

## THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

Passed by Congress in 2015, [ESSA](#) is a federal law that requires states to have a plan for spending federal funds, for measuring the skills students learn, and for supporting students in making academic progress. [ESSA](#), which replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), is largely focused on the needs of historically disadvantaged students, including students from low-income homes, students whose home language is not English, and students with disabilities. The law is not a federal plan; it is a federal law requiring states to develop their own plans.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This draft framework is an outline for public consideration and comment. It continues a statewide dialogue about Louisiana's ESSA plan and is intended to surface questions and new ideas. A final plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in 2017 with the hope that it will be approved prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year.

Readers can find a timeline for the process of developing Louisiana's plan [here](#). Video testimony on the plan and a summary of public comment received so far are available [here](#).

## LOUISIANA'S PLAN TODAY

While every parish and every school is unique, all schools and school systems in Louisiana have been working for years on a shared set of priorities:

- [Unify](#) child care, Head Start, and preK to prepare children for kindergarten.
- Align [standards](#), [curriculum](#), [assessment](#), and [professional development](#) that are as challenging for students and educators as any in America.
- [Prepare](#) every aspiring educator under a mentor, in the classroom, on the job.
- Create opportunity for every graduate through [Jump Start](#) career education and college-level [Advanced Placement](#) (AP) or [dual enrollment](#) coursework.
- Focus on students in [persistently struggling schools](#) by transforming those schools and creating new options for their families.

Students and teachers have made impressive progress in Louisiana classrooms:

- Louisiana fourth-grade students achieved the highest growth among students in all states on the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading and the second highest growth in math.
- Since 2014, Louisiana students have made more progress on the [ACT](#) than has been made in any other state using the ACT as its high school assessment.
- Louisiana's 2015 high school [graduation rate](#) is an all-time high of 77.5 percent.
- Louisiana's class of 2015 [Advanced Placement](#)<sup>®</sup> results showed greater annual improvement than any state other than Massachusetts.

## THE HEART OF ESSA: SET GOALS, PLAN, AND MEASURE RESULTS

The fundamental activity in this framework is a cycle of setting goals, planning for the use of federal funds, and measuring outcomes. Every element in this document is attached to this cycle.

### Goal Setting and Measurement

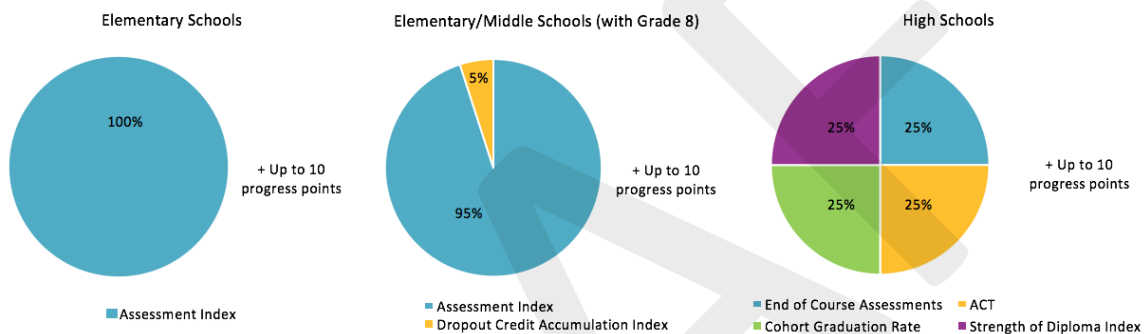
The first step in the cycle calls on all schools and school systems to set goals based on a shared system of measurement and accountability. Every school and district will be rated based on its performance within this shared framework.

Readers will note within the document critical shifts in the design of the accountability system that reports and evaluates results statewide. As detailed later in this document, schools and systems, for example, will be rated based in large part – 25 percent of the score – on the rate of annual progress all individual students make in their fundamental academic skills, no matter how high or low their ultimate performance. This element replaces the “progress points” that today are added to schools' scores but are not a core performance score index.

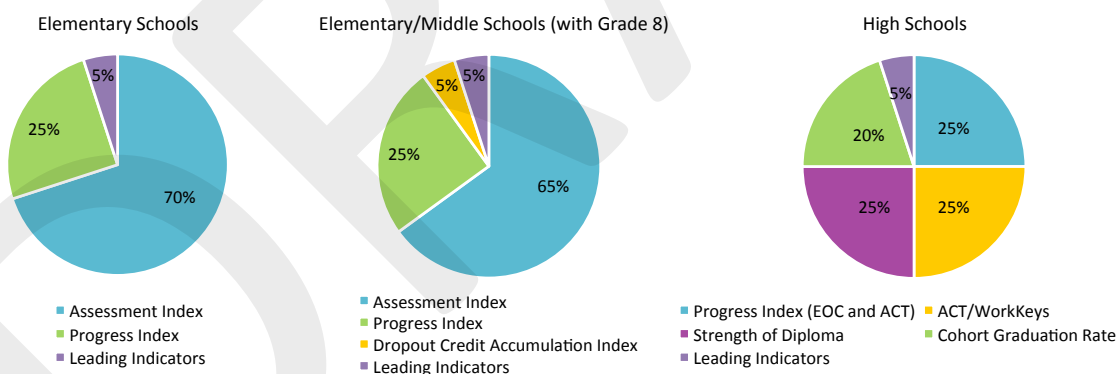
As also depicted later in this document, schools and districts can earn smaller amounts of credit – up to 5 percent of a school’s score – for demonstrating evidence of “leading indicators” of success. These indicators constitute research-based practices likely to produce positive long-term results, as measured by nationally recognized instruments. Their function in the accountability system is to provide early, predictive information for schools as to their performance and to focus diverse schools on needs that inevitably vary from school to school.

Under this element of the accountability system, schools and school systems would analyze past results to determine one key area requiring significant improvement, from a list of four potential options statewide (a proposed set of options is listed throughout this document). The school or district would establish quantitative and qualitative “leading indicators” of progress that would be evaluated throughout the year by local officials using nationally recognized instruments, audited by the state, and validated by independent boards of content experts.<sup>1</sup> These independent boards of experts would also study statewide leading indicator results and would annually propose refinements in the indicators allowed or required.

