



Rhode Island seeks flexibility from the U.S. Department of Education for its state assessment and accountability systems for 2019-20

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Commissioner

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting a waiver from requirements included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These two federal laws include the requirements states must follow to implement their state assessment and accountability systems. Approval of this waiver by the United States Department of Education (USED) would suspend the parts of these laws that apply to the state assessment, accountability, and school improvement systems. The following is an FAQ to help you understand the implications of our waiver request and how it would affect RI district, schools, and students.

Please provide your feedback and comments by **Friday, April 10, 2020** at 4:00pm through this public comment survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RI-2020-Assessment-Accountability-Waiver>.

General Questions

Why do we need request a waiver?

- Rhode Island schools are implementing distance learning to allow educators and students to adhere to social distancing guidelines set forth by the Rhode Island Department of Health and Center for Disease Control. State assessments must be administered in person and cannot be administered while implementing distance learning.
- The flexibility will allow districts, schools, teachers, and students to concentrate on staying safe and healthy while continuing their education through distance learning.

How long is the waiver for?

- This waiver would cancel only the state assessments for the 2019-20 school year that have not yet been administered. Because the state assessments would not be given, we also would not be able to calculate or release accountability results for this school year.

Questions about the State Assessment System

Which tests are included in our waiver?

- We are asking the USED to allow us to cancel the administrations of the following state assessments:
 - RI SAT School Day with Essay
 - PSAT10
 - Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)
 - Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessments
 - Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSA)

Will students be required to make-up the tests they missed this year?

- No. Next year, students will take the test for their current grade level. For example, if a student missed the grade 5 RICAS ELA and math tests this year, next year they would take the grade 6 RICAS ELA and math tests.

What if a student needs an SAT score to complete their college application?

- RIDE is working with College Board to determine the feasibility of providing an optional RI SAT School Day for students in the fall who missed the test this year.

If we don't give the state assessments this year, when would they be given again?

- During the 2020-21 school year.

Will families get score reports this year?

- Only those students who participated in ACCESS English language proficiency testing earlier in the year will receive score reports.

How will I know if my child is making progress on the standards?

- Families should work with the child's teacher and school to access information on their child's progress on the standards. State assessments provide important information to educators and families on the progress students are making in English language arts, mathematics and science, but are only one source of information regarding your child's learning. State assessment results are designed to be used along with other information on student learning like classwork, including distance learning opportunities, class and end-of-course projects and tests, and other district tests.

Questions on the Accountability System:

Will schools receive new accountability Star Ratings in the fall?

- No. Since state assessments are key to the Star Ratings and most state assessments will be canceled for the 2019-20 school year, RIDE will not calculate new Star Ratings this fall.

Will RIDE publish components of the accountability system for which it has data?

- Yes, RIDE will publish data that has been already collected, such as graduation rates, the Diploma Plus measures, and attendance. However, that information may be published in a different location than the School Report Card to distinguish the information from prior years' official accountability results. RIDE still intends to inform schools on whether they are making progress on these measures compared to last year.

Questions on the School Improvement System:

My school/LEA currently has subgroups that are identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and/or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI). What will this mean for the 2020-21 school year?

- Schools with student subgroups identified for TSI or ATSI in Fall 2019, in the absence of 2019-20 state assessment results, will continue to be identified as such for the 2020-21 school year. In Fall 2021, the accountability system will be updated to reflect the 2020-21 state assessment results.

My LEA has schools currently identified as in need of comprehensive support and improvement (CSI). What will this mean for the 2020-21 school year?

- Schools currently identified as in need of CSI will, in the absence of state assessment results, maintain this designation through 2020-21. This means schools will be eligible for an additional year of grant support through Title 1, Part A, 1003 School Improvement Grants, and be expected to maintain a community advisory board (CAB) or equivalent, perform an annual needs assessment on progress to date and quality of implementation of their comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP), and report to RIDE through regular monitoring of progress. No new schools will be identified as in need of CSI and no currently identified schools will exit identification until the next administration of Rhode Island's state assessments.