

September 16, 2020

Public Notice of ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver for 2020-2021

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is seeking comments on the following waiver request for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (US ED). Comments and questions should be submitted to Allison Timberlake, Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, at atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us no later than **October 16, 2020**.

The ESSA includes a statewide 1.0 percent participation cap in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for each content area (1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)). States can request a one-year waiver from this requirement if the state anticipates being above the cap. Georgia received a one-year waiver from the requirement for the 2019-2020 school year. The GaDOE is submitting a similar request for the 2020-2021 school year to provide the necessary time to continue to implement policies and district supports to ensure the alternate assessment is only administered to those students for whom it is intended.

In 2019, Georgia's schools utilized the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0) for an estimated 1.3 percent of tested students. The GaDOE anticipated that Georgia would be above the 1.0 percent cap in 2019-2020. However, due to COVID-19, US ED approved a waiver that canceled state assessments for the 2019-2020 school year. The GaDOE anticipates that Georgia will be above the 1.0 percent cap in 2020-2021 as well. The waiver submission for the 2020-2021 school year will include a demonstration of progress in the work of reducing the percentage of students assessed via the GAA as well as the following information, as outlined in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)ii-v:

- State-level data analysis (2019) a) showing the number and percentage of students in each subgroup who took the GAA, and b) validating the State has measured the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students and at least 95 percent of students with disabilities;
- assurances from the State that each local education agency (LEA) anticipated to exceed the 1.0 percent cap a) followed State guidelines under paragraph 200.6(d) - excluding (d)(6), and b) will address any disproportionality in the percentage of student subgroups utilizing 2019 data under section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), or (D) being administered the GAA; and
- a plan and timeline by which a) the State will improve its guidelines under § 200.6(d), b) the State will take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will use the GAA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students in a content area, and c) the State will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking the GAA.

Prior to submitting this ESSA waiver request, the GaDOE is providing public notice to all interested parties across Georgia. The GaDOE is providing such notification by posting a public notice on its website of the intent to request a waiver of the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards 1.0 percent cap. In addition, the GaDOE has emailed information pertaining to the waiver to all district superintendents, Title I directors, assessment directors, special education directors, parent groups, and the State Advisory Panel for Special Education. Copies of all comments the State may receive from stakeholders in response to this notice will be attached to the waiver request sent to US ED.