**2016-2017 AND BEFORE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT PERFORMANCE SCORE FORMULAS**



**2017-2018 AND BEYOND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT PERFORMANCE SCORE FORMULAS**



**Plan to Implement and Use Federal Funds**

In order to achieve strong results in this shared, statewide framework, schools and districts will not only set goals but also annually submit plans for spending federal funds on academic strategies. Click [here](#) to view a summary of these funding policies.

Most federal dollars flow directly through the state to schools and school systems. Throughout this document, therefore, sections related to district plans call on school systems to use funds from Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV in order to achieve both leading and long-term indicators of success.

<sup>1</sup> Schools statewide would pilot the metrics, measurement instruments, and goal setting process in 2016-2017, participate in a “learning year” statewide in 2017-2018, and fully implement these measures in 2018-2019.

A small amount of federal funding must be or can be “set aside” by the state. Throughout this document, you will also review actions the state will take to support local school systems. These state activities will largely be funded by “set-aside dollars.” Thus the success of Louisiana’s plan is largely based not only on the ambition of its goals, but also on the extent to which the spending plans created by the state, schools, and school districts represent a true attempt at systemic change.

## HOW THIS DOCUMENT WORKS

This document outlines five “challenges” that analysis indicates Louisiana students experience in significant numbers. The document then shows how each challenge will be addressed through this draft framework, focusing on these categories of information within each challenge:

- **Leading indicators** are qualitative and quantitative measurements that do not use tests to measure school success, but provide early indications that schools are on track to success resolving their most critical issues. As discussed above, schools and school systems will annually conduct a needs assessment and will select from a statewide list of leading indicators, measured by nationally recognized instruments, on which they will focus. The state will audit outcomes and independent review panels will validate the results.
- **Long-term indicators** are quantitative measurements of student learning, such as performance on assessments, graduation rates, college credit, or workplace credentials.
- **State support** depicts specific steps the state will take to assist schools and school systems in creating and implementing ESSA plans.
- **School system plans and school plans** include actions school and district leaders can take in developing and implementing their plans for improvement and spending federal funds. These plans will be submitted for state approval through one consolidated application per district instead of several distinct plans for each priority. The allocation of all federal funds tied to each priority will be contingent on state approval of this single district plan.
- **Families in ESSA** depicts information, guidance, and decisions in which parents should partake in order to assist in each child’s growth.

## CHALLENGE ONE: FUNDAMENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

**Evidence of the challenge:** LEAP and NAEP results indicate that only 30 to 40 percent of Louisiana elementary and middle school students demonstrate reading and mathematics skills that put them on track to succeed in the next level of education or workforce training. Furthermore, nearly one in four students does not graduate from high school, and of those who graduate and go on to college nearly one third need to repeat high school coursework. In fact, among those who attend college, only 40 percent complete a degree in the expected time period. Louisiana has the highest percentage of young adults of any state in the nation who are neither employed nor enrolled in school or college.

**Current efforts:** Louisiana has established new, challenging expectations for students, called the [Louisiana Student Standards](#), in reading and writing, mathematics, and social studies. Students demonstrate skills on LEAP and ACT assessments that indicate their true preparedness for the next level of education and their ability to compete with peers across the country. Schools can choose from curricula that teach students to think critically and independently. Parents can review their child’s progress as well as the results achieved by their school and school district through a series of annual reports.

**Leading indicators:** Higher expectations require occasional, accurate diagnoses of student skills, measured against ambitious benchmarks. Results should inform a constant cycle of learning for students and teachers. Schools or school districts may, therefore, identify these elements for consideration as leading indicators of long-term outcomes:

- **Qualitative:** A comprehensive system of improvement that includes a process for regular, facilitated review of student learning using the results yielded by standards-aligned, formative assessments across grade levels.
- **Quantitative:** Measurable, increased exposure to standards-aligned assessments and professional development, increased learning time, and decreased time administering wasteful or misaligned assessments.

**Long-term indicators:** In response to the challenge of students exiting high school with limited skills, Louisiana will raise the ambition of its long-term goals for students to levels exceeding the national average in every measure. Today a school's students must only average "basic" literacy and math skills, have a high school graduation rate of 75 percent, or average an ACT score of 18 in order for the school to earn an "A" in the state's rating system's indexes. More ambitious goals, aligned with the demands of education and work after high school, are necessary for more Louisiana students to complete college and workplace credentials and, ultimately, to succeed in the workforce of tomorrow.

Throughout elementary, middle, and early high school, students will demonstrate "mastery" of core academic content in order to ultimately achieve:

- A statewide high school graduation rate of 90 percent by 2025;
- An average ACT score of 21 by 2025; and
- Postsecondary success as indicated by completion of university or technical credentials.<sup>2</sup>

In each of these areas, the state's system of rating schools would adopt these goals as new benchmarks for achieving a score of 100. In other words, earning a score of 100 or higher in the accountability system's achievement indexes would immediately require:

- student demonstration of "mastery" of skills rather than simply "basic" skills;
- a 90 percent graduation rate; and
- an average ACT score of 21, rather than an average of 18.

[See Appendix A for more details.](#)

These are ambitious goals and will not be achieved immediately in most schools. Therefore, in order to ensure a fair representation of school improvements, the state will continue to require that the distribution of school letter grades – A, B, C, D, F – be no lower than it was in 2013, when the transition to higher standards began. Therefore, even if they fall far short of numeric targets initially, schools will not lose ground in the letter grade system proportionately. This "hold harmless" provision protects school ratings, even as expectations for students increase.

**State support:** The ambition of goals for students necessitates that teachers spend as much time as possible teaching and evaluating student learning to inform further instruction, rather than assessing for measurement purposes only. The state and school districts must take steps to reduce and streamline testing time. This draft framework involves the following steps at the state level to streamline and reduce state and local testing activities.

