

New York State Education Department
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Draft Characteristics of Highly Effective Schools

The following are characteristics of a school that provides a highly effective education to students and enables them to become prepared for college, career, and civic responsibility:

1. Visionary instructional leaders partner with all stakeholders. Visionary leaders create a professional, respectful and supportive school culture and community that values and promotes diversity and leads to success, well-being, and high academic and career expectations and outcomes for all students. This is accomplished through the use of collaborative systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.
2. All students receive curricula in all disciplines that are challenging, engaging, and integrated. The curricula are tied to appropriate formative and summative assessments, which are aligned to State learning standards. This results in instruction that is relevant and responsive to student needs and modified to maximize student growth and learning outcomes.
3. Teachers and staff engage in ongoing professional development to equip themselves with effective, research-based, strategic instructional practices. Teachers and staff use multiple measures, so that targeted instruction maximizes student learning outcomes. Teachers and staff address the needs and interests of diverse learners and design lessons and activities that are responsive to what students need to learn. These efforts allow students to consistently experience high levels of engagement and achievement.
4. The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development throughout the school day. This is accomplished by designing systems, programs and strengths-based experiences that identify and foster healthy relationships, as well as safe, inclusive, and respectful environments. These efforts lead to students developing social emotional skills and barriers to learning being removed.
5. The school has active partnerships that are culturally and linguistically inclusive and in which families, students, community members and school staff respectfully collaborate. These partnerships support student academic progress, social-emotional growth, well-being, and personal and civic responsibility, so that students have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

6. The school community identifies, promotes, and supports multiple pathways to graduation and career readiness based on individual strengths, needs, interests, and aspirations. These pathways create access to multiple opportunities for students to pursue advanced coursework and actively explore and/or pursue specific career-related coursework and experiences in the arts, languages and Career and Technical Education. Consequently, students develop the knowledge and skills to meaningfully transition to postsecondary opportunities and to exercise civic responsibility.
7. The school community continuously and critically examines and challenges its own cultural assumptions to understand how they shape school-wide policies and practices, so as to inform plans for continuous movement towards a school environment that is inclusive, as well as linguistically and culturally responsive.
8. The school community promotes cultural responsiveness and appropriate responses to individuality and differences, as reflected in policies, programs, and practices. The school examines its cultural assumptions to inform practice and professional development on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

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Draft Guiding Principles for NYS Public School Accountability System

1. The goal of the New York State (NYS) public school accountability system is to support the development of highly effective schools and to encourage and enable all schools towards becoming or remaining highly effective. (See Characteristics of Highly Effective Schools)
2. The NYS public school system will provide multiple rigorous pathways to graduate students who are prepared for post-secondary education, careers, and positive civic engagement.
3. The NYS accountability system will consistently and transparently communicate expectations that are understood and supported by students, parents, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders.
4. The NYS accountability system will promote, support, and reward positive and innovative change in all schools in the state.
5. The NYS accountability system will strongly incentivize and support efforts for schools to implement multi-tiered systems of support to close gaps in student achievement among all accountability groups.
6. The NYS accountability system will use state assessments that are valid, reliable, and developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate.
7. School accountability indicators will include multiple measures of progress and growth, and will not be based solely on measures of student achievement.
8. All academic subjects beyond language arts and math for which there are New York State assessments will be part of the NYS accountability system.
9. The NYS accountability system will incentivize and support districts to provide and expand access to student's opportunities to participate in and successfully complete advanced coursework such as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB), as well as rigorous arts, career and technical education, language, and music programs.
10. The NYS accountability system will include non-academic measures of school quality and student success, including but not limited to career readiness, student engagement, school climate, safety, inclusion, and student emotional and developmental health.

11. NYS will establish opportunity to learn standards (e.g., standards intended to ensure that students have access to resources that promote learning such as quality instructional materials) that must be implemented in schools identified for support and improvement.
12. Accountability goals will include measures of student success after graduation from high school through gathering data on indicators such as post high school education, employment and military service, as soon as such data can be reliably collected.
13. Requirements for schools identified for improvement will be based upon the best practices of highly effective schools and research-based practices, as modified to best meet the needs of students at the identified schools.
14. The primary responsibility for school improvement will be the school and the district. The New York State Education Department's role is to support these efforts and to actively intervene when underperformance persists after the school/district solutions have not succeeded, in order to foster continuous improvement in these schools.
15. Every district with identified schools shall demonstrate through required plans that the district is using federal, state, and local resources effectively and efficiently to support school improvement.
16. Stakeholders will be engaged and have a significant role in developing and implementing the NYS accountability system and as a result will be able to articulate how schools are measured, understand the status of the district and its schools, and have knowledge of how gaps in student achievement and performance are being addressed.
17. The NYS accountability system will meet all federal requirements including ESSA, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, and IDEA, and will be seamlessly aligned with concurrent state accountability mechanisms.
18. The NYS accountability system will be designed consistent with the availability of state and local resources and human capital, as well as ongoing efforts to strengthen teacher and leader effectiveness, and support school turnaround in struggling schools.
19. The Board of Regents shall continue to advocate for sufficient resources for districts and schools to achieve the goals of the accountability system and for greater equity in school funding.
20. The success of NYS accountability system shall be regularly reviewed by NYSED and stakeholders, and adjustments shall be made as necessary to accomplish the stated goals.

