educators in doing this is to apply for the extra time before some serious test-based consequences kick in. Thank you and we look forward to working with you in this endeavor.

Regards,

Stephanie Ly
AFT NM President

Betty Patterson
NEA-NM President

xc: Arnie Duncan, US Secretary of Education
xc: Susana Martinez, Governor of New Mexico
xc: Randi Weingarten, AFT President
xc: Dennis Van Roekel NEA President
xc: John Sapien, NM Senate Education Chair
xc: Mimi Stewart, NM House Education Chair