

DATE:	December 10, 2020
SUBJECT:	A–F Accountability Pause; Addendum and Amendment Requests to the State’s Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan
CATEGORY:	Notice
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate administrators and staff

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of balancing health and safety concerns with the impact on student learning and growth. Recognizing the unique challenges schools face this year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will not issue A–F accountability ratings for the 2020–2021 school year and will seek waivers of aspects of federal accountability requirements. However, because it remains critical that parents, educators, and policymakers understand the impact of the pandemic on student learning, state assessments will continue this school year through the administrations of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®), STAAR Alternate 2, the Texas English Language Assessment System (TELPAS), and TELPAS Alternate. TEA will process and report all available data from the 2020–2021 school year but will not calculate accountability scores or assign A–F ratings. The underlying student achievement data can then be used by legislative leadership, TEA, and school systems to inform changes moving forward and otherwise target resources to schools and students that need the greatest support. Parents and educators can use this important information to gain a deeper understanding of individual student strengths and needs.

Background on Federal Accountability

This letter serves as notice of TEA’s intent to submit addendum and amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to address aspects of the federal accountability system.

In March 2020, the USDE granted TEA a waiver from annual assessment and accountability requirements for school year 2019–2020 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) due to the widespread impact of COVID-19. In October 2020, the USDE notified state education agencies of the opportunity to modify their federal accountability systems for the 2020–2021 school year to account for the lack of data due to this waiver.

Upon review of its federal accountability system, TEA determined that the lack of data from the 2019–2020 school year and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the 2020–2021 school year will have a significant impact on the ability to properly calculate the Closing the Gaps domain and issue identifications of schools for federal school improvement. TEA will process and report to the USDE all available 2020–2021 data but will not calculate accountability scores or assign A–F ratings. Therefore, TEA will submit addendum and amendment requests to the USDE to adjust the Closing the Gaps domain methodology used in the academic accountability system and the methodology used to identify schools for support and improvement.

Addendum Request

TEA is requesting the following one-year adjustments for 2021 accountability determinations:

- To delay the implementation of the [accelerated testers requirement](#) by one year.
- To report only reading and mathematics STAAR participation rates for districts and campuses.

- To process the Closing the Gaps domain without the Academic Growth component due to the lack of sufficient growth data.
- To delay the identification of the next cohort of comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), targeted support and improvement (TSI), and additional targeted support (ATS) campuses by one year. This request would also postpone the escalation of three-year ATS campuses to comprehensive status until August 2023.
- To retain existing CSI, TSI, and ATS labels for 2021–2022. In order to receive funding for 2021–2022, CSI campuses must opt-in for continued interventions. Campuses that opt-out of continued interventions would continue to be identified and would also be opting-out of funding. Current CSI campuses identified solely by the graduation rate criteria would have an opportunity to exit if the campus met the graduation rate exit criteria.
- To not calculate or assign scaled scores or A–F rating labels to the Closing the Gaps domain.

Amendment Request

TEA is asking to amend the following sections of the state plan:

- The language in the school interventions section to reflect current interventions.
- The language in the Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children to reflect current needs and procedures.
- The language in the accountability section to align with the addendum request. For example, the definition of “three consecutive years” of data for TSI identification will be updated to exclude data from the 2020–2021 school year due to the lack 2021 Academic Growth.

Comment Period

All comments on this proposed amendment are due by Monday, January 11, 2021, 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 proposals, the comments will be submitted to the USDE as part of the state’s request. When, and if, TEA receives USDE approval of these proposals, additional information will be provided to local education agencies.

For Further Information

If you have any questions regarding these proposals, please contact TEA’s Performance Reporting Division at (512) 463-9704 or performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov. In addition, copies of the proposed requests can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/essa/every-student-succeeds-act>.