



To the Administrator Addressed

Commissioner Mike Morath

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DATE:	March 18, 2020
SUBJECT:	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Waiver Request
CATEGORY:	Notice
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate staff

This letter is to notify you that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has asked the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to waive the assessment and accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), for the 2019–2020 school year in this extraordinary circumstance where the closure of schools during the state’s testing window has inhibited the ability of the state to accurately measure students’ performance and report results to parents and stakeholders.

Background

Earlier today, Governor Abbott waived the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) testing requirements for the 2019–2020 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor has also requested that TEA submit a waiver to the USDE requesting reprieve from federal testing requirements for the 2019–2020 school year.

Waiver Request

Texas is requesting that for the 2019–2020 school year, federal assessment, accountability, and federal identification of schools for improvement requirements be waived in recognition of the unprecedented impact of COVID-19.

The approval of this waiver would not break the chain of consecutive years of low performance under section ESSA, 1111(b)(4)(D).

To view the complete amendment request, visit <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/essa/every-student-succeeds-act>.

Comment Period

All comments on this proposed amendment are due by Tuesday, March 31, 2020, by electronic mail addressed to performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov.

Once TEA has reviewed any comments received and has made any appropriate modifications to the waiver request, the comments will be submitted to the USDE.

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.

Sincerely,

Mike Morath
Commissioner