

# Every Student Succeeds Act

## Topic Discussion Guide

*Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Ohio will create a plan to better align our local, state and federal programs to help all students be successful.*

*The Ohio Department of Education is committed to meaningfully engaging a diverse group of stakeholders through a variety of methods and opportunities to solicit thoughts, opinions and recommendations concerning provisions in Ohio's state plan. Everyone's input is required to create a plan that is deeply rooted in the needs of Ohio's students.*

*Ohio is conducting a series of topic-specific webinars. Each topic will have a detailed discussion guide. The eighth topic, report cards, is discussed below.*

## Report Cards

### WHAT ARE THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORT CARDS?

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, states were required to publish report cards that included, at a minimum, information on student achievement, graduation rates and the professional qualifications of teachers. Student achievement data was disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency and status as economically disadvantaged. District report cards also had to contain information on the number of schools identified for school improvement and comparisons of achievement at individual schools to the district and state.

States were granted additional flexibility through a series of waivers approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Ohio applied for and received flexibility waivers. State law created the A-F report card system that is currently in place.

ESSA maintains the basic foundation but includes new measures that create an expanded view of school quality as well as opportunities for Ohio to define measures in ways that had previously been federally prescribed. ESSA requires the state to create report cards that include specific measures based on state assessments and graduation rates, but Ohio will have the ability in the state plan to build on Ohio priorities in the accountability system.

### WHAT DOES ESSA REQUIRE?

There are multiple issues that must be addressed in Ohio's ESSA plan including technical accountability decisions, new required measures, long-term and interim goals and other opportunities to build on Ohio's system. Based on recent changes in state law, Ohio has many elements in place that align or closely align with ESSA requirements. These will be addressed below.

## I. **Summative rating**

One of the major provisions of the proposed [regulations](#) is a requirement that report cards include a single, summative rating that includes at least three possible rating categories. The U.S. Department of Education explains the rationale for such a requirement by emphasizing the need for an easy-to-understand summary for parents and communities.

Ohio's current report card system is scheduled to publish overall A-F letter grades for districts and schools starting with the 2017-2018 report cards.

## II. **Achievement measure**

ESSA continues to focus on student achievement based on performance on state tests. One of the required measures must measure student proficiency. Currently, Ohio's report cards include two achievement measures: Performance Index and Indicators Met.

The Performance Index measures the achievement of every student, not just whether or not he or she reaches "proficient." Districts and schools receive points for every student's level of achievement. The higher the student's level, the more points the school earns toward its index. This rewards schools and districts that improve the performance of highest- and lowest-performing students.

The Indicators Met measure represents whether student performance on state tests met established thresholds.

These two measures are combined into an Achievement component grade.

## III. **Participation**

ESSA requires states to address participation in state assessments within the accountability system. The proposed [regulations](#) specify that the achievement measure will include at least 95 percent of students. This could impact the Indicators Met measure, which is currently based on only tested students (e.g., if the tested students represent less than 95 percent of all students). The Performance Index is based on all students and considers participation.

## IV. **Growth measure**

The second required measure is a growth, or progress, measure based on the state assessments.

Ohio measures progress of students with an overall Progress measure, as well as progress of three subgroups: students with disabilities, students in the lowest 20 percent of achievement and gifted students.

Additionally, ESSA requires this measure to be disaggregated and reported for *all* federal subgroups.

## IV. **Graduation**

ESSA continues to require the four-year cohort graduation rate, while also stating that states may use extended-year cohort graduation rates (five-year, six-year, etc.) if the data provide a rationale for such rates and targets are increased in extended years.

Ohio currently has four-year and five-year cohort graduation rate measures that aggregate into the Graduation component.

The [proposed regulations](#) specify that states must report graduation rates in the current year. This would be a change for Ohio, which currently lags the graduation rate by one year to include summer graduates.

## **V. Subgroups/N-Size**

ESSA continues to emphasize the needs of all students by focusing on the performance of subgroups. Subgroup measures were prescriptive in No Child Left Behind with the requirement for Adequate Yearly Progress. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver process provided some limited flexibility with Annual Measurable Objectives. Now, Ohio has the opportunity to review and revise its Gap Closing measure.

The report card still must account for subgroup performance in math, English language arts and graduation. Ohio currently is utilizing Annual Measurable Objectives as the Gap Closing measure but now may review, revise or possibly replace the measure.

