

## THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA): REQUIREMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DELAWARE

### FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS THAT REMAIN THE SAME UNDER ESSA

Under ESSA there are some unchanged federal requirements. ESSA still requires:

1. State **standards** aligned with college and career readiness skills.
2. A single statewide **accountability** system that measures the performance of all students and subgroups of students.
3. Annual reading and mathematics **assessments** for grades 3-8 and high school and annual science assessments in grade 5, 8 and high school.
4. 95% of students and 95% of each subgroup participate in **testing**.
5. Annual reporting on **school performance**.
6. State and district **supports** for the lowest performing schools.



### SOME OF THE OPPORTUNITIES UNDER ESSA

**Measuring School Success** is about more than just state test results. The Delaware School Success Framework, or DSSF, currently uses multiple measures to determine school success, but we have an opportunity to improve and expand those measures under ESSA. The new legislation still requires a single statewide accountability system that is differentiated and measured annually, but there are new required components of that system. The required components of ESSA accountability are:

1. academic proficiency;
2. measure of student growth or another academic indicator;
3. high school graduation rates, which may include extended year graduation rates;

The DSSF includes each of the first three components. Under ESSA we will need to add:

4. English learner growth to proficiency; and
5. a measure of school quality or student success. The School quality/student success measures may be designed to address student engagement, educator engagement or school safety and climate.



**School Improvement-** ESSA still requires states to identify schools for improvement and to approve locally-developed school improvement plans that use evidence-based strategies. ESSA also continues to require that districts and schools develop those plans in partnership with parents and school staff. However, ESSA eliminates the federal mandates around what our lowest performing schools must do. Instead, districts are held responsible for developing and implementing plans that will result in timely and lasting improvements.

ESSA also includes state responsibility to support improvement in all Title I schools, regardless of how successful they are. State supports for all schools include

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1. Assistance to LEAs and schools that choose to use Title I funds to support early childhood education programs
2. Supports to LEAs to improve conditions for student learning through reducing bullying and harassment or the overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom
3. Supports to LEAs for meeting the needs of students who are transitioning between middle and high school in order to decrease the risk of dropping out
4. Support to LEAs in the identification, enrollment, attendance, and school stability of homeless students and
5. Any other supports the state determines will help students achieve state standards



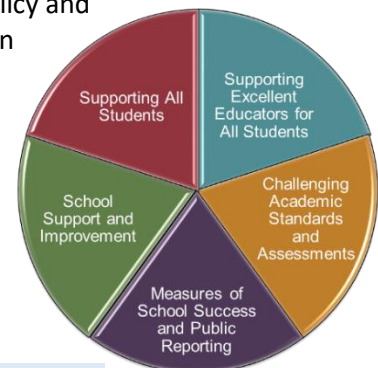
**Funding** under ESSA still places restrictions on how different Title funds may be used; however, ESSA clarifies some funding uses. For example, that Title I funds can be – and are encouraged to be – used to support early childhood programs and transitions to elementary school and also may be used to support dual enrollment and technical skills attainment at the high school level.

There is also a new grant under Title IV – the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant. We have very little information on this grant, but will share information with you as soon as we receive updates from the U.S. Department of Education.

### DELAWARE: POISED FOR THE ESSA TRANSITION

Delaware is in an excellent strategic position for implementing the new policy and forthcoming regulations for ESSA. There are many important themes within ESSA but the state plan will primarily focus on these topics:

- Supporting All Students
- Supporting Excellent Educators for All Students
- Challenging Academic Standards and Assessments
- Measures of School Success and Public Reporting
- School Support and Improvement



### SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS

The ESSA State Plan will address the topic of **Supporting All Students**. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) needs to describe how both it and the districts and schools will use ESSA funds to ensure all children receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education. The plan must include strategies and timelines for how DDOE, districts and charter schools will support

- Students' transitions from early childhood education to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to post-secondary education and careers
- Equitable access to a well-rounded education, in subjects such as English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and

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government, economics, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subjects, in which female students, minority students, English learners, children with disabilities, and low-income students are underrepresented

- School conditions for student learning, including activities to reduce:
  - Incidents of bullying and harassment;
  - The overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and
  - The use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety
- The effective use of technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students
- Parent, family, and community engagement
- The accurate identification of English learners and children with disabilities

Under ESSA there are several new areas of focus for states, districts, and schools to support all students. We look forward to stakeholder consultation on this topic, including the best strategies for addressing each area of focus.

### SUPPORTING EXCELLENT EDUCATORS FOR ALL STUDENTS

The state plan will also address the topic of **Supporting Excellent Educators for All Students**. Delaware has long focused on closing educator equity gaps because we, as a state, believe that we will only close the achievement gap for our highest need students if all students have equitable access to the most capable and well-prepared educators.

Delaware's most recent equity plan was accepted by the U.S. Department of Education in September 2015. The department consulted with approximately 300 people; including parents, civil rights leaders, teachers and others, over the course of about 20 meetings to help develop the plan. The plan, [Excellent Educators for All](#), addresses recruiting, retaining, and developing excellent educators for all Delaware students.

Delaware is also working towards enhancing professional learning opportunities and developing early career pathways in education for our secondary students who want to pursue education as a career. The good news is that many of Delaware's educators and local leaders are already showing what is possible for *all* students by re-doubling efforts to ensure that "excellent educators for all" is a statewide reality.

### CHALLENGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

Delaware is well-positioned to meet state plan requirements for **Challenging Academic Standards and Academic Assessments**.

Delaware's standards for English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies meet ESSA requirements. Our state assessments for elementary, middle and high school English/language arts and mathematics also meet ESSA requirements and we are already in the process of redesigning assessments to align with our recently adopted science and social studies standards.

