

PREPARING TODAY'S CHILDREN TO OVERCOME TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

How the Every Student Succeeds Act protects the right of every student to receive a quality education



The Education Trust

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You see the budding hero in your children.

And you know that to save the day, your children will need more than suits and capes. They'll need opportunities to reach their potential in their schools and classrooms. The Every Student Succeeds Act protects the right of every student — **regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, home language, or family income** — to receive a quality education. Here is what you need to know — and what you can do — to make sure the law works for your child and other children in your communities. #MyChildMatters



What is the Every Student Succeeds Act?

The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, is a federal education law that was signed by former President Obama. It replaced No Child Left Behind.

The new law provides a substantial amount of money — more than \$14 billion in total — to improve educational opportunities for students who have for far too long been underserved in our schools. In exchange, the law requires states to make sure that schools and districts take steps to eliminate inequities in resources and improve outcomes for all students. And it requires states to engage families, educators, civil rights organizations, education advocates, and business leaders in the decision-making process.



What is going on with ESSA?

Right now, states are working on their plans for how to comply with the law. States have to decide how they will measure how well schools are serving their students, and which schools need to improve. They are also planning for how they will support schools that are struggling. And, they are figuring out what they need to do to make sure that families and communities have the information they need to push for improvement in their schools. All of this information has to be included in the ESSA plans states are required to submit to the U.S. Department of Education in either April or September of this year.



What decisions are being made by my state?

One of the biggest decisions states are making right now concerns their school accountability systems. A school accountability system is the set of policies and practices that states use to hold all public schools — including charter schools — responsible for raising achievement for all students.

Specifically states will have to decide:

- What measures are used to determine success?
 - How is a school identified as doing well or needing improvement?
 - If a school needs to improve in educating all of its students or an individual group or groups of students, what happens next?
 - Will these schools get the attention and resources they need?
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Why does this matter to my child?

For too long, our schools have under-invested in and provided uneven opportunities for low-income students; Black, Latino, and Native students; students with disabilities; and English learners. School accountability systems are a powerful tool for turning these patterns around. A strong system sends a clear signal that in order to be considered an “A” school, a school has to be serving all groups of students well.



What should you do?

Keep doing what you’re doing at this moment: informing yourself.

- Read Ed Trust’s ESSA fact sheets (<http://edtru.st/ESSAFactSheets>).
- Go to your state education department’s website to find out if your state has released a draft ESSA plan or where they are in the process.
- Find out ways to get involved in the ESSA implementation process, for example by attending an ESSA community outreach meeting near you.
- See if there’s an organization in your area or in your state that is actively working on ESSA implementation plans.
- Finally, join Ed Trust’s mailing list by visiting www.EdTrust.org.