

# What Organizers Need to Know About



**Deadline!**  
September  
**18**

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!**

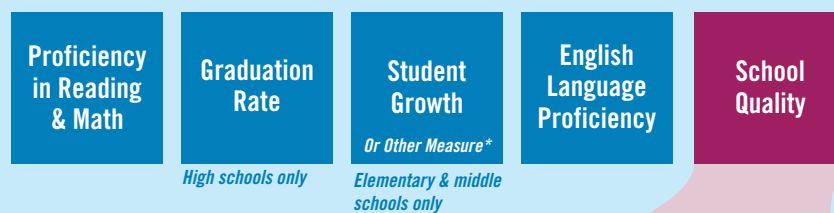
ESSA requires states to involve local stakeholders throughout the drafting process. Without organized communities in the room advocating for the support they need, the law could fall prey to well-connected lobbyists and corporate interest groups. Communities can hold letter-writing campaigns, bus in parents to public hearings, and demand transparency and inclusion in the process.

## Accountability Plans

### What goes into an accountability plan?

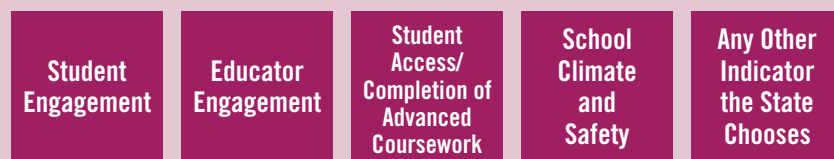
States must judge school performance by the following factors:

**all of these:**



\*see the statute language for more details

### at least one of these:



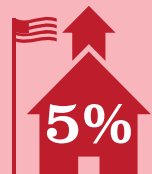
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Communities can push policymakers to include factors that focus on more than just a test score. For example, states judging schools based on their suspension rates could help push districts away from punitive and discriminatory discipline models and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

## 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 67%



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.



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Schools identified for improvement must notify parents and list ways to get involved in developing and enacting the school's improvement plan.

Without pressure from parents, students, and educators, schools could choose a plan of privatization, cuts for low-income kids and corporate management.

But if the local community is organized and ready, they can make sure schools choose a plan that emphasizes equity, justice, and gets to the root of systemic problems.

## 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>

Women's Law Center ESSA Webinar:

<http://bit.ly/NWLCwebinar>

Mississippi Department of Education:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/SSE/essa>

Protecting an Opportunity to Learn Through ESSA State Accountability Plans:

<http://bit.ly/schottESSAwebinar>



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