

New York State Education Department ESSA State Plan High Concept Ideas

Challenging Academic Standards and Assessments

1. To ensure all schools are provided with accurate measurement of their students' academic proficiencies, New York proposes to determine a State-designed rigorous action that will lead to improvements in the participation rate of schools that do not test 95 percent of their students (as opposed to an action designed by USDE).
2. To ensure all students have access to advanced coursework, New York develop procedures to allow districts to administer and accept multiple types of alternatives to state assessments at the secondary level.
3. To ensure all students have access to advanced coursework, New York will seek USDE approval to allow grade 7 and grade 8 students to take a Regents exam in mathematics in lieu of the grade level math test.
4. To ensure all students have equal access to learning and being able to demonstrate what they have learned, New York proposes to:
 - a. Expand on the current set of testing accommodations that enable students with disabilities to participate in assessment programs on an equal basis with their nondisabled peers.
 - b. Provide accessibility features that will enhance the test experience for all students, including the use of assistive technologies on computer-based tests as they are developed.
5. To ensure that the appropriate assessment is administered to English learners and they are not over tested, New York proposes to seek USDE approval to not require English learners to take multiple English skills tests (i.e., the state ELA test and the NYSESLAT) in a single year to satisfy the English Language Arts (ELA) assessment requirement.
6. To ensure that parents, teachers, principals, other school leaders, and administrators can address specific needs of students in relation to assessments, the State proposes to report assessment sub-scores in student-level reports provided to the parents and school.

Accountability Methodologies and Measurements

7. To ensure that schools focus on students with low performance in ELA and math, we will give schools "full credit" for students who are proficient (Level 3 and 4 scores on Grade 3-8 assessments and Levels 4 and 5 on Regents) and "partial credit" for students who are partially proficient (Level 2 scores on grade 3-8 assessments and Level 3 on Regents).
8. To ensure that students are able to meet assessment requirements for graduation, we will give schools credit for a student's best score on state exams within four years of the student entering high school.
9. To incentivize schools to make efforts to have students reach advanced levels of proficiency, we will give "extra credit" to schools for students who are performing at the advanced or college- and career- readiness level.
10. To ensure that all schools value student proficiency, student growth, and improving student outcomes, we will hold schools accountable for percentages of students who are proficient and partially proficient in ELA and math; progress in increasing the percentage of proficient students over time; and growth of students in ELA and math from year to year.
11. To ensure that schools support students until they graduate, we will use 4-, 5-, and 6- year graduation rates to determine how well schools are doing in getting students to graduate.

12. To ensure that schools support students regardless of the subgroup that they are part of, we will hold schools accountable for closing gaps between groups of students.
13. To ensure that schools maximize opportunities for students, we will create a high school "Success Index" that gives partial credit for students who successfully complete the TASC through AHSEP programs and programs at the school, BOCES, or night school; and extra credit for students who earn a Regents diploma with advanced designation, CTE endorsements, or a Seal of Biliteracy.
14. To ensure that all students benefit from access to rigorous coursework, we will measure student participation in advanced coursework and measure the degree to which students score at specified levels on advanced high school assessments or earn college credit.
15. To ensure that students have access to a well-rounded curriculum, we will differentiate school performance by using student results on Grades 4 and 8 Science exams; Science and Social Studies Regents; and approved graduation pathway examinations.
16. To ensure that school districts have time to implement improvement strategies, we will create new lists of Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools once every three years.
17. To ensure that schools engage students, we will hold schools accountable based on measures of chronic absenteeism and removal of students from instruction (e.g., suspensions).

Supporting Excellent Educators

18. To ensure that all students have equitable access to the most effective educators, regardless of their physical location, the Department will support school districts, BOCES and Institutes of Higher Education to develop comprehensive systems of educator support that address five common challenge areas: 1) preparation; 2) recruitment and hiring; 3) professional development and growth; 4) retention of effective teachers; and 5) extending the reach of the most effective educators to the most high-need students; and family and community engagement.
19. To ensure that educators entering the field from preparatory programs understand and are prepared to enter the profession, the Department will increase the minimum placement requirement of 100 hours, require that these placements include a full-time workload for an extended period (e.g., one semester), and require that field experience occur throughout the preparatory program rather than at the end of the program to allow prospective educators exposure to the rigors of the profession before committing to program completion.
20. To ensure that educators entering the field from preparatory programs understand the demands of the profession and are prepared to enter it, the Department will work to expand clinically rich preparatory programs.
21. To ensure that novice educators receive the supports that are necessary to persist in the profession, the Department will seek to revise the current first year mentoring requirement to require a full school year of formal mentoring.
22. To ensure that early career educators (both those new to teaching and to leadership) receive the supports that are necessary to persist in the teaching profession, the Department will develop and encourage districts/Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) to adopt induction models to support educators during the first three years of their educators' careers.
23. To ensure that principals and other school leaders receive the supports that are necessary, the Department will use the optional 3% set-aside under Title IIA to develop programs that provide for systemic improvements for principals and other school leaders.

