



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

April 8, 2025

The Honorable Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Morath:

I am writing in response to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) request on December 16, 2024, for a waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which stipulates that a State may not assess more than 1.0 percent of all students in the grades assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). TEA requested this waiver because, based on State data for school year (SY) 2023-2024, TEA concluded that it may exceed the 1.0 percent cap on AA-AAAS participation in reading/language arts (R/LA), mathematics, and science.

After reviewing TEA's waiver request, I am granting, pursuant to my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA, for SY 2023-2024, a one-year waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the ESEA so that the State may assess with an AA-AAAS more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in R/LA, mathematics, and science.

As part of this waiver, TEA assured that it:

- Will continue to meet all other requirements of section 1111 of the ESEA and implement regulations with respect to all State-determined academic standards and assessments, including reporting student achievement and school performance, disaggregated by subgroups, to parents and the public.
- Had assessed in SY 2023-2024 at least 95 percent of all students and all students with disabilities who are enrolled in grades for which the R/LA, mathematics, and science assessments are required.
- Will require that a local educational agency (LEA) submit information justifying the need of the LEA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any such subject with an AA-AAAS.
- Will provide appropriate oversight of an LEA that is required to submit such information to the State.
- Will verify that each LEA that is required to submit such information to the State is following all State guidelines in 34 CFR § 200.6(d) – excluding (d)(6) – and will address any subgroup disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- Will implement, consistent with the plan submitted in TEA's waiver request, system improvements and will monitor future administrations of the AA-AAAS to avoid exceeding the 1.0 percent cap.

As a reminder, 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(3)(iv) requires a State to make publicly available the information submitted by an LEA justifying the need to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students on the AA-AAAS, provided that such information does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. I also encourage you to make available your State's plan, timeline, and progress to date in reducing the percentage of students taking the AA-AAAS.

I appreciate your work to improve Texas' schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Hayley B. Sanon
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
and Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education

cc: Julie Cole, Director of Policy and
Publications, Student Assessment Division