- Confining end-of-year state testing to no more than one week per student and never allowing testing to exceed two percent of all instructional minutes in a year.
- Eliminating the duplication in high schools between the ACT series of tests and end-of-course tests. This draft framework proposes one test of math and English per year in grades 9, 10, and 11, with all duplication between ACT and end-of-course tests removed. Full details on changes to high school assessment are available [here](#).
- Making available to schools and school districts a series of optional, efficient "check up" tests that align with state standards in grades K-10 so that districts can eliminate time-consuming, antiquated, costly, and unhelpful tests administered throughout the year.

**School system and school plans:** Under this draft framework, the state would produce detailed reports for school system leaders and principals, providing them with a comprehensive view into student achievement in their districts and schools. Using these annual reports, superintendents and principals would set annual goals that align with each element of the accountability system for their schools and school systems including:

- student skills on assessments in grades 3-11, including the ACT;
- high school graduation rates; or
- advanced coursework, such as AP, dual enrollment, and Jump Start.

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<sup>2</sup> College enrollment and persistence is not currently an accountability metric. Of the graduating class of 2014, 59 percent of graduates enrolled in college the following fall. Of students enrolled in college in Louisiana, only 40 percent complete a degree within the expected time. Beginning in 2017-2018, Louisiana will report on these metrics for all high schools.

Similarly, the state will make available to teachers and schools optional check-up assessments that can be used to measure student progress throughout the course of the year and that align to state standards and state measures at the end of the year, in grades K-10. This means that principals can not only set annual goals for their schools, but also will have instruments to assist teachers in setting goals for their students every year and monitoring academic progress along the way.

**Families in ESSA:** As part of this draft framework, the state would provide to every school district a report for every student based on state assessments. The report would detail specific reading, writing, mathematics, and critical thinking skills in which students excelled or struggled. For teachers and parents, these reports will come with [guides](#) on how to use and interpret the reports, as well as video tutorials on how to have conversations about the reports and [sample presentations](#) that can be used for back-to-school events.

Louisiana's plan will also enhance the tools parents can use to find information about area schools, through a new section on the Department's homepage at [louisianabelieves.com](http://louisianabelieves.com) that will provide a search portal for every school in the state as well as a map showing critical information and ratings for all schools in a given geography.

## **CHALLENGE TWO: DEEP STRUGGLES FOR HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS**

**Evidence of the challenge:** The challenges of meeting the needs of diverse learners begin early in their education. When Louisiana improved the LEAP assessment, higher achieving students were able to achieve at higher levels than ever before. But the gap among racial groups of students, the gap between low-income and middle-income students, and the gap between students with disabilities and their peers all was shown to be larger than previously understood. Similar gaps exist on ACT assessments, high school graduation rates, and Advanced Placement assessments. The gap in identifying and addressing student needs even plays out for the gifted: low-income students are less than half as likely as their middle-income peers to be identified as gifted.

**Current efforts:** Schools and school systems across the state have [unified and expanded](#) child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten into one system of quality options more capable of preparing low-income students for kindergarten, so that students do not start school behind the curve. Similarly, schools now identify struggling students early and are rewarded when their performance exceeds annual progress targets through the progress point system. Students that continue to struggle in 8<sup>th</sup> grade now move into [transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade](#) to spend a year focused on remediating their challenges while still accumulating high school credits toward graduation. Finally, for those students struggling still in the high school grades, especially those with disabilities, the Louisiana Legislature created a path to graduation, college, and the workplace that allows for [alternate means](#) to demonstrate skills and student progress.

**Leading indicators:** Research indicates that early and accurate identification of disabilities, giftedness, dyslexia, and other learning needs leads to more successful intervention than is the case when the condition is left unaddressed. Strong schools have a systemic approach to early grade screening, diagnosis, and intervention, starting with the connection of Early Steps and pre-kindergarten, and continuing through high school. Schools or schools districts may, therefore, identify these elements for consideration as leading indicators of long-term outcomes:

- Qualitative: A plan for appropriate and high quality screening, research-based interventions and remediation practices, and continued monitoring until the student is exited.
- Quantitative: Significant progress in achieving early and accurate diagnosis and significant progress in successful completion of English Learners (EL), special education, and transitional 9th grade services.

**Long-term indicators:** Currently schools in Louisiana are often rewarded more for the absolute performance of their students in a given year, than for the progress their students make over the course of the year. Under this draft framework, the state will redefine what it means to be a "good school" by making annual student progress, rather than just the average level of performance, a critical feature of that definition.

First, the rating system for schools and school districts will include a calculation of individual student growth over the course of the year, for all students, as a significant factor in the rating formula itself, rather than as "progress point" add-on. This factor will make up 25 percent of a school's rating thereby recognizing and incentivizing growth with all children.

Second, ESSA calls on states to calculate and report not just the progress of schools but also the progress of individual groups of students within schools, particularly historically disadvantaged groups of students, such as those still learning English or students with disabilities. While previously a struggling school might never be rewarded for strong gains by a



given subgroup, under this draft Louisiana framework, each subgroup of students in a given school will receive its own performance score and rating so that achievement gaps are addressed with urgency, and schools exemplifying growth with Louisiana's most underserved student are commended for their work.