The N-Size determination is a crucial component of this measure. A separate webcast/[discussion guide](#) is available that provides detail about the N-Size requirements.

## **VI. English learner (EL) measure**

While English learners have been an emphasis in previous federal law, ESSA places an increased priority on meeting these students' needs. The most significant change requires that states include English language proficiency in their accountability frameworks under Title I, the provision that governs accountability for all students. Previously, accountability for growth in language proficiency was limited to Title III, which provides resources for English learner programs. The change raises the profile of English learners within accountability systems and reflects their growing importance and numbers in student achievement determinations.

A separate webcast/[discussion guide](#) is available that provides detail about the numerous English learner requirements. In short, the report card must include a measure of English learner progress in meeting English proficiency. This must be one of the measures that "counts" on the report card. Additionally, the English learner subgroups must continue to be evaluated in math, English language arts and graduation as part of the Gap Closing measure. Several other detailed, technical decision points (e.g., how many years English learners are excluded from accountability measures) are outlined in the English learner discussion guide.

## **VII. Additional indicator of school quality**

In response to concerns that accountability systems were too focused on test-based measures, ESSA includes a requirement that local school and district report cards include an additional measure of school quality that will provide communities with a more expansive view of school performance.

Potential examples include student engagement, school climate, access to advanced coursework and other measures beyond proficiency on state tests. A separate

webcast/[discussion guide](#) is available that provides detail on the requirements for this new measure. A few highlights of that guide are included in this section.

Based on the statutory language and proposed regulations, the following requirements apply to the measure. The measure must:

- Include at least one indicator but is not limited to one;
- Allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance;
- Be valid, reliable, comparable and statewide;
- Be calculated the same for all schools across the state but may vary by grade span;
- Be broken out for each subgroup of students;
- Include a different measure than the state uses for any other indicator;
- Be supported by research finding that performance or progress on such measure is likely to increase student academic achievement or, for measures used within indicators at the high school level, graduation rates;
- Aid in meaningful differentiation among schools;
- States may amend their systems at a later date if more sophisticated measures are not ready for statewide implementation in 2017-2018.

Some issues to consider:

- 1) The measure must be meaningful with an evidence base connected to achievement (and graduation);
- 2) The measure must be incorporated into the report card. That is, it will count toward a report card outcome. Proposed regulations require a single, summative rating. This measure would count toward that summative rating;
- 3) Since it will contribute to the report card, there are significant considerations regarding data collection, reporting and quality. Some measures, such as surveys, may require a greater data collection burden on schools. New elements could require additional EMIS reporting;
- 4) While different measures can be used for different grade spans, the measure must be statewide and broken out by subgroup. It is not a district-level decision;
- 5) It must be at least one measure but could be more.
- 6) Depending on the measure(s) selected, there could be considerable new costs to the state and districts for implementation.

### **VIII. Goal-setting requirements**

Ohio must, in the state ESSA plan, set ambitious, long-term goals and interim progress measures for achievement based on the annual assessments and four-year graduation rate (and five-year graduation rate at state's discretion). Ohio determines the multi-year term for the goals, but it must be the same for all students and subgroups—and must take into account improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing achievement and graduation gaps among subgroups.

### **IX. Other accountability-related provisions**

- Additional subgroups must now be reported including homeless, migrant and foster students and students from military families;
- The proposed regulations suggest that a new definition of partial attendance (based on half of the school year) may require changes to Ohio's Full Academic Year calculations;

- The State Report Card must include demographic and achievement data for each school authorized by a chartering agency compared to the community in which the charter school is located.

**X. Focus on improvement**

Many educators and policymakers have expressed concerns about the No Child Left Behind Act's narrow focus on proficiency and labeling of districts. ESSA is providing an opportunity to focus on improvement. Ohio must identify the lowest-performing schools as well as schools that are struggling with subgroups and provide support services.

The report card system provides information about the performance of schools for educators, communities and policymakers. The new measures, such as the additional school quality indicator and the flexibility to build on Ohio priorities, move this away from a system that focuses only on proficiency to one that can focus more on preparing students for college, careers and life. The data should not be viewed as just a label but should be aligned with support systems to support improvement. Schools and districts have numerous other data sources to provide more information. These local data systems should complement the state data to inform local strategic improvement planning.