New York State Education Department
Draft: ESSA State Plan High Concept Ideas
2/3/2017

Challenging Academic Standards and Assessments

1. To ensure that New York State meets the ESSA requirements for measurement of academic proficiency, New York proposes to require schools that do not test 95 percent of their students to develop and implement new local policies designed to increase the participation rate over a number of years. (Recommended Revision January, 2017)
2. To ensure all students have access to advanced coursework, New York should 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 students enrolled in an advanced mathematics course to take a Regents exam in mathematics in lieu of the grade level math test and for grade 8 students enrolled in an advanced science course to take a Regents exam in science in lieu of the grade 8 science test. (Recommended Revision January, 2017)
4. To ensure all students have equal access to opportunities to learn and are 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 on a more equal basis 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. (Recommended Revision, January 2017)
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. (Recommended for Review and Additional Information from USDE, February 2017)
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 continue reporting assessment sub-scores in student-level reports provided to the parents and school. (Recommended Revision, January 2017)

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 level. (Recommended for Review, January 2017)
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).
(Recommended to be rewritten as informed by survey results, January 2017.)

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, Institutions of Higher Education, and other preparatory program providers 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 educators; and 5) extending the reach of the most effective educators to the most high-need students.
(Recommended Revised, January 2017.)
19. To ensure that educators entering the field understand and are prepared to enter the profession, the Department will enhance clinical practice requirements. These enhancements may include:
 - a. Increasing the minimum field experience requirement of 100 hours prior to the student teaching placement and require that such experiences occur throughout the preparatory program to allow prospective educators exposure to the rigors of the profession before committing to program completion.
 - b. Developing guidance and resources that encourage Institutions of Higher Education and other preparatory program providers and school districts/BOCES to align field experiences to evidence-based practices.
 - c. Requiring that the student teaching placement, which occurs after the field experience requirement is completed, include a full-time workload for an extended period (e.g., one semester).
 - d. Requiring Institutions of Higher Education and other preparatory program providers to align program completion with a candidate’s demonstration of positive impact on student outcomes. This should include multiple measures where practicable (e.g.,

portfolios, evidence from observations, student growth/achievement). (Recommended Revised, January 2017.)

20. To ensure that novice educators receive the supports that are necessary to persist in the profession, the Board of Regents will consider revising the current first year mentoring requirement to require a full school year of formal mentoring. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
21. 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. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
22. 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. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
23. To ensure that educators entering the field from Institutions of Higher Education and other preparatory programs understand the demands of the profession and are prepared to enter it, the Department will work to expand programs that provide greater opportunities for candidates to apply the knowledge and skills they acquire in authentic settings. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
24. To ensure that Institutions of Higher Education and other preparatory programs have a fuller picture of the quality of the candidates that they graduate, the Department will work with IHEs and other providers to create tools and other resources that will facilitate feedback loops between preparatory programs and the LEAs that employ their graduates. These tools/resources should provide districts/BOCES that employ educators from a variety of different preparatory programs with a user friendly solution. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
25. To ensure that all students have equitable access to the most effective educators, regardless of their physical location, the Department will work with Institutions of Higher Education and other preparatory program providers to support initiatives that identify and recruit promising candidates into education preparatory programs. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
26. To ensure that all students have equitable access to the most effective educators, regardless of their physical location, the Department will facilitate communication and partnerships between Institutions of Higher Education and other preparatory program providers and districts/BOCES that address the greatest areas of shortage/need. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
27. To ensure that existing certification pathways/requirements do not create barriers to an adequate supply of qualified candidates in emerging fields (e.g., CTE, computer science, etc.), the Department will work with stakeholders to determine what, if any, revisions are necessary to existing certification pathways/requirements that will promote increased numbers of qualified candidates. This could include aligning CTE certification areas to the 16 career clusters (ACTE's National Career Clusters Framework), creating competency based certifications, etc. The strategies that are undertaken must account for the range of issues that impact supply (e.g., economic factors, geographic factors, etc.). It must also be recognized that, in certain instances, both short and long term strategies may be necessary. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
28. To ensure that existing certification pathways/requirements do not create barriers to an adequate supply of qualified candidates in hard to staff subject areas (e.g., school librarians, LOTE, sciences, etc.), the Department will work with stakeholders to determine what, if any

revisions are necessary to existing certification pathways/requirements that will promoted increased numbers of qualified candidates. The strategies that are undertaken must account for the range of issues that impact supply (e.g., economic factors, geographic factors, etc.). It must also be recognized that, in certain instances, both short and long term strategies may be necessary. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)

