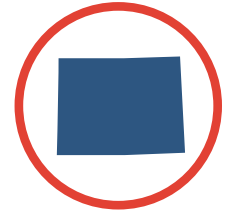




WYOMING

Accountability System Fact Sheet



The Every Student Succeeds Act

In December 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), returning power back to the states for the creation of their education accountability systems. States now have a tremendous opportunity to involve a diverse group of business and community leaders in the development of ambitious goals and metrics for their unique student population and economic environment. This new law replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which has been in place since 2002. The biggest shift in ESSA is that the law gives much greater flexibility for the design of statewide accountability systems. The law does preserve the requirement for states to have a system that addresses data by race, income and learning needs; to test in at least math and reading in grades 3-8 and once in high school as well as science in grade spans, and to identify low-performing schools requiring intervention.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, its many state and local chambers across the country, and the nation’s public schools, have a long and successful history of advocating on behalf of rigorous academic expectations for all students to prepare them for college and career. In the next two years, the business community has an important role to play in ensuring that every state sets high goals and puts a plan in place to measure and meet those goals. Despite giving states more control, ESSA does require the following:

- Each state must implement a state-designed accountability system that includes long-term goals, such as percentage of growth in third-

grade reading for African-American students, measured by annual indicators, such as the end-of-year statewide reading exam;

- States must include academic indicators, such as student growth and proficiency, and school quality or student success indicators such as student or educator engagement, school climate and post-secondary readiness;
- States must report annually on the progress made in each of their schools;
- States must identify at least 5 percent of their lowest-performing Title I schools, high schools that fail to graduate one-third or more of their students, and schools for which a subgroup of students is consistently underperforming over a period of time, determined by the state, as needing *comprehensive* support;
- States must annually identify any school with a portion of its students that are consistently underperforming, based on all of the indicators in the state accountability system, as needing *targeted* intervention and support; and
- States and districts must work with the identified low-performing schools to determine the appropriate interventions to support student outcomes.

Prior to the passage of ESSA, NCLB required states to make adequate yearly progress toward 100 percent student proficiency in English/language arts and math on state tests by the 2013-2014 school year; otherwise, schools were deemed “in need of improvement” and subject to consequences. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education implemented a waiver program offering states the opportunity

to apply for flexibility from key provisions of the law. In exchange for additional prescriptive federal requirements, states that received a waiver had more flexibility in setting goals for schools, determining how to measure school performance, and identifying which schools needed additional support.

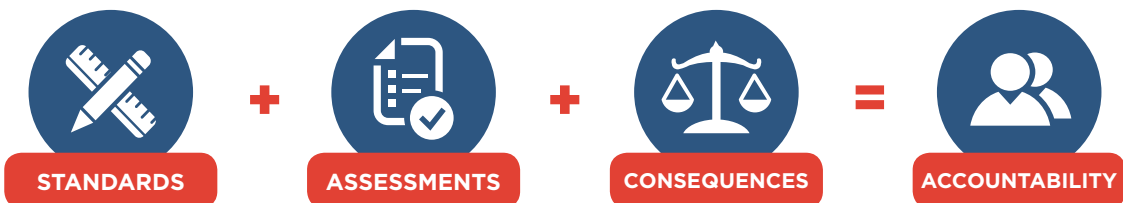
The U.S. Department of Education has already begun the rulemaking process to develop ESSA regulations and guidance. It is important that the business

community is engaged in this process leading up to the 2017-2018 timeline for when states must implement a new accountability system. The business community can and should be a vocal advocate for the necessary elements of an accountability system that ensures all students are receiving a high-quality education that will prepare them for college and the demands of today's workforce.

What is accountability, and what are the principles of a good accountability system?

Accountability is a process for determining how well districts and schools are serving students and taking action when a district or school is not achieving the desired outcomes. There is no silver bullet to creating an effective accountability system. There are, however, core principles of a strong state accountability system, which include:

- 1 HIGH EXPECTATIONS:** College and career ready state standards, annual assessments aligned to those standards, and a rigorous benchmark for proficiency on the state assessments;
- 2 CLEAR AND AMBITIOUS STATEWIDE GOALS FOCUSED ON BOOSTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS:** These goals need to be established at a minimum in reading and math assessment results as well as graduation rates;
- 3 ACCESSIBLE AND DISAGGREGATED DATA:** School and district performance results, disaggregated by race, income and learning needs, that are publicly reported in a clear and transparent way;
- 4 STRAIGHTFORWARD SCHOOL RATINGS:** Easily explained school ratings or labels are based on a core set of accountability measures focused on student performance as well as progress for all groups of students; and
- 5 EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTION PLAN:** States require proven and effective interventions and appropriate consequences for schools that are not meeting their goals.



What is in Wyoming's current accountability system?

Wyoming does not have a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education.

STANDARDS/ASSESSMENTS

In 2012, Wyoming adopted standards for college and career readiness in English/language arts and math. Last spring, the state administered the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS) assessments.

ACCOUNTABILITY GOALS, PROGRESS MEASURES AND ANNUAL INDICATORS

Wyoming currently includes the following indicators in its accountability system:

Schools with grades 3-8:

- Student achievement on the reading and math tests for grades 3-8; science for grades 4 and 8;
- student growth on the reading and math tests for grades 4-8; and
- an equity measure defined as student growth for target populations.

Schools with grades 9-12:

- Student achievement on the grade 11 ACT reading, math, science and combined English/writing test;
- Student growth on the reading and math tests in grades 10-11;
- an equity measure defined as student growth for target populations;
- An overall readiness indicator consisting of four-year, on-time graduation rate and extended graduation rate; and
- additional readiness indicators including: a) tested readiness (based on composite scores on grade 9 Explore, grade 10 Plan and grade 11 ACT tests); b) percentage of ninth-grade

students who earned high-school credit courses prior to entering high school; and c) Hathaway scholarship eligibility, and completion of the "success curriculum."

SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION

Wyoming uses a four-tiered system to identify whether a school needs intervention. Specifically, schools are identified as Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations and Not Meeting Expectations. Schools identified as Partially Meeting Expectations or Not Meeting Expectations must implement a tiered set of interventions.

What questions should I be asking my state leaders?

1. How is our state ensuring that we are meeting the learning needs of all students?
2. Is our state transparent and timely with how student performance data is reported and providing this information in a parent-friendly format?
3. What information are parents given, when and by whom? How does this level of disclosure compare to surrounding states?
4. Are we holding schools accountable for the right things? What are the indicators, and how are they calculated and weighted? How are indicators that focus on academic learning used to be a "much greater" part of the overall system?
5. Is our state's school grading or classification system easily understandable for parents and the public?
6. How are we ensuring that struggling schools and students are properly identified and supported?
7. What is our state doing to ensure that districts are implementing evidence-based interventions in schools?



Where do I go for more information?

WYOMING ACCOUNTABILITY WEBSITE: <http://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/accountability/>

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION: www.achievetomorrow.org

HONESTY GAP: www.honestygap.org

EDUCATION TRUST: www.edtrust.org