**State support:** Schools struggling to make progress with subgroups of students or achieving low marks in subgroup performance on an absolute scale will be identified as schools in need of "targeted support." Targeted support schools will develop plans for improvement as part of their school system's application for Title I federal funding. To assist with these local Title I plans for targeted support:

- The state will make available to schools and school districts a series of optional, efficient check-up tests that align with state standards in grades K-10 so that districts can eliminate time-consuming, antiquated, costly, and unhelpful tests administered throughout the year.
- The state will develop and identify an appropriate series of screening instruments and guidance for use in early grades and will train teachers statewide to use these instruments to identify dyslexia, giftedness, and other learning needs, including disabilities. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, the state will work with school systems to pilot screening assessments in the early grades. Those instruments demonstrating the greatest utility will replace the state's reliance on DIBELS or other fluency tests in future years and will provide a more holistic view of student needs for educators and parents alike. Over time, the state will also provide recommendations and tools for monitoring the progress of EL monitoring and for identifying gifted students.
- The state will develop curricular supplements for teachers across the state – adding to the literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science curricula already developed – to address the needs of English Learners and struggling students in mathematics and English language arts.
- The state will also develop a series of intensive mathematics "short courses," and where appropriate, full courses that support students throughout the K-12 system who are struggling. This will include full courses to support students in their sometimes difficult transition to high school through Algebra I.
- As with curriculum, the state will conduct an open and thorough review process for outside providers of interventions and support with which districts may contract in implementing plans for struggling students.
- The state will work with a group of lead districts to explore the daily and school structures for intervening and supporting all unique students. Learning from this work will inform the additional guidance and tools the state will provide others throughout the system.
- Through the nationally recognized [Believe and Prepare](#) program, aspiring educators will attend colleges or alternative certification programs using curricula that teach and require competency in identifying and addressing acute student needs and that provide a full-year of residency in the classroom that allows prospective teachers to work directly with students.
- The state will recommend a set of external partners with expertise in serving specific subgroups of students with which districts can partner in developing their plans for these students.

**School system and school plans:** While the state can develop reports, tools, and training to be used by schools and educators, it is ultimately school systems and schools that must create plans to support struggling students. This is true in all schools, but it is especially true for schools with groups of students struggling year after year. These schools, referred to within ESSA as being in need of "targeted support," would benefit from an external partner with expertise in improving the achievement of each subgroup. The districts in which these "targeted support" schools exist will submit plans to the state that include performance goals for subgroups of struggling students in every school. The plans will identify district- and school-level approaches to identifying struggling students, diagnosing the needs of specific students, teaching students unlearned learning, and identifying approved outside partners to support the process. Grants for "targeted support" will be provided to schools in amounts of up to \$50,000 annually.

**Families in ESSA:** Too often, parents are told that their child is developing and acquiring skills at an acceptable pace, only to learn later that the child's skills do not fully make them ready for the next level of education. Parents need accurate evidence their children are growing and making progress. Under this draft framework, the state will provide parents accurate and instructive reports on individual student skills throughout a child's public education process to support parents' role as their child's greatest coach and advocate.

Providing scores and ratings not just for the overall school, but also for historically disadvantaged students (e.g., students with disabilities), will provide parents with a more comprehensive and specific view into the successes and struggles of a given school.

### **CHALLENGE THREE: FAIR ACCESS TO EXPERIENCES ESSENTIAL FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

**Evidence of the challenge:** A voluminous set of rankings and reports indicates that Louisiana students have struggles not only in academic endeavors traditionally measured by the state, but also in areas important to productive and healthy life after high school. For example:

- A recent [study](#) revealed that Louisiana has the nation's highest rate of adult obesity and the fourth highest rate of childhood obesity.
- A task force of Louisiana music educators and statewide arts organizations [reported](#) earlier this year vast differences in music education and performing arts offerings to elementary school students across and within school districts in our state.
- Elementary and middle school students in [half](#) of Louisiana's school districts are not being exposed to or provided instruction in a foreign language.
- Louisiana school systems reported that more than 61,000 students, as young as prekindergarten, spent time outside of school for disciplinary reasons last year. Of these students, low-income students, African-American students, and students with disabilities were disproportionately impacted.
- Though Louisiana ranks near the bottom among states in annual household income, less than half of all Louisiana high school graduates complete forms making them eligible for financial aid for higher education or workforce training.

Each of these challenges illuminates a larger issue: schools can have a significant influence over a wide range of interests, habits, and skills important to living a productive and healthy life, but student access to enriching experiences and best practices varies widely.

**Current efforts:** Louisiana supports local school systems in the use of positive behavior and intervention supports (PBIS), evidence-based, proactive approaches for developing positive behavior and a positive climate where all students in a school can achieve social, emotional and academic success. In addition to student behavior, Louisiana has focused on equipping students with lifelong interests and skills through its career education initiative, Jump Start, and on providing diverse courses through the state's [Course Choice](#) program. Schools are also helping future graduates navigate the transition to college and career through supporting their completion of [financial aid processes](#), now requisite for graduating from high school in Louisiana.

**Leading indicators:** Through concerted, comprehensive efforts, schools and school systems can make measurable progress providing access to critical experiences for all students as is seen in strong schools around the world. Schools or school districts may, therefore, identify these elements for consideration as leading indicators of long-term outcomes:

- Elementary and Middle Schools will plan for systemic improvement and demonstrable progress school-wide and in subgroups in access to high-quality arts or foreign language coursework, reduction in out-of-school discipline, reduction in chronic absenteeism, and access to daily, high quality nutritional options.
- High Schools will plan for systemic improvement and demonstrable progress school-wide and in subgroups in access to a wide range of Jump Start pathways and early college coursework, reduction in out-of-school discipline and chronic absenteeism, and attainment of [financial aid](#) and post-secondary placement.

**Long-term indicators:** To foster a better understanding of how skills taught in schools translate to life after high school, Louisiana will provide to schools and school systems an annual series of reports on the postsecondary success and economic productivity of their graduates as a group. These reports will provide local communities and educators with aggregated data regarding the measurable life outcomes experienced by recent graduates, including income, employment, and education attainment information. These reports will be purely informative and not part of the school or school district rating system.

The state will make modifications to its rating system's long-term indicators, however, to better reward actions schools take that promote students' successful transition to college and the workplace. Specifically, in high schools, the average graduate in an "A" high school should earn not just a diploma, but also meaningful credentials (AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, Jump Start). The attainment of a HiSET credential (formerly known as a GED) and a valuable industry credential may be the most appropriate option for some significantly over-age students. Similarly, attainment of a full associate degree while in high school is an exceptional achievement with significant implications for the student. It too will be rewarded more prominently in the state's accountability system.

**State support:** The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Legislature have taken steps to bolster state support of schools and districts pursuing increased access to critical, non-traditional coursework and experiences.

