



*News from Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley & the
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

On the Desktop - April 8, 2020

USED Approves Massachusetts Waiver Request for ESSA Grants Due to COVID-19

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents, and School Business Officials,

The U.S. Department of Education has approved Massachusetts for the following waivers offered under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act):

- **Extension for Use of FY19 Funds:** FY19 ESSA funds set to expire on September 30 of this year can now be used until September 30, 2021.
- **Title I: Limit on Carryover (15 percent):** The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may waive this limit for FY20, even if your district has been granted a waiver within the last three years.
- **Title IVA: Restrictions Loosened to Allow Districts to Best Meet Current Needs:**
 - **Needs assessment waived for all districts:** For districts receiving \$30,000 or more, needs assessments have been waived for the 2019-20 school year. (Needs assessments are not required for districts receiving less than \$30,000.)
 - **Content area spending requirements waived:** Districts receiving \$30,000 or more in Title IVA funds are not required to spend at least 20 percent on well-rounded education and safe and healthy schools nor some amount on Effective Use of Technology. Expenditures still must be allowable under Title IV.
 - **Cap on technology infrastructure lifted for FY19 and FY20 funds:** Districts can spend more than 15 percent on technology infrastructure from the funds set aside for Effective Use of Technology. (There is no longer a limit on how much of the grant can be spent on technology infrastructure).
- **Title IIA: Professional Development Definition in ESSA Waived:** Districts may conduct time-sensitive, one-time or stand-alone professional development to help educators provide effective distance or remote learning.

Additional waivers are expected in the coming weeks and months and might include flexibility for IDEA and Perkins grants. We will keep districts apprised of new waivers as they are granted, as well as any special procedures for districts wishing to exercise the above and any additional

waivers. If you have questions, please contact your federal grants liaison or email questions to federalgrantprograms@doe.mass.edu.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner