



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Education
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 16, 2019

Michelle John
Superintendent
Paradise Unified School District
3760 Morrow Lane, Ste. A
Chico, CA 95928

Dear Superintendent Thurmond and Superintendent John:

I am writing in response to the California Department of Education's (CDE's) request on March 19, 2019, on behalf of Paradise Unified School District (PUSD), to waive certain statewide academic standards and assessment requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). CDE on behalf of PUSD requested these waivers due to the extraordinary circumstances present in PUSD as a result of the November 8, 2018, Camp Fire. To ensure that students receive appropriate supports during the 2018-2019 school year, PUSD requested a one-year waiver of statewide assessment requirements in the 2018–2019 school year. PUSD will report student progress based on formative assessments to parents.

After reviewing PUSD's request, I am granting for the 2018-2019 school year a waiver, pursuant to my authority under section 8401(a)(3) of the ESEA, of the following requirements as they relate to PUSD only:

- ESEA section 1111(b)(1)(B), requiring that academic achievement standards be the same for all public schools and all public school students.
- ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(i), requiring the State to assess all public school students using the same assessments. CDE will continue to administer assessments, as required, to all other public schools in the State.
- ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v), requiring the State to administer annual assessments in each required grade level in PUSD.
- ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(x) and (xii), requiring the State to provide, for PUSD students, individual student interpretive, descriptive and diagnostic reports and itemized score analyses regarding achievement on State assessments for parents, teachers, principals and other school leaders to understand and address specific academic needs.
- ESEA section 1111(h)(2)(C), requiring PUSD to report assessment results for the 2018-2019 school year on its local educational agency (LEA) report card.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii), requiring CDE to report assessment results for PUSD for the 2018-2019 school year on its State educational agency (SEA) report card.

As a result of this waiver, for the 2018–2019 school year, PUSD will not administer statewide student academic assessments. Consistent with the waiver request, PUSD will administer English language proficiency assessments in school year 2018-2019. The rationale for approving this waiver is due to the extensive devastation caused by the Camp Fire and the resulting impact on students, families, staff and available facilities.

Thank you for the work you are doing to provide a high-quality education for all of PUSD’s students, especially during this time of recovery from the devastating fire. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my staff at: California.OESE@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary
for Elementary and Secondary Education

cc: Khieem Jackson, Deputy Superintendent, Government Affairs and Charter Schools Branch
Shanine Coats, Federal Policy Liaison, Government Affairs and Charter Schools Branch

Other than statutory and regulatory requirements included in the document, the contents of this guidance do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.