

New Jersey's ESSA State Plan

New Jersey Department of Education

What is an ESSA State Plan?

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* requires states to ensure that all students have equitable access to high-quality educational resources and opportunities, and that all schools are improving overall student performance and closing persistent achievement gaps. ESSA replaces *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and reauthorizes the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* of 1965.

To receive federal funding, most of which goes directly to school districts, states are required every few years to submit a state plan to the U.S. Department of Education detailing how it will comply with the federal law. On August 9, 2017, [New Jersey's State Plan](#) was one of the first in the nation to be approved, allowing some implementation to begin during the 2017-18 school year.

How was New Jersey's ESSA State Plan created?

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) collaborated with families, students, educators, district leaders, unions and organizations for over a year to ensure that our state plan represented the values of New Jersey communities. The full list of communities and organizations who offered their valuable time to engage with the NJDOE is available on the [NJDOE ESSA website](#).

What's in the plan?

Our state plan was developed by New Jersey for New Jersey, and thus, will empower local communities to identify their unique student needs and receive targeted supports to ensure all students receive the education they deserve. New Jersey's State Plan:

- Aligns state assistance to schools
- Focuses on each child by shining a light on the performance of individual student groups
- Enriches the state vision of what makes a school successful beyond testing
- Accounts for student *growth* over static achievement benchmarks
- Highlights chronic absenteeism to start conversations on what keeps students out of school

What does this mean for New Jersey?

New Jersey's State Plan uses more information than ever before to identify what schools need the most assistance. For instance, the state looks at academic growth and the performance of student groups rather than overall averages. As a response to new federal requirements and public input, NJ School Performance Reports provide more valuable data about the quality of students' educational experiences in each school. These reports are meant to spark conversations in the school community about how to improve and where to provide better supports for students.

Where can I find more information?

- [Visit our ESSA website](#)
- [Explore school and district reports](#)
- [Contact us directly](#)
- [Follow us on Twitter](#)
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Supporting New Jersey's Schools under ESSA

To determine schools in need of support under ESSA, states will look at academic proficiency, academic growth (SGP) or graduation rate, the progress of English language learners, and in New Jersey for 2017-2018, chronic absenteeism.

A school is identified as in need of targeted support if it has:

- A student group, or "subgroup," perform at or below the bottom 5 percent of schools, or
- A subgroup that is "consistently underperforming" as defined by the state.
- PARCC Proficiency, SGP or Graduation Rate, ELL Progress, and Chronic Absenteeism rates are factored together to produce a Summative Score. The schools with student groups, or subgroups, at or below the bottom 5 percent "cutoff score," or a school with a subgroup that is "consistently underperforming," will be identified as in need of targeted support.

A school is identified as in need of comprehensive support if it:

- Scores in the bottom 5% in these factors overall,
- Is a high school with a graduation rate under 67%, or
- Has been identified for targeted support for more than 3 years.
- PARCC Proficiency, SGP or Graduation Rate, ELL Progress, and Chronic Absenteeism rates are factored together to produce a Summative Score. The schools with summative scores at or below the bottom 5 percent, or with less than 67 percent graduation rate, or have been targeted for 3 or more years, will be identified as in need of comprehensive support.

What is a "subgroup"?

"Subgroup" is a term defined in The Every Student Succeeds Act, section 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi), and is meant only to note groups within a larger group. Looking at the performance of subgroups ensures all groups of students are accounted for and receiving the supports they need.

- All students fall under one, or multiple, subgroups
- Subgroups include major racial and ethnic groups, the economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English learners
- In NJ, there must be at least 20 students in a given group to be factored into calculations

How does NJ define "consistently underperforming"?

This means that for two consecutive years, a school has at least one subgroup of students which:

- Falls below its interim target in academic achievement;
- Falls below a pre-determined level in academic progress (or for high schools, graduation rate levels); and
- For each indicator, falls below the state average for all students.

What happens next?

Once a school has been identified as in need of support, NJDOE staff will work closely with districts to assess the level and types of supports needed for the district, school, educators, and students.

How will students receive support?

Under ESSA, the NJDOE must ensure that districts provide equitable access to a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework. We strive to accomplish this through:

- Improved Data to Identify Student Needs
- Supporting implementation of Tiered System of Supports
- Leveraging Equity Regulations
- Birth through Grade 12 Standards
- Increasing Access to Early Childhood Education
- Guidance to Best Use Funds to Meet Students' Needs