



## To the Administrator Addressed

Commissioner Mike Morath

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<b>DATE:</b>	<b>July 30, 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Approval of Accelerated Testers Waiver</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Notice</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Share with district and campus testing coordinators</b>

The purpose of this communication is to provide information about the approval by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) of Texas's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver related to accelerated testers.

### **Accelerated Testers Waiver History**

In May 2020, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) requested a waiver of the ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), §1111(b)(2)(C), to broaden the advanced mathematics exception to include all middle school students administered the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) end-of-course (EOC) assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science. The USDE notified TEA of the approval of this waiver request on July 20, 2020.

As part of Texas's ESSA plan, TEA has been granted a waiver to expand the advanced mathematics exception beyond grade 8 students enrolled in advanced mathematics courses to include all middle school students who are administered a STAAR EOC assessment for mathematics, reading/language arts, or science. The USDE's approval of this waiver request eliminates the need for double testing.

Beginning in the 2020–2021 school year, a middle school student, who is completing instruction in a high school course that has a corresponding EOC assessment, will be administered the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment (not the grade-level assessment). The STAAR EOC assessment may be used to fulfill the student's graduation requirement and will be used for the campus' and district's accountability calculations. This waiver aligns assessment requirements with students' instruction, where possible. As required now in Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), [§101.3011](#), students who have completed STAAR EOC assessments while in middle school must take either the ACT or the SAT once to fulfill federal testing requirements.

A copy of the waiver request and USDE response are available on the TEA website at [https://tea.texas.gov/about\\_tea/laws\\_and\\_rules/essa/every\\_student\\_succeeds\\_act/](https://tea.texas.gov/about_tea/laws_and_rules/essa/every_student_succeeds_act/).

**Contact Information**

If you have questions about academic accountability, please contact the Performance Reporting Division at (512) 463-9704 or [performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov](mailto:performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov). For questions about assessment requirements, please submit your questions via the [Student Assessment HelpDesk](#).

Sincerely,

Mike Morath  
Commissioner of Education