



Extenuating Circumstance for Waivers Under Section 121 of the Public School Code

Under Act 158 of 2018 (Act 158), a chief school administrator may grant a waiver of the requirements for demonstration of statewide graduation requirements as set forth in Act 158 to accommodate a student who experiences extenuating circumstances.

Under Act 158, extenuating circumstances includes:

- serious illness
- death in the student's immediate family
- family emergency
- frequent school transfers or transfer from an out-of-State school in grade twelve
- another emergency as determined by the Secretary of Education and approved by the State Board of Education

To date, the Secretary has not determined, nor has the State Board of Education approved, another emergency that would constitute an extenuating circumstance.

Because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the administration of the Keystone Exams, including the United States Department of Education's waiver of the requirement to administer statewide assessments during the 2019-20 school year, its effects on administration of the NOCTI, and its effects on students' access to other opportunities that can be used as evidence in demonstrating graduation requirements, such as cooperative work experiences and community service, Secretary Ortega has determined the COVID-19 pandemic to be considered an extenuating circumstance for students in the graduating class of 2023 and requests that the Board approve this modification as recommended by the Council of Basic Education on September 8, 2021.

Approved by the State Board of Education on September 9, 2021