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**James F. Lane, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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## **OFFICE OF MEDIA RELATIONS**

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# **VDOE Preparing Application for Statewide Testing Waiver**

RICHMOND — Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane today directed Virginia Department of Education staff to prepare an application to the US Department of Education for a statewide waiver from federal requirements related to student testing.

The state superintendent issued the directive after U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced an expedited process for states to request statewide waivers from assessment and certain accountability provisions of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

“I thank USED for responding to the pleas of states — including Virginia — for relief during this time of national crisis and for providing a simple and expedited process for requesting waivers,” Lane said. “I anticipate presenting our waiver application to the state Board of Education in early April and submitting it to Washington immediately upon approval by the board.”

ESSA requires annual testing in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school. The federal law also requires states to administer science tests at least once during elementary, middle and high school. The commonwealth’s assessment system also includes tests in writing and history and history and social science that are not required by the federal law but are mandated by state law and regulations.

“We are exploring all options to cancel state-required Standards of Learning assessments for the year in light of today’s announcement by USED,” Lane said. “But with today’s announcement, our educators and schools can focus on supporting the health and well-being of students and on providing opportunities for continued learning while schools are closed.”

Last Friday, Governor Ralph Northam ordered all schools to close through March 27 as part of the commonwealth’s strategy to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Several of the state’s largest divisions have announced that they will remain closed until mid-April.

VDOE is encouraging school divisions to continue to monitor the [COVID-19 and Virginia Public Schools page](#) on the department website for updates.

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