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## Your Question:

You asked for information on states who have paused accreditation because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect it will have on Every Student Succeeds Act requirements.

## Our Response:

The U.S. Department of Education issued [ESSA state plan assessment waivers](#) to every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Bureau of Indian Education. With a [waiver](#), a state does not need to “administer its statewide assessments to all students, to make annual accountability determinations, to identify schools for support and improvement, or to provide data on its state and local report cards for assessment and accountability information” for the 2019-20 school year. A brief review of state waiver approval notices shows that, at minimum, a state must ensure that any school identified in the 2019-20 school year for targeted support and improvement continues to receive support and maintains improvement plans in the 2020-21 school year.

We do not yet have a complete picture of how states will account for lost 2019-20 school year data in their accountability systems, reports or determinations. As assessment, accountability and accreditation are intertwined, states tackle these topics in tandem. Below, we have provided some sample state actions.

### State Examples:

**California:** An [accountability FAQ webpage](#) maintained by the department of education notes that the department is considering options for calculating the 2021 dashboard. The FAQ notes that while the state has received a federal waiver for assessment and accountability requirements, the state has not yet waived its own requirements, and districts and charter schools are still required to submit local indicator data. This [EdSource article](#) provides some information about how federal waivers may impact California’s accountability reforms.

**Colorado:** The department of education provides information on the state’s [accountability pause](#), noting that districts will continue to implement their ratings and plans according to their 2019 ratings.

**Kentucky:** The [department of education notes](#) that assessment cancellations “will affect this fall’s accountability data release” and that all ratings and supports will remain the same until the 2021 testing cycle.

**Louisiana:** [SCR 23](#) (enacted) directed the state board of elementary and secondary education to apply for a waiver from certain ESSA provisions. Upon receipt of the waiver, the bill suspended certain state laws related to school and district accountability and assessments. A [FAQ document](#) from the state board notes that testing data will be excluded from performance measures for the current year.

**Massachusetts:** On April 10, Gov. Charlie Baker signed [4616](#) which, among other things, charged the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to modify or waive “the requirement for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students ... in order to address disruptions caused by the [COVID-19] outbreak.”

**New Jersey:** Gov. Phil Murphy issued [Executive Order 117](#), which authorized the commissioner of education to waive any rules that would be detrimental to public health, waived statutory requirements for statewide assessments of

eighth grade students and cancelled the assessment for the 2019-20 school year. The order also waived the graduation assessment requirement for 12th grade students and noted that student growth data cannot be used as a measure of educator effectiveness for the school year. The state department of education [plans](#) to make the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment available in the summer or fall for current high school students who want to take the assessment.

**New York:** In a [letter](#) to district superintendents, superintendents and charter school leaders, the New York State Department of Education noted that for accountability determinations, the 2018-19 results will be used in place of 2019-20 results.

**Texas:** [Guidance](#) from the Texas Education Agency notes that no school improvement ratings will be issued for 2020. Ratings of D or F in 2019 and 2021 will be considered consecutive.

**Wisconsin:** [A.B. 1038](#) (enacted) prohibits the department of public instruction from publishing a school and school district accountability report in the 2020-21 school year. The department of public instruction [maintains a webpage](#) for updates related to federal reporting requirements. This [guide](#) from the department outlines federal waiver information, but does not address how missing data will be addressed.

#### [Additional Resources:](#)

This [article](#) from the Hunt Institute outlines three options states have when accounting for lost assessment data.

- Use spring 2019 data in lieu of spring 2020 data.
- Estimate spring 2020 data by assuming that students would maintain the same projectile ranking as 2018-19.
- Administer the tests in the fall or whenever school resumes.

A blog post from the National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment provided [The Outlook for ESSA School Accountability After COVID-19](#).