



April 2020

The Educator Effectiveness System during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to school building closures in the Commonwealth that impact almost every aspect of public K-12 education. As a result of the closures, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has been approved by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) for its [March and April waiver applications](#) specific to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA).

The waivers specifically address the following:

Student Assessment

- Pennsylvania's PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exams will not be administered to any students in the 2019-20 school year.

School Accountability and Improvement

- Any school that is identified for 1) comprehensive support and improvement (CSI); 2) additional-targeted support and improvement (A-TSI); and 3) targeted support and improvement (TSI) in the 2019-2020 school year will maintain that identification status in the 2020-2021 school year.
- CSI, A-TSI, and TSI schools will continue to receive supports and interventions consistent with the school's support and improvement plan in the 2020- 2021 school year.
- The state is no longer required to *annually meaningfully differentiate* all public schools based on the state's accountability indicators for the 2019-2020 school year (student achievement; student growth; graduation rate; progress in English language proficiency; chronic absenteeism; career readiness).

Statewide Reporting

- For the 2019-20 school year, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) does not need to report to the USDOE on the following statewide measurements required by ESSA:
 - Accountability system description
 - State assessment results
 - English language proficiency assessment results
 - Chronic absenteeism
 - College and career preparedness
 - Progress toward meeting long-term goals and measurements of interim progress
 - Percentage of students assessed and not assessed

- Number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities taking an alternate assessment
- Annual meaningful differentiation

Funding

- Pennsylvania has additional flexibility for timing and utilization of funds specific to ESSA (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV) to support continuity of education during this period of severe disruption.

Issues to Consider

The issuance of waivers related to the 2019-20 ESSA requirements is an important first step to acknowledge the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on student achievement and school and state accountability measures. However, several impacts of pandemic-related school building closures will continue beyond 2019-20. For example, inequities in access to technology and parent and family supports means that students will have widely divergent learning experiences for the last three months of the 2019-20 school year. This will impact readiness to learn in the 2020-21 school year and beyond. Gaps in learning that result from inequitable access will impact state assessment results in 2020-21 and beyond, as well. PSEA will continue to advocate for policymakers and administrators to consider the impact of school building closures on accountability measures.

For More Information

Additional information about school accountability and state reporting requirements under ESSA are available on [PSEA's ESSA webpage](#). For additional information on specific changes to the 2019-20 school accountability system of reporting and support, please contact PSEA's Educational Services Department at professionalllearning@psea.org. For information related to your school's designation as a CSI, A-TSI, or TSI school or your school's improvement plan, please contact your UniServ Representative.