- **Arts:** BESE convened a task force to study elementary student exposure and access to music coursework, the [findings](#) from which are being implemented statewide. The study revealed vast differences in music education offerings across and within local school systems.
- **World languages:** The Legislature recently earmarked funds to support the expansion of dual language programs across the state. The Legislature also called on BESE to [study](#) the feasibility of establishing two-way dual language immersion programs and to provide greater [incentives](#) for local school systems to offer quality language immersion education to students.
- **Nutrition and physical activity:** Over the past several years, the legislature has enacted several laws, supported pilot programs and other supports, and elevated public attention to the availability of healthy and fresh foods and beverages at public schools and providing regular, vigorous physical activity for students during the school day.
- **Out-of-school discipline:** The Legislature established a 24-member [advisory council](#) to provide advice and guidance as to the use of appropriate, effective behavioral interventions and expansion of best practices. The council will meet at least three times per year to review school discipline data, study best practices, and make recommendations on more effectively addressing students' behavioral needs.
- **Jump Start pathway access:** Using funds won through the New Skills for Youth grant, Louisiana conducted an inventory of every pathway offered in every high school in the state. Further grant funding, if awarded, will in part go toward bolstering the Jump Start Regional Team connection among employers, higher education, and high schools.
- **Early college coursework:** House Concurrent Resolution 141 and Senate Resolution 182 of the 2016 Regular Session call for BESE and the Board of Regents to design statewide systems of expanded early college access for eligible students and to report back to the legislature by February 2017.
- **Increased science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) access:** The state is developing curricula in partnership with local and national experts to build freely available instructional resources for educators supporting struggling students in math through Algebra I. The state is also developing STEM pathways that prepare older students for job opportunities and college majors. These pathways will include agritechology, robotics computer science and coding, pre-engineering, and cyber security.

**School system and school plans:** Under ESSA, school districts will be able to use federal funds to support plans to expand access to critical courses and experiences. The Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, for example, provides funds specifically for health, behavior, and enrichment services; this will be part of school systems' consolidated plans. Similarly, many of these services can be funded through Title I, which now has fewer programmatic requirements and more closely resembles a bloc grant for eligible schools and school systems. Finally, Louisiana will set aside statewide Title I funds so that schools can provide families with choices of expansive courses and experiences through a new Direct Student Services (DSS) program established within ESSA and depicted below. DSS is a new opportunity available to states that allows for three percent of Title I funding -- just over \$8 million in Louisiana -- to be reserved for innovative courses, services, and experiences that offer value and service to educators, families, students, and taxpayers. Examples include, but are not limited to, access to courses not offered at the school students attend, support for students taking exams for post-secondary credit and industry certifications, credit recovery programs for at-risk students, school choice, and personalized student learning.



**Families in ESSA:** Aimed at providing all students equal access to a high-quality education, ESSA not only assures families that their children will have access to quality instruction in core academic areas, but also challenges states and local school systems to expand access to coursework and experiences that will support and enrich students' educational journey and their personal development. These offerings should not be limited to a small number of schools. Nor should they be restricted by school attendance zones.

Local school systems, particularly those with schools identified as being in need of comprehensive and targeted support (criteria are described in greater detail below), will be able to plan not just for transforming academic outcomes but also for expanding access to critical courses, individual academic opportunities, AP test fee reimbursements, tutoring services, and student planning services through the DSS funding stream available to such districts and schools. Through their existing consolidated application for Title I funds, schools choosing this DSS option will be able to apply for additional funds for courses and experiences that align with the specific goals they are working to achieve, that parents seek for their students, and that might not typically be offered by the school. High schools, for example, could dramatically expand access to Jump Start internships, postsecondary counseling, and financial aid planning support. Elementary and middle schools could make significant strides in offering music and dual language curricula and accessing tutorial services.

#### **CHALLENGE FOUR: PERSISTENTLY STRUGGLING SCHOOLS**

**Evidence of the challenge:** There are 100 non-alternative schools in Louisiana in which either no more than 12 percent of students have demonstrated mastery levels of proficiency, or no more than 66 percent of students have graduated within the last three years. African-Americans are disproportionately assigned to these schools. While African-American students make up slightly more than 40 percent of students statewide, in these schools they make up three quarters of the population.

**Current efforts:** Interventions in persistently struggling schools range in nature, from the incremental to the dramatic. Research indicates that both can be done well. In Louisiana, federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding has fueled the creation of "transformation zones" in Ascension Parish, Caddo Parish, Jefferson Parish, and Rapides Parish, for example. Districts such as Ascension, Caddo, Desoto, Iberville, Lafourche, and Rapides have adopted the [Teacher Advancement Program \(TAP\)](#) whole-school model; which has shown positive effects, especially in districts implementing some form of the model at scale. The [Recovery School District](#) created charter schools that will soon be authorized by the Orleans Parish School Board, as well as a cluster of charter schools called the Baton Rouge Achievement Zone. Research has attributed positive effects to the New Orleans charter school and school transformation strategies.

**Long-term indicators:** Under ESSA, states must identify no fewer than five percent of all schools as being in need of "comprehensive support." This status requires a plan for urgent intervention and improvement, funded through seven percent of statewide Title I funds. States maintain discretion over the criteria for inclusion on the list and states create a general framework for what local plans may entail and how long they may persist before significant progress must be shown.

In Louisiana, persistently struggling schools will experience a ladder of escalating interventions, starting with comprehensive support. Schools unable to make progress in this stage will be eligible for significant state monitoring. If these strategies do not work, schools can become eligible for inclusion in the Recovery School District.

Louisiana's proposed criteria are below:

- In need of comprehensive support: Any school rated 'F' based on results in either of the two preceding school years
- Eligible for significant state monitoring: Schools unable to improve results and ratings significantly after comprehensive support has commenced
- Eligible for inclusion in the Recovery School District: Any school rated 'F' for four consecutive years

**State support:** Radically underperforming schools need outside help. Research indicates that nearly every effective model of school transformation includes some external support.

