

## Every Student Succeeds Act

### Middle School Mathematics Assessment Exemption

As the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is implemented, states may have questions about assessment and accountability requirements. In particular, questions may arise over the middle school mathematics assessment exemption that has been included in ESSA. To account for middle school students who may take a high school level mathematics course with an end-of-course assessment, states can apply for the flexibility to exempt these students from the state mathematics assessment that must be administered in eighth grade.

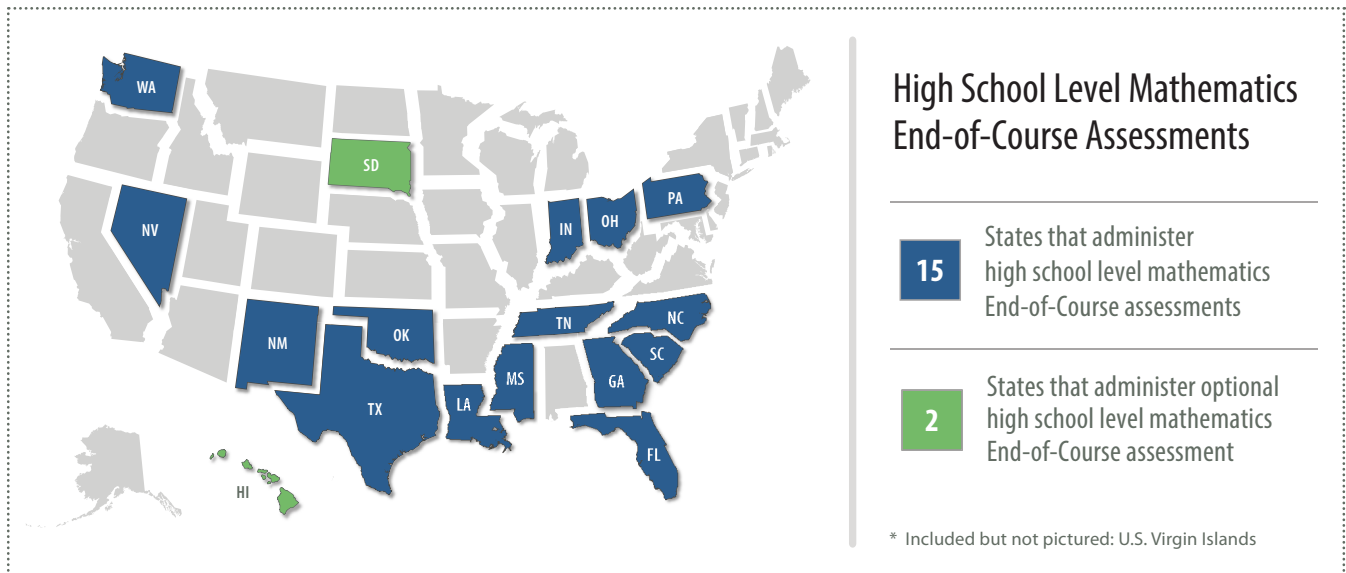
Under Section 1111(b)(2)(C) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states may exempt eighth grade students from the eighth grade state mathematics assessments if:

“(i) such student takes the end-of-course assessment the State typically administers to meet the requirements of subparagraph (B)(v)(I)(bb) in mathematics;

“(ii) such student’s achievement on such end-of-course assessment is used for purposes of subsection (c)(4)(B)(i), in lieu of such student’s achievement on the mathematics assessment required under subparagraph (B)(v)(I)(aa), and such student is counted as participating in the assessment for purposes of subsection (c)(4)(B)(vi); and

“(iii) in high school, such student takes a mathematics assessment pursuant to subparagraph (B)(v)(I)(bb) that—  
“(I) is any end-of-course assessment or other assessment that is more advanced than the assessment taken by such student under clause (i) of this subparagraph; and “(II) shall be used to measure such student’s academic achievement for purposes of subsection (c)(4)(B)(i).” (see p. 27 of ESSA [statute](#))

Eighth grade students taking a high school level mathematics (e.g., Algebra I, Geometry) course with an attached state-administered end-of-course assessment would be exempt from taking a state mathematics assessment typically administered to students in eighth grade. This end-of-course assessment must meet the peer review requirements attached to high school assessments, ensuring that the assessment is appropriate in terms of accountability and reporting use. Additionally, eighth grade students who take an end-of-course assessment in a high school level mathematics course would have their scores count in the year the assessment is completed (see [proposed regulations](#) for assessments). These scores cannot be banked for later use once these students reach high school.



According to ESSA [proposed regulations](#) regarding assessments, students who completed an end-of-course mathematics assessment in eighth grade would be required to take a state-administered end-of-course mathematics assessment or nationally recognized mathematics assessment in high school, given the assessment is more advanced than the assessment taken in the eighth grade. This would enable students to meet the ESSA requirement to test all students in mathematics at least once in the high school grades.

States interested in incorporating this testing exemption (allowing eighth grade students to take a high school level mathematics end-of-course assessment in lieu of a state eighth grade mathematics assessment) into their state plans must outline state strategies to provide all students with opportunities to be prepared for and take advanced mathematics (e.g., Algebra I, Geometry) courses in middle school (see USED's [Overview of Proposed Regulations: Assessment](#)). States that do not elect to incorporate this testing flexibility would continue administering an eighth grade mathematics assessment all students in the grade and use these scores for accountability calculations.



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