

March 14, 2020

Secretary Betsy DeVos  
United States Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As you are aware, the rapid spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has resulted in unprecedented actions by local authorities in an effort to combat the public health threats posed by this pandemic. An increasing number of counties, municipalities, and even entire states have taken steps to prohibit large gatherings and cancel public events.

As school districts, we are faced with the task of providing educational services to our students in a safe and healthy learning environment. We are also responsible for our students and contributing to the protection of the overall public health in the midst of a pandemic. As a result, and because of the significant public health threat posed by COVID-19, we have determined that the prudent course of action is to close schools and provide educational services in an alternative manner.

While we appreciate the support of school district efforts to protect the safety of our students, we are concerned with the continued focus on the administration of state standardized testing. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has previously taken the position that state standardized testing cannot be cancelled without risking federal funding unless the U.S. Department of Education provides a waiver of the assessment requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to states. Given the unique situation with which we are faced, we believe our focus is best placed on keeping students safe and maintaining continuity of instruction, not attempting to implement some alternative form of standardized testing.

With this in mind, we urge you to provide waivers to states of the assessment requirements of ESSA for the 2019-2020 school year so that school districts and teachers can focus on providing the best possible instruction to students in an impossibly difficult situation. Student assessment is important, but student instruction and safety must be paramount when faced with such significant challenges.

Thank you for your continued support of school districts as we seek to continue serving our students to the best of our ability.

Sincerely,

Aledo ISD	Collinsville ISD	Irving ISD	Prosper ISD
Allen ISD	Community ISD	Keller ISD	Palmer ISD
Anna ISD	Coppell ISD	Lake Dallas ISD	Richardson ISD
Bells ISD	Denison ISD	Lake Worth ISD	Rockwall ISD
Birdville ISD	Denton ISD	Lancaster ISD	Royse City ISD
Blue Ridge ISD	DeSoto ISD	Leonard ISD	S&S Consolidated ISD
Boles ISD	Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD	Lewisville ISD	Sam Rayburn ISD
Bonham ISD	Farmersville ISD	Lovejoy ISD	Scurry-Rosser ISD
Brock ISD	Forney ISD	Lubbock Cooper ISD	Sherman ISD
Caddo Mills ISD	Frisco ISD	Mansfield ISD	Sunnyvale ISD
Carroll ISD	Garland ISD	McKinney ISD	Terrell ISD
Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD	Grand Prairie ISD	Melissa ISD	Trenton ISD
Castleberry ISD	Grapevine-Colleyville ISD	Mesquite ISD	Van Alstyne ISD
Cedar Hill ISD	Greenville ISD	Midlothian ISD	Waxahachie ISD
Celina ISD	Gunter ISD	Plano ISD	Whitesboro ISD
College Station ISD		Pottsboro ISD	Whitewright ISD

