

DATE:	April 2, 2020
SUBJECT:	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Waiver Approval & 2020 State Academic Accountability
CATEGORY:	Notice
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate staff

This letter is to notify you that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received approval from U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on March 30, 2020, to waive statewide 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.

Additionally, for 2020 state academic accountability, all districts and campuses will receive a label of *Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster*.

Background

As announced in the *To the Administrator Addressed* [letter](#) dated March 18, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott used his statutory authority under Texas Government Code, §418.016 to suspend annual academic assessment requirements for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year. As a result, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR[®]) are not being administered for the 2019–2020 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TEA submitted a federal assessment and accountability waiver on March 24, 2020, and will issue labels indicating *Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster* for 2020 to recognize that the closure of schools during the state's testing window inhibited the ability of the state to accurately measure district and campus performance.

School Improvement Implications and Funding

While no ratings will be issued in 2020, an overall rating or domain rating of *D* or *F* in 2019 and an overall rating or domain rating of *D* or *F* in 2021 will be considered to be consecutive for the determination of multiple-year unacceptable status.

Furthermore, as with other *Not Rated* labels, when a district or campus receives a *Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster* label, the district or campus shall continue to implement the previously ordered sanctions and interventions. If a campus has been ordered to prepare a turnaround plan and then receives a rating of *Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster*, that campus is strongly encouraged, but not required, to implement the approved turnaround plan.

Campuses identified for comprehensive support and improvement, targeted support and improvement, and additional targeted support in 2019 will maintain that label and interventions for 2020–2021.

For Further Information

To view the complete amendment request and approval as well as other valuable resources, visit <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/coronavirus-covid-19-support-and-guidance>.

If you have questions regarding this waiver request or 2020 academic accountability ratings, please contact TEA's Performance Reporting Division at (512) 463-9704 or performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov.

For questions regarding interventions, please contact the School Improvement Division at (512) 463-5226 or SIDivision@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Mike Morath
Commissioner