

Federal Government Grants Historic Waiver from No Child Left Behind Standards, Tests

Kansas Initiative Will Use Quantum Learning Citizenship Model

The U.S. Department of Education has granted a Kansas school district the first broad-based waiver from the No Child Left Behind Act.

No Child Left Behind, signed into law almost a decade ago by President George W. Bush, requires all government-run schools that receive federal funding to administer statewide standardized tests.

The McPherson Unified School District in Central Kansas was informed last week that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has approved its request for a waiver from NCLB, Superintendent Randy Watson said. In partnership with Quantum Learning and ACT, Inc., the school district developed the C³ - Citizenship, College and Career Readiness plan, including benchmarks to measure student progress in the three areas of emphasis.

The U.S. Department of Education called the C³ initiative "bold, challenging and one of a kind in the United States," Dr. Watson said. DOE officials indicated it would be considered a model for future waiver requests from other school districts.

Quantum Learning Network, which integrates Quantum Learning teacher and student programs in school districts nationwide, has worked with the school district for almost 10 years.

"Quantum Learning is thrilled to be part of this breakthrough initiative in McPherson," said Bobbi DePorter, president of Quantum Learning Network.

Ms. DePorter said the opportunity to develop students who are better equipped for success in college, careers and life is consistent with Quantum Learning's mission to transform education and the lives of young people.

Standardized testing mandated by No Child Left Behind has come under significant scrutiny in recent months from critics who believe state standardized tests are too narrowly focused, are not an authentic measurement of student learning, and create undue stress for students, teachers, administrators and parents.

Dr. Watson chose to partner with Quantum Learning to develop the Citizenship-Ready component of the C³ model. Quantum Learning's *8 Keys of Excellence* is McPherson USD's foundation for teaching and assessing students in their citizenship readiness. The model also includes a partnership with ACT, which will supply multiple assessments for 6th - 12th grade students based on a College Ready/Career Ready curriculum.