



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center
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Richard A. Carranza
Superintendent of Schools

www.HoustonISD.org
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February 6, 2018

The Honorable Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Commissioner Morath:

The purpose of our letter is to request a one-year reprieve on accountability post-Harvey for all schools. Houston ISD's classrooms are not the same since September 11, the first day of school. And 2017-18 is not a normal school year for any Houston area or coastal school district. As the Superintendent and Board President of Texas' largest school district, we have an obligation to speak up for our region as Houston rebuilds homes and schools.

Our rationale for this request is straightforward: a one-year pause on accountability is the right thing to do after America's worst flood. Our schools are institutions of learning and personal development for thousands of children. Our students rely on us to educate them, protect them and nurture them into productive citizens ready to conquer the world. We will still meet our goal, but Harvey changes everything.

While districts are trying to return to normalcy, TEA is rolling out a new accountability system per HB 22 (85R). We know the accountability system is recalibrating, and the standards will be higher. Usually, when the agency launches a new accountability system, schools are not given ratings during the first year of the roll out.

You understand school communities are uncomfortable with A-F ratings determined by an accountability system that continues to rely on standardized testing, especially after a year like this one. In addition, the accountability standards and metrics for calculating letter grades are vastly unknown for the current school year; therefore, our administrators, principals and teachers are shooting for an invisible target. Teaching and learning is happening at every campus, especially the Achieve 180 schools. However, school districts need clear and timely guidance from TEA on the standards, metrics and targets.

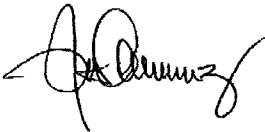
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We support your pursuit for "Not Rated" designations for schools impacted by Harvey; however, we want to stress that the federal waiver should apply to all schools and zip codes, regardless of their status before the storm hit.

Sincerely,



Rhonda Skillern-Jones
HISD Board President



Richard A. Carranza
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Sen. Joan Huffman
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