



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

October 4, 2021

The Honorable Richard Woods
Superintendent
Georgia Department of Education
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Superintendent Woods:

I am writing in response to the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) request on August 25, 2021, to extend its waiver of the requirements in sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and (b)(2)(B)(i) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which requires a State to hold all students to the same academic standards and administer the same aligned assessments in science to all students. GADOE requested this extension so that it may continue to allow an eighth grade student enrolled in the high school physical science course the opportunity to take the State-administered end-of-course assessment aligned with that course in lieu of the eighth grade end-of-course grade-level science assessment. GADOE has identified its Biology end-of-course assessment as the more advanced, State-administered end-of-course assessment that these students will take in high school.

After reviewing GADOE's request, I am pleased to grant, pursuant to my authority under ESEA section 8401(a)(3), a waiver extension of section 1111(b)(2)(B)(i)(I) of the ESEA, as well as the corresponding regulation 34 CFR 200.2(b)(1)(i). This waiver applies to the subject area of science only. This waiver will permit any eighth grade student taking the high school level course in physical science the opportunity to take the high school assessment for that course. This waiver is in effect from the 2021-2022 school year through the 2024-2025 school year. By granting this waiver, the Department and GADOE have mutually agreed that:

- GADOE will apply the rules established in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(i) through (iii) of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, and 34 C.F.R 200.5 (b)(1) through (3) to any student who does not take the science assessment typically administered in the grade in which the student is enrolled.
- If a student does not take the science assessment typically administered in the grade in which he or she is enrolled:
 - The student will take the end-of-course physical science assessment the State administers to high school students to comply with assessment requirements established in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA, or a more advanced assessment;
 - The student's performance and participation on the high school assessment will be used in the year in which the student takes the assessment for the purposes of measuring academic achievement and participation as it pertains to the school-based accountability system required under the ESEA, as amended by ESSA; and

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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.

- In high school, the student will take a more advanced, State-administered end-of-course assessment or nationally recognized high school assessment (that meets the requirements in 34 C.F.R. 200.3(d)) and the student's performance on and participation in that assessment will be used for the purposes of measuring academic achievement and participation as it pertains to the school-based accountability system required under the ESEA.

I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your 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,



Ian Rosenblum
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Educatio

cc: Allison Timberlake, Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability