

Dear Secretary DeVos,

Pursuant to sec. 8401(a), (20 U.S.C. 7861), of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Indiana hereby requests the provision of a targeted, two-year waiver of the requirements of sec. 1111(d)(2)(A) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), pertaining to the annual identification of schools for targeted support and improvement (TSI) due to one or more subgroup determined to be consistently underperforming.

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) requests that this targeted, two-year waiver of the above-referenced statutory requirements applies for TSI identifications utilizing data from the 2020-2021 school year.

Indiana considers a school to have a “consistently underperforming” subgroup if, for two (2) consecutive years, the overall accountability score of the subgroup, which includes all required indicators, falls at or below the lowest performing 10 percent of the respective subgroup; and the subgroup receives an overall rating of “does not meet expectations”. An overall accountability score is calculated for each subgroup with at least 20 students at the school. Schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups are identified annually.

Indiana’s definition of a “consistently underperforming” subgroup was revised through an amendment and requires a school to maintain both identification criteria for two consecutive years in order to demonstrate consistency in low performance for the subgroup. These criteria were to be applied beginning with identifications occurring in the Fall of 2020 based on data from the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. The TSI identifications occurring in the Fall of 2019 based on data from the 2018-2019 school year were based on the criteria for identifying schools for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement status.

As a result of the waiver from accountability and school identification requirements in sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D) for the 2019-2020 school year, Indiana did not have two (2) consecutive years of overall accountability scores and ratings with which to identify schools for TSI status in the Fall of 2020. Further, Indiana is requesting an addendum to its ESEA Consolidated State Plan due to the COVID-19 national emergency. This addendum includes a provision that Indiana will revise its system of annual meaningful differentiation so as not to calculate overall accountability scores and ratings for schools based on data from the 2020-2021 school year. The culmination of the 2020 waiver and the 2021 addendum results in the lack of two (2) consecutive years of data needed to identify schools for TSI status in the Fall of 2021.

Indiana intends to maintain its definition of a “consistently underperforming” subgroup currently incorporated in its ESEA Consolidated State Plan. Given this definition, Indiana would not have the data necessary to identify schools for TSI status until the Fall of 2023, based on data from the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. Until new TSI identifications can be made, Indiana will continue to provide resources and support to those schools with subgroups currently identified with TSI status in the same manner as identified in Indiana’s ESEA Consolidated State Plan.



Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Working Together for Student Success

Schools that are not currently identified with TSI status may request technical assistance from the Indiana Department of Education.

The Indiana Department of Education will provide performance data that are available to schools for use in advancement of student achievement during these unprecedented times. All available data will be published on Indiana's public data portal, INView (<https://inview.doe.in.gov>).

These extraordinary times introduce new obstacles that must be addressed and overcome. Please know that Indiana remains committed to supporting all Hoosier students, including the needs of our most vulnerable.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction