

DATE:	April 1, 2021
SUBJECT:	2021 Accountability Waiver Request for Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan
CATEGORY:	Notice
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate administrators and staff

Background on Federal Accountability

In January 2021, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) submitted an addendum and amendment to the state’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), state plan. The addendum and amendment requested one-year adjustments to the 2021 Closing the Gaps domain methodology used in the academic accountability system and the methodology used to identify schools for support and improvement. On February 22, 2021, the new administration at the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) announced that additional accountability flexibilities would be available for states that submit requests using a USDE waiver request template. Based on USDE feedback on the addendum and amendment request, TEA has determined that the next step in addressing aspects of the 2021 federal accountability system is to submit the waiver request.

Waiver Request

As was announced in the [December 10, 2020](#), correspondence, TEA will not calculate accountability scores or issue A–F accountability ratings for the 2020–2021 school year but will process and report all available data from the 2020–2021 school year.

In the waiver request, TEA will seek to waive the following accountability and school identification requirements in ESEA:

- To measure progress toward long-term and interim goals
- To meaningfully differentiate all public schools
- To adjust the Academic Achievement indicator based on a participation rate below 95 percent
- To identify schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement based on data from the 2020–2021 school year

Additionally, TEA will seek to waive federal report card provisions for accountability data, which is not available for the 2020–2021 school year, such as Academic Growth.

Pursuing this waiver allows TEA to process and report all available data as requested in the original addendum and amendment with one exception—to delay the implementation of the [accelerated testers requirement](#) by one year. Because the request to delay the implementation has not been approved by the USDE, TEA will include grade 12 accelerated testers’ SAT or ACT results in 2021 accountability

calculations. Under the waiver request, participation rates of less than 95 percent will not affect the Academic Achievement component calculations.

Waiver Assurances

As part of the waiver request, states must satisfy equal or improved transparency in reporting to parents and the public. Chronic absenteeism data, as reported annually to the USDE in its *EDFacts* data submission, must be reported by district, campus, and available subgroups on TEA's website. Additionally, any data collected related to student and/or teacher access to technology devices and high-speed internet must also be reported publicly. These reports will not require additional data reporting by districts. Further information on reporting timelines and data indicators will be shared as available.

Submission Timeline

Per guidance from the USDE, an additional comment period is not necessary as TEA's original request aligns with the waiver request, and public comments were submitted to the USDE as part of the state's request. TEA will submit the accountability waiver request on April 1, 2021. Additional information will be provided to local education agencies when TEA receives a response from the USDE for this request.

For Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this waiver request, please contact TEA's Performance Reporting Division at (512) 463-9704 or performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov.

A copy of the waiver request can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/essa/every-student-succeeds-act>.