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## For Immediate Release

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### ATPE Shares Statement on 2020-21 A-F Ratings Pause

*The largest educator association in Texas grateful that the Texas Education Agency has listened to its concerns regarding accountability, STAAR mandates during COVID-19 pandemic*

**AUSTIN, Texas**—The announcement from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Commissioner Mike Morath regarding pausing the A-F Accountability Ratings for the 2020-21 school year is a welcome one, says the [Association of Texas Professional Educators](http://atpe.org) (ATPE), the largest educator association in Texas.

In a Dec. 10 announcement, TEA shared the news that A-F ratings would be paused “...due to the ongoing disruptions associated with COVID-19.” The STAAR test is scheduled to proceed, but it will not be used for accountability purposes. School districts that tie teacher evaluations to STAAR data will have the flexibility to remove this component for the year.

“As an association representing 100,000 educators across the state, who have made extraordinary sacrifices during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are grateful that TEA and Commissioner Morath have taken some of our advocacy to heart,” said ATPE Executive Director **Shannon Holmes**. “These changes do not quite go as far as we wish and have fought for these last few months, but we appreciate that TEA has clearly heard us.”

The first round of A-F letter-grade ratings for Texas public school districts was issued in 2018. ATPE was among the first education groups to express concerns about moving to an A-F rating system, considering that the basis of any rating depends on an underlying accountability system that was already too heavily reliant on state standardized testing data. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown this concern to be well-founded.

Holmes added: “For now, at least, our state’s dedicated educators have one less thing to worry about. We believe that waiving the STAAR test mandate completely for the year is the best move for our Texas public schools. However, removing the added pressure of the A-F ratings is a step in the right direction.”

In November, [ATPE shared a letter with TEA, Commissioner Morath, Gov. Greg Abbott, and other state leaders urging the waiver of state testing requirements](#), as they had for the 2019-20 school year. One of the chief reasons for the necessity of this waiver is that numerous high-stakes decisions are tied to standardized testing data, which would not be reliable under the circumstances surrounding this difficult school year.

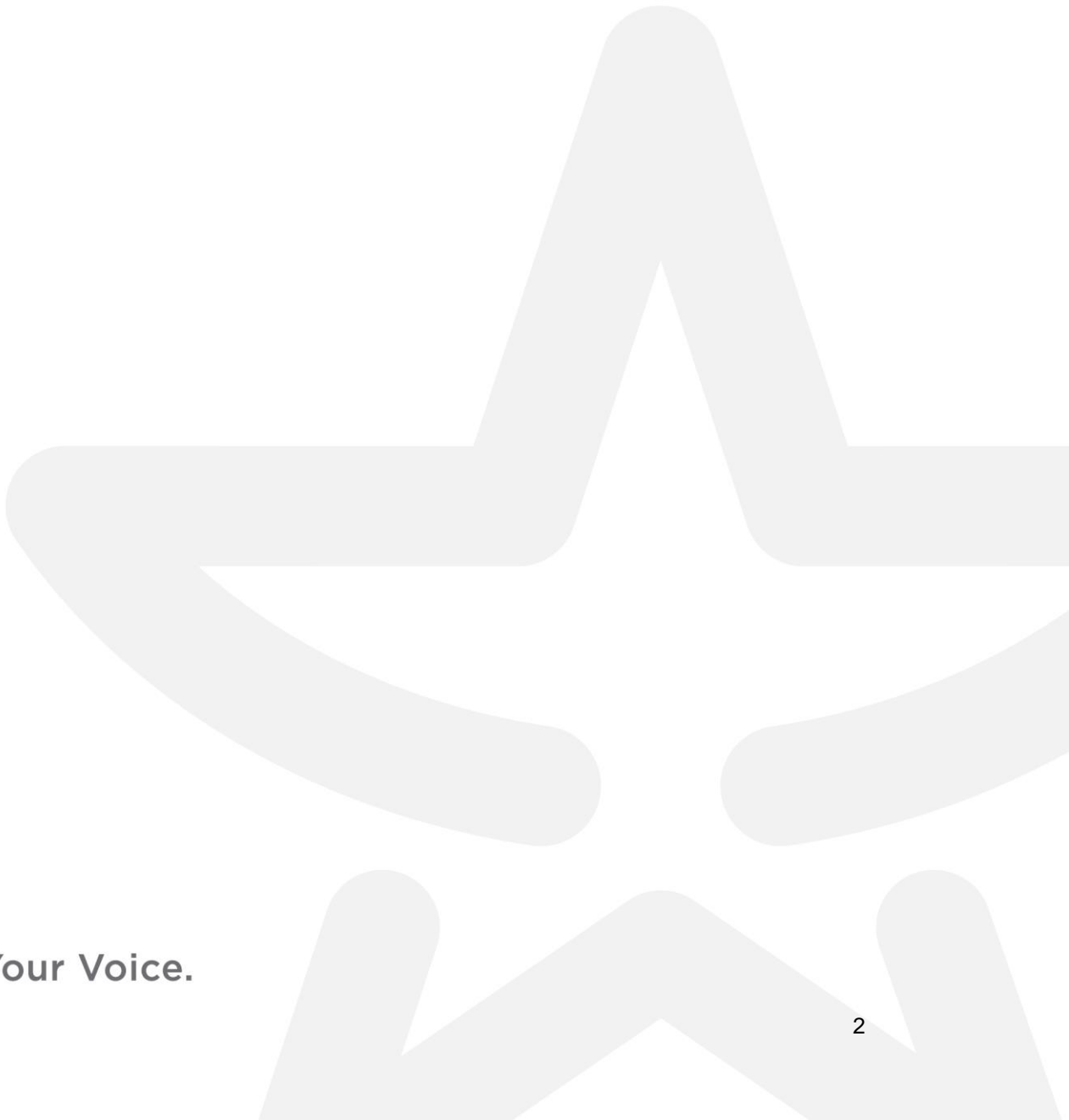
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#### About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

Founded in 1980, ATPE is the leading educators’ association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, and future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas’ five million public school students. | [atpe.org](http://atpe.org)

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