

DATE:	July 27, 2020
SUBJECT:	Waiver of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) Promotion Requirements
CATEGORY:	Student Assessment
NEXT STEPS:	Please share with district and campus administrators

The purpose of this correspondence is to inform districts and open-enrollment charter schools about changes to the Student Success Initiative (SSI) promotion/retention and retesting requirements for the 2020–2021 school year.

In light of past and anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the commissioner of education is exercising his authority under Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 7.056, to waive the requirements of TEC, Section 28.0211 regarding grade promotion requirements for students in fifth and eighth grade for the 2020–2021 school year.

School districts and open-enrollment charter schools are not required to apply for a waiver of these SSI requirements.

Students enrolled in grades 5 and 8 are still required to take the appropriate State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR[®]) tests once. Regardless of their score, retest opportunities will not be provided. Districts will have local discretion on whether these students should advance to the next grade, just like students in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7. These decisions should be based on local criteria that reflect a student’s academic achievement and mastery of subject matter, and should include STAAR assessment results, along with other relevant information. Districts are still responsible for providing accelerated instruction and supports for students that fail to perform satisfactorily on STAAR. Furthermore, although students in grades 5 and 8 will not be retained solely on the basis of STAAR results, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools will remain accountable for student performance.

As a part of this waiver, there will only be one administration of the STAAR grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading assessments for the 2020–2021 school year. This administration will be in May to coincide with the administration of other STAAR grades 3–8 assessments. The 2020–2021 testing calendar has been updated to reflect these changes and is available at [Testing Calendar](#).

If you have any questions about this information, please send them to the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#).