What Organizers Need to Know About ESSA

Each state must create plans that conform with ESSA and submit them to the U.S. Department of Education no later than September 18, 2017,* to go into effect for the 2017-18 school year.

* States can choose an earlier submission date of April 3, 2017.

ESSA State Plans

Each state must produce a State Plan that describes how ESSA will be implemented. States are encouraged to think holistically about how to attain the twin goals of equity and academic achievement.

Here’s an opening for organizers!

School Improvement Plans

Using the state’s accountability plan, schools will be identified by the state for comprehensive support & improvement and those identified by the school district for targeted support & improvement based upon one or more consistently underperforming subgroups.

Which schools?

- The 5% of lowest-performing schools
- Schools with a graduation rate under 87%
- Schools in which a subgroup* is consistently underperforming, even after state assistance

*Specific subgroups are defined by the state and could be, for example, Black students or ELLs

Who decides the plans?

School districts are required to collaborate with local stakeholders to develop and implement an improvement plan.

Here’s an opening for organizers!

Accountability Plans

States must judge school performance by the following factors:

- Proficiency in Reading & Math
- Graduation Rate
- Student Growth
- English Language Proficiency
- School Quality

at least one of these:

- Student Engagement
- Educator Engagement
- Student Access/Completion of Advanced Coursework
- School Climate and Safety
- Any Other Indicator the State Chooses

Here’s an opening for organizers!

Communities can push policymakers to include factors that focus on more than just a test score. For example, states judging schools based on their suspension rates could help push districts away from punitive and discriminatory discipline models and toward policies of restorative justice that keep students in the classroom and learning.

There’s a lot more to learn!

ESSA is a massive, complicated law — this infographic just scratches the surface. Visit the resources below to learn more about ESSA, how it can impact your community, and how to use it to help make public education work for everyone:

ESSA Organizing & Policy Toolkit: http://www.schottfoundation.org/ejn/essa
NAACP Legal and Education Defense Fund: http://www.naacpldf.org/search/node/ESSA
Dignity In Schools Campaign: http://www.dignityinschools.org/search/node/ESSA
Mississippi Department of Education: http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/SSE/essa

Southern Echo, Inc. www.southernecho.org
Schott Foundation, Inc. www.schottfoundation.org