March 19, 2020

Senator Lamar Alexander  
Chairman, HELP Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, HELP Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Bobby Scott  
Chairman, Education & Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Virginia Foxx  
Ranking Member, Education & Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives,

We, the executive directors of the undersigned organizations, lead the state associations representing the nation’s public school superintendents. We write today to call on Congress to grant the U.S. Sec. of Education the authority necessary to grant statewide, narrow-in-scope waivers related to assessment and accountability in the context of the current national crisis related to COVID-19.

The last time our group came together on a joint letter was to support the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which included carefully negotiated language to clarify stipulations related to the secretary’s regulatory authority. We were happy to support those provisions, in the context of regular operations and day-to-day needs and responsibilities. Now, as our country’s public school superintendents are working to support our students in a new remote-learning environment, it is clear that the status quo is not enough.

With more than three-quarters of our states issuing statewide school closures—closures that are increasingly likely to last the remainder of the school year—it is clear there will be an impact on our ability to comply with assessment and accountability requirements.

We are not asking to step away from our responsibilities to educate our students or not be accountable for their academic progress. We are asking that federal policy and requirements are temporarily adjustable to reflect the unique set of circumstances currently facing our schools.

It is imperative the U.S. Dept. of Education is able to address this emergent need by issuing a blanket, statewide, narrow-in-scope waiver to expedite the process by which states can pursue and receive the necessary relief related to uncertainty over how assessments and accountability will play out and how/if flexibility will be granted.

Rather than rely on a paper-heavy process by which each state would need to individually submit paperwork requesting their specific flexibilities—flexibilities that would potentially vary from state to state—we urge Congress to authorize the Department to provide these waivers. Thank you for considering this urgent request and we look forward to working with you. Please direct all questions to Noelle Ellerson Ng (nellerson@aasa.org).

Sincerely, See next page
Lisa Parady  
Alaska Superintendents Association

Kirk Miller  
School Administrators of Montana

Ryan Hollingsworth  
School Superintendents of Alabama

Katherine Joyce  
North Carolina Association of School Administrators

Richard Abernathy  
Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators

Aimee Copas  
North Dakota Association of School Administrators

Mark Joraanstad  
Arizona School Administrators

Michael S. Dulaney  
Nebraska Council of School Administrators

Lisa Escarcega  
Colorado Association of School Executives

Carl M. Ladd  
New Hampshire School Administrators Association

Frances Rabinowitz  
Connecticut Assoc. of Public School Superintendents

Richard G. Bozza  
New Jersey Association of School Administrators

Tammy Croce  
Delaware Association of School Administrators

Stan R. Rounds  
New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders

Juhan Mixon  
Florida Association of School Administrators

Susan Keema  
Nevada Association of School Superintendents

John Zauner  
Georgia School Superintendents Association

Charles S. Dedrick  
New York State Council of School Superintendents

Roark R. Horn  
School Administrators of Iowa

R. Kirk Hamilton  
Buckeye Association of School Administrators

Rob Winslow  
Idaho Association of School Administrators

Pam Deering  
Oklahoma Association of School Administrators

S. Brent Clark  
Illinois Association of School Administrators

Craig Hawkins  
Confederation of Oregon School Administrators

John T. Coopman  
Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents

Mark DiRocco  
Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators

Gene A. Buie  
USA/Kansas - KSSA

Thomas DiPaola  
Rhode Island School Superintendents Association

Rhonda K. Caldwell  
Kentucky Association of School Administrators

Beth Phibbs  
South Carolina Association of School Administrators

Michael W. Faulk  
Louisiana Association of School Superintendents

Rob Monson  
School Administrators of South Dakota
Thomas A. Scott
Massachusetts Assoc. of School Superintendents

Dale P. Lynch
Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents

Mary Pat Fannon
Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland

Kevin Brown
Texas Association of School Administrators

Eileen King
Maine School Superintendents Association

Jeffrey D. Francis
Vermont Superintendents Association

Christopher A. Wigent
Michigan Association of School Administrators

Joel Aune
Washington Association of School Administrators

Gary M. Amoroso
Minnesota Association of School Administrators

Jon R. Bales
Wisconsin Assoc. of School District Administrators

Doug Hayter
Missouri Association of School Administrators

Susan Lee Collins
West Virginia Association of School Administrators

Ronnie McGehee
Mississippi Association of School Administrators

Kevin Mitchell
Wyoming Association of School Administrators

CC: Senate HELP Committee
House Education & Labor Committee