29. To ensure that LEAs are able to hire qualified school leader candidates (e.g., principals, APs, EAs, curriculum coordinators, etc.) who best meet the needs of the district/BOCES, the Department will work with stakeholders to determine what, if any, revisions are necessary to existing certification pathways /requirements for school building leaders. The strategies that are undertaken must address the range of issues that currently affect the supply of adequately prepared candidates. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
30. To ensure better professional learning and support for current school building leaders and aspiring principals, the Department will:
 - a. Recommend to the Board of Regents that educator leadership certification be aligned to the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL).
 - b. Strengthen university-based school building leadership programs by closely linking the 2015 PSEL with extended school-based internship.
 - c. Provide enhanced support for quality mentoring of sitting principals (up to and through their first full year on the job).
 - d. Create pathways, options, and/or opportunities leading to full-time, year-long, school-based internships for aspiring principals.
 - e. Adapt preparation to account for varied setting (rural vs urban), level (elementary vs secondary), age (early childhood), school type (Title I vs non-Title I), student need (those with disabilities, English learners, gifted & talented), or school focus (STEM, Career Tech).
 - f. Recommend to the Board of Regents the addition of a competency-based expectation to initial certification. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)

Supporting English Language Learners

31. 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 (like 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 as appropriate.
32. 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.
33. 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 and grade entered.
34. To ensure students are prepared for post-secondary success and positive civic engagement and to reduce achievement gaps, we will leverage the diversity of New York students by treating multiple forms of socioeconomic and racial integration of schools and districts as evidence-based interventions. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
35. To ensure students are prepared for post-secondary success and positive civic engagement and to reduce achievement gaps, we will leverage the diversity of New York students by developing

measures of racial and/or socio-economic integration of schools and use that measure appropriately to incentivize integration of schools throughout New York State. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)

Supporting All Students

36. 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.
37. 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.
38. 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.
39. 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.
40. 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.
41. 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.
42. To ensure that all students feel valued, safe, and supported at school and can do their best work, the Department will support the building of positive school climates based upon inclusive, equitable school cultures that recognize student diversity in the following areas:
 - a. School climate evaluation as a non-academic measure of success
 - b. Pro-active approaches to bullying reduction
 - c. Curriculum and instruction attentive to diversity
 - d. Professional development for in-service educators on marginalized student populations
 - e. Pre-service training on diversity
 - f. Increasing student support services in support of student safety. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
43. To ensure that schools maximize student learning, especially for traditionally marginalized youth including youth of color, LGBTQ youth and youth with disabilities, the Department will support districts in implementing activities, policies and strategies that reduce bullying; harassment; the overuse of punitive and exclusionary responses to student misbehavior, such as teachers' removals, suspensions, expulsions, arrests, summonses, and unnecessary EMS referrals; and will promote positive disciplinary practices, improving school climate, and providing students with social-emotional support. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)

44. To ensure that all students benefit from school-community partnerships, the Department will require schools and districts undertaking a comprehensive needs assessment and creating plans using such assessments to incorporate input from relevant community partners that work in the school or work with the students the school serves in a community-based setting, such as afterschool providers, summer program providers, health providers, and mental health providers. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
45. To support LEAs in providing all students with equitable access to instruction and resources that improve student academic achievement and develop strong skills in digital and information literacy to help prepare college and career ready graduates, the Department will support LEAs with implementation of guidelines that include opportunities to integrate inquiry and independent, self-directed learning through effective school library programming (i.e., strong school library programs staffed with certificated school librarians). (Recommended for addition, January 2017)
46. To ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn, receive sufficient feedback from their teachers, are engaged academically, and are educated in a safe school climate, the Department will work with districts to support appropriate class sizes, by grade level, as determined by research. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)

Support and Improvement For Schools

47. 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.
48. 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.
49. 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.
50. 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.
51. The state will develop systems to connect identified schools to evidence-based interventions, and identified schools will have the ability to identify the evidence-based solutions appropriate to the root causes they have identified. (Recommended for addition, January 2017)