

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for Waiver of School Level Expenditure Data Reporting Requirements

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is submitting an application for a waiver from Section 1111(h)(C)(x) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Section 8401(a)(3) of ESEA, as amended by ESSA, allows the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to waive any statutory or regulatory requirement of this Act for which a waiver request is submitted. All waiver requests are required to address a number of components, which are included below.

1. Identify the federal programs affected by this waiver request

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) requests a waiver for Section 1111(h)(C)(x).

2. Describe which federal statutory or regulatory requirements are to be waived

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) requests that the deadline to fulfill the requirements of Section 1111(h)(C)(x) for reporting 2018-19 school year expenditure data be extended from June 30, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

WDPI has been developing data displays for public reporting as well as training and technical assistance materials for the field, and was on target for a June 2020 public release when the COVID-19 disruption began. Closing state offices and responding to local educational agencies' (LEAs) needs has forced WDPI to reprioritize work. WDPI's capacity to meet the June 30 deadline is challenged and the deadline may be unattainable.

3. Describe how the waiving of the requirements indicated above will advance student academic achievement

LEAs have expressed concern about their ability to analyze and process their data with district leadership and staff, and to prepare to discuss their data with the public, by June 30. Local COVID-19 response and developing virtual and other instructional alternatives are occupying LEA time and attention and will continue to do so through the spring and into the summer. Fall will be a better time for LEAs to integrate school-level expenditure data into their existing outcome reviews.

4. Describe the methods that will be used to monitor and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation plan of this waiver request

WDPI will publish the data by December 31, 2020 to meet implementation requirements of the waiver. WDPI will continue to collect school-level expenditure data and will publish 2019-20 expenditure data on the regularly scheduled timeframe in the spring of 2021.

5. Describe how schools will continue to provide assistance to the same populations served by programs for which waivers are requested

This waiver does not affect the provision of programming, but would rather move back the deadline for reporting school-level expenditure data. Moreover, schools in Wisconsin have already set preliminary budgets for the 2020-21

school year. It is also important to note, given the large proportion of school budgets that go to salaries, that school districts were required to issue preliminary layoff notices by April 30 under state statutes.

6. If the waiver relates to provisions of subsections (b) or (h) of section 1111 of ESEA, describe how the SEA requesting the waiver will maintain or improve transparency in reporting to parents and the public on student achievement and school performance, including the achievement of the subgroups of students identified in section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) of ESEA

Under Wisconsin state law, school boards are still required to make their budgets publicly available. This waiver would not affect the reporting of student achievement data, which has already been suspended under a separate waiver received by Wisconsin, and would not suspend this year's reporting requirement. This waiver would instead delay the publication of school-level expenditure data with the goal of improving transparency so LEAs are better able to discuss and explain the data to their public and the department is better able to display it in an accessible manner.

As required under the waiver process, the state educational agency must provide the public and all local education agencies in the state with notice of and the opportunity to comment on this request. The Department's application for waiver authority is available to review at <https://dpi.wi.gov/esea>.

Written Comments

Public comment on the application described above may be submitted by using the Department's form for submitting comment at <https://forms.gle/Ta91WQbjhoPibUs96>. Questions or additional comment may be accepted by using the contact information below. Written comments should be submitted no later than 10 a.m. on Friday, May 8, 2020, in order to receive consideration.

Agency Contact Person

Dan Bush
Director, School Financial Services Team
Division for Finance and Management
Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
daniel.bush@dpi.wi.gov