The organizations providing this type of support run the gamut. Some models, such as [community schools](#), involve a coordinated series of entities providing a suite of wrap-around services for students including but not limited to social services, tutoring, employment support for families. Some, such as the [Teacher Advancement Program \(TAP\)](#) provide an intensive academic framework and training model for teachers. Others call on teams of administrators and teachers from within and without the school to make significant changes; this model was used to great effect in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Public Schools. Some, such as [IBM's P-tech model](#), call for outside design partners. Others, such as [Empower Schools](#), assume the management and operations of the school. Some place the school under a new governing board; this model has often been used in New Orleans.

Yet there is no statewide or nationwide catalogue of such supports or organizations, which presents a problem for approaching this issue in Louisiana's ESSA plan. A second challenge is that states and school systems have often approached this particular stream of work as adversaries.

Neither of these conditions will serve Louisiana or its children well. Louisiana must identify best-in-class supports to assist its schools, and plans for these schools must be co-designed among partners, local school systems, and the state.

To that end, rather than prescribing school turnaround models in this document, Louisiana will write its approach for comprehensive support in partnership with school systems and external organizations throughout the fall and winter of 2016-2017. In other words, the plan Louisiana will submit to the federal government in 2017 will be co-authored by the state and local school systems, supported by outside partners. To do this, the state will take the following steps:

- Issue a Request for Information (RFI) from school improvement providers across the nation, attempting to identify and catalogue those with a strong track record of school improvement and soliciting their best thinking on how to approach the issue in urban, suburban, and rural communities within Louisiana.
- Based on responses, invite qualified groups from across the state and nation to meet with Louisiana school systems likely to have schools on the comprehensive support list.
- After matching organizations and districts for brainstorming, solicit from school system leaders thoughts on the models and organizations they believe are most promising for persistently struggling schools; draft the state's ESSA comprehensive support plan to include these lines of thinking.

**School system and school plans:** School systems and schools in need of comprehensive support will build a plan for school turnaround in partnership with one or more of the organizations that have demonstrated a track record of success in supporting school improvement. Districts will use that plan to apply for Title I School Improvement funds as part of their consolidated application for all federal funds. Quality applications will receive a four year grant and may continue if the school demonstrates improvements that lift their ratings.

It is important to note that the plans school systems submit for struggling schools should be a part of one broad Title I plan. Districts should not have separate plans for every school or every program; each element of the plan should connect with the others, and plans for school improvement in a single struggling school should be supported by all spending decisions a district makes.

**Families in ESSA:** Parents should understand clearly the school options that exist for their students. Louisiana's annual reporting should help parents to determine whether a school is academically high-achieving and whether students in the school typically make significant academic progress. Similarly, parents should be able to determine whether the school provides diverse course offerings and extracurricular activities.

Per the laws and regulations of the state, families of students attending schools that have been rated 'F' and are thus in need of comprehensive support maintain a right to access alternative options through public and nonpublic school choice programs. More information on those options is available [here](#).

## CHALLENGE FIVE: A STRONG EDUCATOR PROFESSION

**Evidence of the challenge:** The teaching profession is under significant strain. While more positions are available following recession-related reductions in the late 2000's, [qualified educators are hard to find](#). Studies also show that while compensation for most workers with bachelor's degrees continues to grow, [compensation for educators](#) remains stagnant. These challenges are evident in Louisiana, as they are across the nation. Two thirds of Louisiana school system leaders reported that they cannot hire enough teachers to meet staffing needs in certain certification areas and schools. In 2015-2016, for example, 20 percent of secondary math and science classes and 23.5 percent of special education classes in Louisiana public schools were taught by out-of-field or uncertified teachers<sup>3</sup>. These issues are more acute in school systems with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. For example, in Louisiana school systems with the highest concentrations of economically disadvantaged students, 15.8 percent of teachers are teaching outside of their certification area as compared to 10.4 percent statewide.<sup>4</sup>

**Current efforts:** Efforts to strengthen the educator profession in Louisiana start with teacher candidates in the state's colleges. Using [evaluations of classroom effectiveness](#), Louisiana school systems identify [Believe and Prepare](#) mentor educators, who host teacher candidates for a full-year, classroom-based residency while still in college. In these partnerships, preparation programs work with districts to ensure that what is taught to aspiring teachers is based on current expectations for students and teachers. Mentors develop leadership and coaching skills. Through the use of Title I funds, Louisiana has incentivized placement of residents and identification of mentor teachers in high-need schools, which are more likely to experience challenges with talent identification and cultivation. The state also has identified more than 5,000 [Teacher Leaders](#), who lead teaching and learning improvements in their schools and who meet on a quarterly basis through regional and statewide collaborative sessions. Strong Teacher Leaders and mentors can choose to pursue administrative pathways through the [Louisiana Principal Fellowship](#). Similarly, school and district administrators wishing to pursue district leadership can join the recently created [Louisiana Superintendents Academy](#).

**Leading indicators:** Strong schools and school systems create a "talent pipeline" at every level of the system. They proactively identify promising talent and create challenging growth experiences, cultivating future leaders for the next challenge based on their ability to ensure learning and growth for teachers and students. Schools or schools districts may, therefore, identify these elements for consideration as leading indicators of long-term outcomes:

- Qualitative: Evidence that demonstrates a system of talent cultivation, from aspiring educators through administrative leadership. Such a plan will include a means of inducting educators into the profession through partnership with preparation providers, identifying effective teachers for leadership roles within schools, and a system of identifying and cultivating the next generation of administrative leadership. These plans will draw on the data reported in the annual Educator Workforce Report, including the report's portrayal of talent in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students of color. Their results may involve local use of statewide structures, such as Believe and Prepare Resident Teachers, Teacher Leaders, Mentor Teachers, and Principal Fellows in all schools or in schools that have historically struggled to build a robust talent pipeline.
- Quantitative: Evidence of a functional talent pipeline may include resolution of hiring shortage areas; the number of effective educators identified and trained as mentors; reduced percentages of uncertified or out-of-field teachers, particularly in high-need schools; retention and promotion of highly effective teachers and leaders.

