

March 19, 2020

Senator Lamar Alexander
Chairman, HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Bobby Scott
Chairman, Education & Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Patty Murray
Ranking Member, HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member, Education & Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives,

We, the executive directors of the undersigned organizations, lead the state associations representing the nation's public school superintendents. We write today to call on Congress to grant the U.S. Sec. of Education the authority necessary to grant statewide, narrow-in-scope waivers related to assessment and accountability in the context of the current national crisis related to COVID-19.

The last time our group came together on a joint letter was to support the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which included carefully negotiated language to clarify stipulations related to the secretary's regulatory authority. We were happy to support those provisions, in the context of regular operations and day-to-day needs and responsibilities. Now, as our country's public school superintendents are working to support our students in a new remote-learning environment, it is clear that the status quo is not enough.

With more than three-quarters of our states issuing statewide school closures—closures that are increasingly likely to last the remainder of the school year—it is clear there will be an impact on our ability to comply with assessment and accountability requirements.

We are not asking to step away from our responsibilities to educate our students or not be accountable for their academic progress. We are asking that federal policy and requirements are temporarily adjustable to reflect the unique set of circumstances currently facing our schools.

It is imperative the U.S. Dept. of Education is able to address this emergent need by issuing a blanket, statewide, narrow-in-scope waiver to expedite the process by which states can pursue and receive the necessary relief related to uncertainty over how assessments and accountability will play out and how/if flexibility will be granted.

Rather than rely on a paper-heavy process by which each state would need to individually submit paperwork requesting their specific flexibilities—flexibilities that would potentially vary from state to state—we urge Congress to authorize the Department to provide these waivers. Thank you for considering this urgent request and we look forward to working with you. Please direct all questions to Noelle Ellerson Ng (nellerson@aasa.org).

Sincerely, *See next page*

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Alaska Superintendents Association

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School Superintendents of Alabama

Richard Abernathy
Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators

Mark Joraanstad
Arizona School Administrators

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Colorado Association of School Executives

Frances Rabinowitz
Connecticut Assoc. of Public School Superintendents

Tammy Croce
Delaware Association of School Administrators

Juhan Mixon
Florida Association of School Administrators

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Mississippi Association of School Administrators

Kevin Mitchell
Wyoming Association of School Administrators

CC: Senate HELP Committee
House Education & Labor Committee