Supporting English Language Learners

24. To ensure that accountability for ELLs/MLLs beginning in their first year of enrollment is equitable and reliable, New York State will use student specific factors (such as prior schooling, level of English proficiency, and age) to determine whether a student takes either the ELA or NYSESLAT to set a baseline for accountability in Year 1, after which schools will be held accountable for a student's growth in language arts on that same assessment in Year 2 and beyond Year 2.
25. To ensure that language arts assessments of ELLs/MLLs are equitable and accurate, New York State will seek funding to develop and implement high quality native/home language arts assessments aligned to standards and curricula.
26. To ensure that ELLs/MLLs have enough time and English instruction to understand coursework, New York State ELLs/MLLs will be expected to become English proficient in three to six years, and this timeline should be extended based on factors like age, prior amount of schooling, and the level of proficiency at entry.

Supporting All Students

27. To ensure that all students have access to a well-rounded education, we will allow Title I schools that meet alternative criteria to implement a Schoolwide program, even if their poverty rates are below 40 percent.
28. To ensure that all students benefit from strong home-school partnerships, we will promote state, district, and school-level strategies for effectively engaging parents and other family members in their student's education.
29. To ensure that schools are meeting the diverse academic and non-academic needs of all students, we will support districts in strengthening early intervention strategies for English Learners; Students with Disabilities; Migrant Youth; Youth in Foster Care; Homeless Youth; Youth in Temporary Housing; Neglected, Delinquent, and At-Risk Students as defined in Title I, Part D; and other at-risk/underserved groups such as girls and LGBTQ Youth.
30. To ensure that LEAs are developing and implementing plans that meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, we will deploy a data-driven performance management system focused on differentiated technical assistance, progress monitoring, compliance review, and corrective action in support of continuous improvement of student outcomes.
31. To ensure that Migrant Youth; Youth in Foster Care; Homeless Youth; Youth in Temporary Housing; and LGBTQ youth experience the maximum level of educational stability, we will develop and/or update policies, procedures, and guidance related to transportation, disputes and continuous enrollment practices.
32. To ensure that students served in Neglected and Delinquent facilities graduate from high school and meet college- and career- readiness standards, the Department will work closely with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, and other agencies as appropriate, to develop a plan for requiring facilities to create a formal transition plan for each student. Additionally the Department will require each LEA to identify a liaison to support the implementation and monitoring of those plans for all students who return to their district.

Support and Improvement For Schools

33. To ensure that school improvement plans are tailored to the identified needs of schools, we will require low-performing schools to complete a diagnostic needs assessment that looks at whole school practices and use the results as the basis for school improvement plans.

34. To ensure that plans are driving improvement, schools identified as low-performing will conduct an annual review and develop annual plans in collaboration with the families and school community.
35. To ensure that schools identified as Comprehensive are able to address the specific areas that are contributing to their identification status, Comprehensive schools will have some flexibility in the school reform model they pursue.
36. To ensure that schools and districts identified as low performing have the flexibility to address their specific needs, we will not pursue the Direct Service Set Asides option contained in ESSA.

The Department is also requesting assistance from the public in answering these additional questions:

37. What indicators can the Department use to hold schools accountable for student engagement?
38. Should the Department use part of its 5% Title II set-aside for competitive grants designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in New York State?
39. Should the Department require LEAs, in their annual Title IIA applications, to describe how funds will be used to address gaps in equitable access to effective educators?
40. Should Title I schools that are identified as Comprehensive (lowest 5%) be required to offer parents the opportunity to transfer their children to another public school in the district, or should it be an option for interested districts?
41. What nationally recognized high school assessments would be appropriate to use in place of the Regents Exams?
42. What testing accommodations should NYSED make available for students with disabilities beyond those already provided?
43. What should be included in New York's State-designed action for schools that do not test 95 percent of their students? The action must be "equally rigorous" to USDE's pre-approved sanctions ("assign a lower summative rating to the school," "assign the lowest performance level on the State's Academic Achievement indicator," or "identify the school for targeted support and improvement")?