**Long-term indicators:** Unlike the other four challenge areas, the state will not include the strength of a school's teacher and leader corps as a long-term indicator in the accountability rating system. However, it is important that school and school system leadership be able to make strategic decisions about professional educators using data, much of which must be gleaned over periods of years. To that end, under this draft framework, the Department will continue providing districts and schools with an annual Educator Workforce Report, providing detailed information on the distribution of effective educators, their tenure status, their compensation, and the opportunities for advancement that await them. The state will continue to provide this report to superintendents and principals directly in the winter of every year as part of the annual reporting cycle.

3 2015-2016 workforce data from Profile of Educational Personnel, Teacher Certification Management System, Compass Information System

4 Louisiana's Plan for Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers. Retrieved at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/equitable/laequityplan12315.pdf>.

**State support:** While educator professional pathways must be a local endeavor, the state can provide training, support, and funding at statewide scale. This approach, allowing local schools and school systems to build and connect statewide job titles and systems of professional development into their local plans, will include the following enhancements to the state's plans:

- Through Teacher and Leader Preparation Academies, as defined in Title II of ESSA, the state will continue to financially support the growth and sustainability of teacher residencies, and support the development of residency-based leader academies. Support for these academies will incentivize the placement of residents and identification of mentors in schools and districts where students who are economically disadvantaged and students of color have more limited access to excellent educators.
- The Teacher Residency role will become a certification in state regulations. Teacher candidates in a full-year residency will be granted a stipend of \$2,000 minimally per year in order to cover lost part-time wages and travel expenses.
- The state will also create a Teacher Mentor certificate, granting mentors a stipend of \$1,000 per year and adjusting the accountability framework for such professionals through a Compass rubric and goal-setting framework specific to mentors. The state will invest \$100,000 annually in mentor-specific training.
- The state will consider the creation of a content leader certification, designating expertise in and the ability to lead professional learning in particular academic content areas.
- Louisiana will grow its Teacher Leader initiative, doubling it in size, creating a vast pool of teachers with leadership experience. In addition the state will provide a training tack for Teacher Leaders that prepares them for the mentor and content leader roles.
- The state will similarly continue to support cohort-based principal and superintendent leadership development fellowships.

With this framework of job titles and basic trainings in place, Louisiana will use the Believe and Prepare “pilot” approach to study adjustments to school leadership preparation akin to adjustments currently in development regarding teacher preparation. As with Believe and Prepare for teacher candidates, the state will invest in a small series of pilot residencies under mentor principals to determine the feasibility and nature of changes to the actual criteria and curriculum necessary to become a qualified school leader in Louisiana.

**School system and school plans:** Title II plans will provide a means for school systems to report on their approach to strengthening their educator pipeline and identify evidence that will be used to gauge success. Using Title II funds, schools and school systems will develop plans that meet the terms of leading indicators depicted above.

**Families in ESSA:** Families deserve to know if their children have access to excellent educators. That is why Louisiana will continue to report on teacher results at the school and district level. Parents and community members will also have access to information about the extent to which students in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students or students of color are taught by qualified, effective teachers.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

This document outlines a draft framework intended to continue a statewide discussion. All interested individuals, including parents, educators, business and industry representatives, and community advocates, are encouraged to email reactions to the framework directly to the Department at [essalouisiana@la.gov](mailto:essalouisiana@la.gov), or attend one of the fall **public meetings** listed below.

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION
October 5	Special Education Advisory Panel	Baton Rouge
October 12	BESE Full Board Meeting	Baton Rouge
October 17	Accountability Commission	Baton Rouge
November 1	Accountability Commission	Baton Rouge
November 1	Public Feedback Meeting	Bossier City
November 2	Superintendents' Advisory Council	Baton Rouge
November 4	Public Feedback Meeting	New Orleans
November 7	Public Feedback Meeting	Opelousas
November 16	Special Education Advisory Panel	Baton Rouge

\*Details on these meetings will be available at [essalouisiana@la.gov](mailto:essalouisiana@la.gov) as they are finalized.



