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JULY 17, 2017

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State Education Department Releases Revised Draft Every Student Succeeds Act Plan

Revisions Made in Response to the More Than 1,000 Comments
Received on the Draft ESSA Plan

Revised Draft Plan Continues to Emphasize Fostering Equity in Education for All Students and Expands Measures for School Accountability & Student Success

The New York State Education Department today presented revisions to the draft Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan to the Board of Regents. Since releasing the draft plan in May, the Department received more than 1,070 public comments, both in writing and verbally at the 13 public meetings held across the state, and made revisions to the draft plan in response to those comments.

The revised draft plan continues to emphasize fostering equity in education for New York's students; expands measures for school support and accountability and student success; and requires school-level improvement plans for the lowest performing schools overall as well as schools with the lowest performance for certain student populations. The plan also includes strategies for supporting the professional growth of educators and ensuring that all students, including English language learners/Multilingual learners, immigrant students, migratory youth, homeless youth, and neglected and delinquent youth, have access to a well-rounded, culturally responsive education that supports their academic and social-emotional development. The Department detailed [highlights of the plan](#) to the Board of Regents at its May meeting.

“The Board of Regents and I take our responsibility to improve teaching and learning in New York's schools very seriously, and we were awed by the young people and other

members of the public that came to our public meetings to share their thoughts on New York’s draft ESSA plan,” Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa said. “We heard you, and our revised ESSA plan is better because of it. Through ESSA, New York is poised to take a more holistic approach to accountability that looks at multiple measures of school and student success. This approach allows us to continually evolve and adapt so we can ensure that our systems are culturally responsive and place an emphasis on educating the whole child.”

“At each of the 13 public meetings we held on our draft ESSA plan, parents, educators and students all spoke passionately about certain aspects of our plan – from school accountability and transfers schools to the importance of social and emotional supports and physical education – and we listened,” Commissioner Elia said. “The revised draft plan includes changes as a result of this public feedback. In September, we will submit to the U.S. Department of Education a plan to help all of New York’s children lead successful lives and to move us forward in our efforts to improve equity of educational outcomes in our State. We thank all of the hundreds of stakeholders and members of the public who helped shape this plan throughout our process over the past year.”

The Department received more than 800 written comments and 270 verbal comments at the meetings during public comment period. In addition to hosting 13 public hearings on the plan from May 11 through June 16, NYSED also held more than 120 stakeholder and public meetings between October 2016 and May 2017 to gather input to help inform the development of the draft plan.

The revised full draft plan and a summary are posted on the Department’s ESSA webpage. The summary document outlines the Department’s stakeholder engagement process and highlights key proposals from the full plan.

Key Revisions to the Draft ESSA Plan

Based on the feedback received during the public comment period, the Department made key revisions to the draft ESSA plan, which included to:

- Reduce grades 3 – 8 English Language Arts and Mathematics testing days from 3 days to 2 each to reflect the recent Board action;
- Use out-of-school suspensions as a school accountability indicator starting in 2018-19
- Measure middle school students’ readiness for success in high school once two years of data becomes available;
- Equally weight achievement and growth at the elementary and middle school level;

- The Commissioner will partner with districts to determine the most appropriate interventions for transfers schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools and not automatically place them in receivership if these schools are re-identified;
- Require all school improvement plans to provide adequate evidence of parent and family involvement in plan development;
- Consider ways to support school boards and promote legislation to intervene when school boards are not meeting students' basic educational needs;
- Emphasize the State's commitment to promoting a well-rounded education that includes physical education and the arts, including revising Commissioner's regulations pertaining to physical education;
- Include greater emphasis on the State's commitment to cultural responsiveness;
- Add a provision to promote the social and emotional support services by specialized instructional support personnel as part of a well-rounded education;
- Emphasize the State's use of technology to support personalized learning; and
- Place greater weighting on the English Language Proficiency indicator for schools that are held accountable for this indicator.

More details on the specific changes to the draft ESSA plan can be found [here](#).

Stakeholder Engagement

For the past year, NYSED has engaged diverse groups of stakeholders to solicit recommendations on how to craft an ESSA plan that best meets the needs of the state's students, schools and communities. In support of these efforts, NYSED established an ESSA Think Tank with representatives from more than 100 organizations, including district leaders, teachers, parents, and community members. The Department also consulted with national education experts regarding ESSA, including Linda Darling-Hammond (Learning Policy Institute) and Scott F. Marion (National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment).

In addition, NYSED held more than 120 fall and winter regional in-person meetings across the state in coordination with the state's 37 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and the superintendents of the state's five largest City School Districts, which were attended by more than 4,000 students, parents, teachers, school and district leaders, school board members, and other stakeholders.

Next Steps

The plan will next be submitted to the governor, who has 30 days to review the plan. Following the governor's review, the Board will be asked at its September meeting to

take action to approve the ESSA plan so that on September 18, 2017 the State Education Department can submit the plan to the USDE for review and approval. After the plan is approved by the USDE, the Department will work with BOCES District superintendents, superintendents, the ESSA Think Tank and other stakeholder groups to develop and provide guidance on implementing the ESSA plan. Further, NYSED is developing summary documents for parents and teachers to explain the changes in the ESSA plan.