Delaware also has alternate academic achievement standards and assessments for our students with significant cognitive abilities and statewide standards and an assessment of English Language proficiency.

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### MEASURES OF SCHOOL SUCCESS AND PUBLIC REPORTING

Another state plan topic is Accountability and Report Cards – what we refer to as **Measures of School Success and Public Reporting**. As explained earlier, Delaware is well positioned in this area, but there are opportunities for improving our current system.

More than 6,500 parents, educators, community members and students responded to an

online, voluntary survey conducted by the Delaware Department of Education as DSSF was being created. As we develop our state plan under ESSA, we will engage stakeholders again to determine whether there should be changes to the current metrics and to discuss options for the new measures that we need to add, namely English learner growth to proficiency and measures of school quality or student success.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the Delaware School Success Framework replaced Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, for all state and federal accountability.

As we look to ESSA, we will engage stakeholders on the current components of the DSSF and determine if there should be changes or additions to the current metrics.

Current DSSF measures	Required measures under ESSA
Student proficiency in English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies	Student proficiency in English/language arts, mathematics, and science
Student growth in English/language arts and mathematics (elementary and middle schools)	Measure of student growth or another academic indicator
On track to graduate in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade (high schools only)	
	English learner growth to language proficiency
4, 5, and 6 year graduation rates (high schools only)	High school graduation rate(s)
Attendance rates (elementary and middle schools only)	Measure(s) of school quality or student success
College and Career Preparation (high schools only)	

### SCHOOL SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT

A related plan topic is **School Support and Improvement**. Once schools receive ratings through the DSSF, states must identify schools for support and improvement. And as discussed earlier, many of the federal requirements around identified schools have changed.

There are two categories in which states need to identify schools. The first is targeted support and improvement. These are schools where one or more subgroup of students is “consistently underperforming.” States are required to notify LEAs about these schools each year and LEAs must develop a plan to improve student subgroup performance.

The second category is comprehensive support and improvement – these are the lowest performing five percent (5%) of schools, high schools that fail to graduate more than one third of their students, and schools that have not shown progress under targeted support and improvement. States are required to identify schools for comprehensive support and improvement at least once every three years and the state must approve the LEA plans for improvement.

ESSA also requires states to support improvement in all Title I schools, regardless of how successful they are.

Given the number of policy changes around school supports and improvement, all states will need to make changes to their systems for identifying and supporting low-performing schools. We look forward to stakeholder consultation on this topic, including areas where the state can provide support for our schools.

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### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

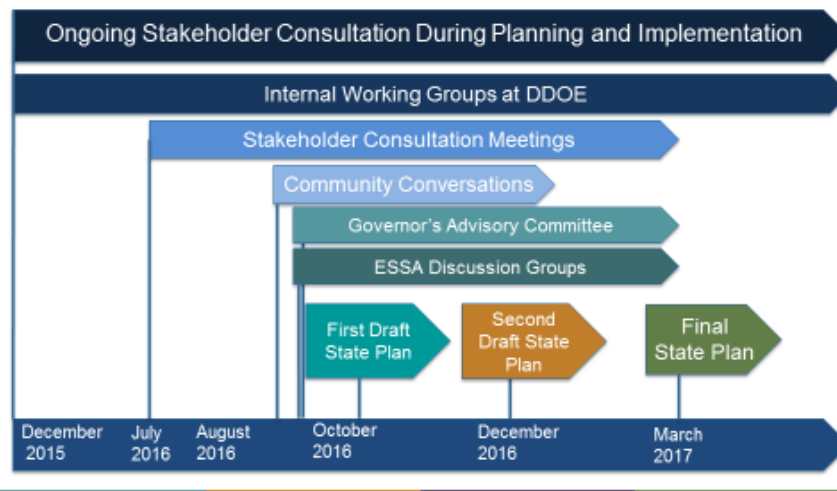
Engaging our stakeholders during the development of the DSSF and equity plan left us well positioned to meet the requirements of ESSA, but there is more work to do. We will **re-engage with stakeholders** and use the additional feedback to inform our ESSA state plan development and to check our progress as we implement that plan.



Stakeholder consultation will be carried out in multiple ways:

- First, we are in the process of scheduling time during existing group meetings. We are calling these **stakeholder consultation meetings**.
- Second, the department has scheduled **community conversations** across the state. These meetings will be open to the public.
- Third, the Governor through Executive Order 62 created an **ESSA Advisory Committee**. This committee brings together a variety of education leaders and advocates who are required to be part of the consultation process and will provide input to the state plan.
- Fourth, the department will engage representatives of stakeholder groups in **ESSA discussion groups**. Stakeholder groups will nominate participants to these topical discussion groups. The first group will focus discussions on technical topics related to measures of school success and reporting. The second group will focus discussions on provisions for student and school supports. The discussion groups will provide information to the Advisory group created by this Executive Order.
- Finally, the department has established an [ESSA web page](#) and ESSA state plan [email account](#) so that we can share information and collect feedback. Surveys will also be available on the ESSA webpage in September to provide additional feedback.

### Stakeholder Consultation & Plan Development Timeline



We also have timelines for plan development. After the conversations and consultations, we will synthesize input and feedback into our first draft of the Delaware State Plan by the end of October. We will share our first draft and continue to solicit feedback on the draft plan to produce our second draft, which we plan to complete by the end of December. Our goal is to submit the final plan by March, which will allow us to have the plan approved prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year.

To share your questions and comments about the Every Student Succeeds Act, please email [ESSAStatePlan@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:ESSAStatePlan@doe.k12.de.us).