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**Public Notice of** **ESSA Waiver for Eighth-Grade Science Flexibility**

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is seeking comments on the following waiver request for the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), which will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. A survey with an opportunity for comments and questions is provided at this [link](https://forms.office.com/r/btDWgcpFW3) until 11:59 p.m. **November 22, 2024.**

The State is seeking to renew a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education that allows eighth-grade students enrolled in the high school physical science course to take the physical science end-of-grade assessment instead of the grade 8 science end-of-grade assessment. The State is seeking to renew the existing waiver, which expires after the 2024-2025 school year, for another four years (2025-2026 through 2028-2029).

In order to support accelerated models of learning, eliminate extra testing, and ensure testing closely aligns with instruction, Georgia is seeking to renew its existing waiver for eighth-grade students in high school physical science. The State was granted a similar waiver request in 2021. However, this waiver will expire at the end of the 2024-2025 school year and the need for such a waiver remains. In 2024, more than 41,000 physical science end-of-grade assessments were taken by eighth-grade students who took high school physical science. Without a waiver, these students would have had to take the grade 8 science end-of-grade assessment that is not aligned with high school physical science. A waiver renewal will further the State’s commitment to providing accelerated learning opportunities for all students while eliminating the burden of double testing. Should this waiver be denied, as many as 43,000 eighth-grade students across the state of Georgia who take high school physical science each year will be expected to take the grade 8 science end-of-grade assessment, which is not aligned to standards for the high school course.

Prior to submitting this ESSA waiver request, public notice is being provided to education stakeholders across Georgia. GaDOE is providing notification by posting an intent to renew a waiver on the GaDOE website. In addition, the State has emailed information pertaining to the waiver to all district superintendents, assessment directors, curriculum directors, and Title I directors. Copies of all comments that GaDOE may receive from stakeholders in response to this notice will be attached to the waiver request sent to the U.S. Department of Education.