



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Acting Commissioner of Education *CRJ*

DATE: April 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Connecticut Accountability Waiver Request Approved

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is pleased to inform you that the [U.S. Department of Education \(USED\)](#) has approved Connecticut's [request for waiver](#) from implementing district/school accountability for the 2020-21 school year. Therefore, Connecticut will not issue a summative rating (i.e., the Accountability Index), not categorize schools into 1-5 categories, and not identify new Turnaround or Focus schools (category 4 and 5) in Fall 2021 based on data from the 2020-21 school year.

In their approval, the USED affirmed the following:

"The intent of these accountability waivers is to focus on assessments to provide information to parents, educators, and the public about student performance and to help target resources and supports. This is particularly crucial this year, due to the COVID pandemic."

The CSDE wholeheartedly concurs with this sentiment. We are pleased to have now received approval of this accountability waiver request. **Educators across the state can take comfort in knowing that the 2020-21 assessment results will be used not to formally evaluate their work, but to inform and support the ongoing collective work of accelerating student learning.**

Connecticut's state academic assessment window opened more than a week ago. Thanks to the dedication and commitment of our excellent educators, thousands of students have already started participating in these assessments. Educators have availed themselves of the training offered by the CSDE and are fully prepared to safely assess as many students as possible, hopefully in-person, but remotely if truly necessary.

Although there is no formal school/district accountability in 2020-21, the USED expects that aggregate results will be reported publicly. The CSDE understands that this year's reporting of results must look different from those in prior years. At a minimum, they must reference the contextual backdrop of the pandemic and the different ways in which students accessed learning (e.g., in-person, hybrid, remote). Additionally, the public will have to be clearly and explicitly cautioned about any limitations in the data that might affect interpretation such as uneven or low participation that make the data unrepresentative. The CSDE will seek the input of superintendents, district leaders and other relevant stakeholders on this year's results release.

The 2020-21 school year has undoubtedly been challenging, but our educators, students, and families have risen to that challenge and adapted to teaching and learning in new ways. We remain confident that this resilience will enable us to successfully administer our state assessments this year so that our decisions going forward are informed by the best available information. Please share this waiver information with educators and your school community to build common support for a continued focus on teaching and learning for our students.

Thank you.