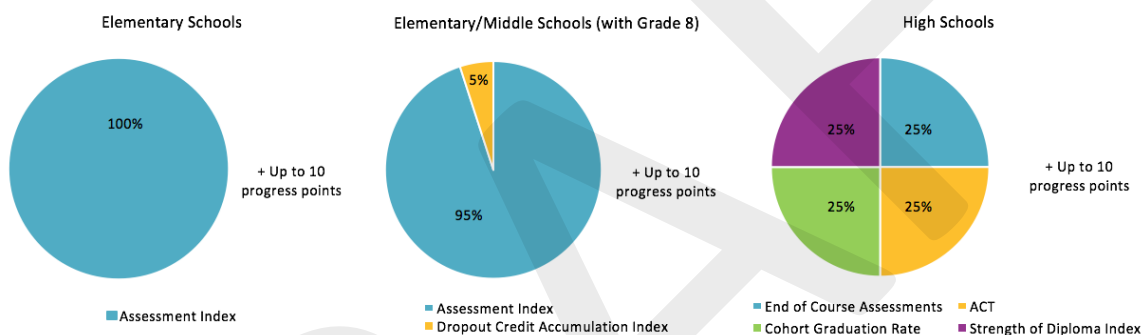
**APPENDIX A - OVERVIEW OF ACCOUNTABILITY SHIFTS**

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORE FORMULAE**

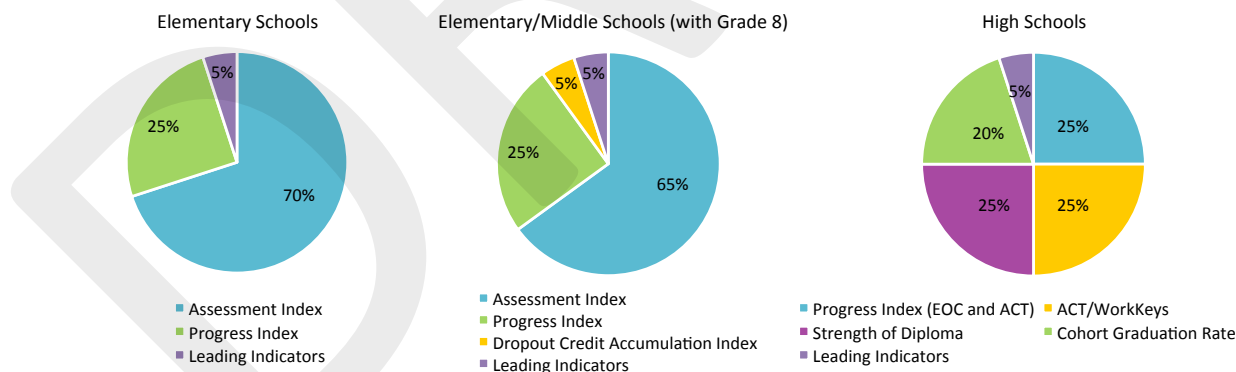
Louisiana's ESSA draft framework proposes a few critical shifts in the design of the accountability system. Schools and systems, for example, will be rated based in large part – 25 percent of the score in this draft – on the rate of annual progress all individual students make in their fundamental academic skills, no matter how high or low their ultimate performance. This element will replace the “progress points” frequently added to scores.

Additionally, schools and districts will be able to earn smaller amounts of credit – up to 5 percent of a school's score -- for demonstrating “leading indicators” of research-based practices likely to produce positive long-term results but not, themselves, measured through summative testing.

Therefore, the formula will shift from today:



To the following beginning in 2017-2018:



**MASTERY OF FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS: LONG-TERM INDICATORS**

To ensure Louisiana students are prepared for postsecondary studies and high wage, high growth employment opportunities, Louisiana will raise the ambition of its long-term student achievement goals.

<b>SPS INDEX</b>	<b>CURRENT 'A' BENCHMARK</b>	<b>PROPOSED 'A' BENCHMARK</b>
Grade 3-8 Assessments	Basic	Mastery
Dropout Credit Accumulation Index (DCAI)	5 or more credits	5 or more TOPS-aligned course credits
End-of-Course (EOC)	Good	Mastery on 5-level scale test, as Louisiana will utilize aligned, comparable measurement of student learning from grades 3 to 10
ACT	18	21
Strength of Diploma	Four-year graduate with a diploma	Diploma plus (a) a basic Jump Start credential or (b) at least one TOPS core curriculum credit in AP, college credit, dual enrollment, IB (current 110 level)
Cohort Graduation Rate	75% of cohort graduates in four years	90% of cohort graduates in four years

**LEADING INDICATORS**

<b>CORE CHALLENGES</b>	<b>POSSIBLE METRICS</b>
Mastery of Fundamental Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards-aligned formative assessments and curricula</li> <li>• Standards-aligned professional development</li> <li>• Test reduction</li> </ul>
Serving Historically Disadvantaged Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early grade identification and intervention process, as indicated accuracy rates of referrals, exit rates, and follow up success</li> <li>• Gifted access rates</li> <li>• On time, on level rates</li> <li>• Inclusion rates</li> <li>• Transitional 9th grade use and success</li> </ul>
Fair and Equitable Access to Enriching Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline reduction</li> <li>• Chronic absenteeism rates</li> <li>• Access to arts, music, foreign language</li> <li>• Daily nutritional options and physical education</li> <li>• Broad portfolio of high school pathway options for college and career</li> <li>• Gifted access</li> <li>• Direct student service access</li> <li>• Student access to counseling</li> </ul>
Celebrating and Strengthening the Teaching Profession	<p>Plans and quantitative evidence that show a system of talent cultivation, including means of induction, evaluation, depiction of regular learning, and a system of identifying next system of leaders, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residency participation</li> <li>• Reductions in uncertified and out-of-field placements</li> <li>• Teacher retention rates for teachers rated Effective</li> <li>• Teacher survey</li> <li>• Strong professional development implementation, including TAP</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B - HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS**

**HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW**

SUBJECT	2015-2016 ASSESSMENTS	2016-2017 ASSESSMENTS
All subjects	ACT (Grade 11), PLAN (Grade 10), EXPLORE (Optional Grade 8 & 9) WorkKeys, Advanced Placement & CLEP	ACT, WorkKeys, Advanced Placement & CLEP
ELA	<a href="#">English II EOC</a> <a href="#">English III EOC</a>	ELA EOC and Math EOC tests reviewed to ensure alignment to new <a href="#">LA Student Standards</a> Updated ELA and Math EOC <a href="#">Assessment Guides</a> and <a href="#">Sample Items/Student Work</a> documents (mid-September)
Math	<a href="#">Algebra I EOC</a> <a href="#">Geometry EOC</a>	
Science	Biology EOC	<a href="#">Biology EOC</a>
Social Studies	US History EOC	<a href="#">US History EOC</a>

**END-OF-COURSE UPDATES FOR 2016-2017**

COMPONENT	2015-2016	2016-2017
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structure and content of the EOC tests in ELA and Math will look and feel much the same as previous years.</li> <li>Practice test for English I will be provided in place of a field test to prepare teachers and students for 2017-2018 test</li> </ul>	
Online Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pacific Metrics Testing System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insight, DRC's system</li> <li>Spanish forms available for Algebra I and Geometry</li> </ul>
Test Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ELA: 3 sessions (Writing, Reading and Research, Reading and Language)</li> <li>Mathematics: 3 sessions (No Calculator Multiple-Choice, Constructed-Response, Calculator Multiple-Choice)</li> <li>Embedded field-testing to develop items aligned to new standards</li> </ul>	
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015-2016 Louisiana Standards for ELA and Mathematics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Louisiana Student Standards for ELA and Mathematics</li> <li>Items not aligned have been removed.</li> </ul>
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Untimed, suggested timing information available in the updated ELA (English II and English III) and Mathematics (Algebra I and Geometry) Assessment Guides</li> </ul>	