



Every Student Succeeds Act Minnesota State Plan Executive Summary

Introduction

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed in December 2015 as the nation’s new pre-K through grade 12 federal education law. ESSA reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), previously known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). ESSA empowers states to develop systems and policies that place a sharp focus on equity and continuous improvement for all students, and on ensuring all students have what they need to succeed and all teachers and administrators have supports in place to deliver on that promise.

ESSA was passed with the intention to shift the balance of power in education oversight and accountability, moving away from overly prescriptive federal oversight to a more supportive approach that gives states and districts additional flexibility and decision-making power. At its heart, ESSA is a civil rights law. It reminds us that every child has a right to an excellent education, regardless of circumstances that are outside of their control like the ZIP code in which they live or their socioeconomic status. ESSA provides us with the opportunity to confront the serious and urgent nature of the gaps that exist between our white students and students living in poverty, students of color, American Indian students, students learning English, students with disabilities and any other student needing additional support to meet our ambitious goals.

In order to raise achievement and eliminate disparities among student groups, Minnesota’s system will be equitable, coherent and meaningfully guided by students, families and educators.

The law requires states to develop plans that address standards, assessments, school and district accountability, support for struggling schools, support for educators, and ensuring a well-rounded education for all students that prepares them for career and college. The focus on a well-rounded education means that students should participate in many different learning experiences in a wide range of disciplines—including language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, world language, physical education, the arts and many other fields—as a regular part of their school day, week and year.

In recent years, Minnesota has invested significantly in our youngest learners, increasing access to high-quality early learning programs. Similarly, the federal government has recognized that investing early is an important strategy in reducing opportunity gaps. In addition to supporting students in elementary, middle and high school, most programs funded by ESSA can also be used to support students in early learning settings, a critical time in children’s development when high-quality educational opportunities for both students and families can provide lifelong benefits.

Minnesota’s ESSA plan complements our state accountability law, World’s Best Workforce. The two work together to address educational disparities and inequities identified in our system. Our plan raises the bar on accountability and equity in our schools. It includes rigorous statewide goals focused on tackling opportunity and achievement gaps. Every school and district in our state will measure and report progress against these goals in a clear and transparent way. Improvements to our data reporting systems will offer a clear, easy-to-understand overview to help families and communities better examine school performance and financial practices.

Minnesota’s North Star

This plan provides a framework for how we will do this important work using Minnesota’s new school accountability and support structure, the North Star Excellence and Equity System. Polaris—the North Star—is famous for holding nearly still in our vision while the entire northern sky moves around it. North Star guides our way towards better outcomes for the nearly one million students we collectively serve every day.

North  Star
Toward excellence and equity.

We hold high expectations for the academic performance of every student, in every student group, on every accountability indicator for every Minnesota school—not just those receiving Title I funds. We will be transparent about where we are succeeding and where we are falling short. Schools will be identified for support and expected to develop plans to improve if they fall short in just one student group, even when all other student groups are proficient. High schools, historically under-scrutinized and left without meaningful support, will be identified for assistance if any student group’s graduation rate falls below 67 percent. Our plan also places a renewed focus on supporting English learners. All told, Minnesota will identify and support approximately 300-400 schools, more than double the number identified and supported under our NCLB flexibility waiver.

The Minnesota Department of Education believes strongly that, in addition to identifying schools that are in need of support, there is an equally crucial need to identify schools that are succeeding in providing every student with an excellent education. In order to support and improve schools that may be struggling, Minnesota is committed to recognizing and learning from those schools that are beating the odds, and sharing that information so that other schools may consider how their strategies may be useful in their own unique settings. The department will continue to work with stakeholders to develop the process for school recognition.

Minnesota’s NCLB waiver remained in effect until August 1, 2016. Some components of ESSA take effect in 2017-18, while much of the data reporting, school improvement and accountability requirements are not in place until 2018-19.

There are areas of our plan where more detail may be needed to fully understand how a program may be implemented at the district and school levels. Much work remains for Minnesota school districts and charter schools to engage with their local communities to make decisions on how to implement parts of ESSA. One example of this includes how a district may use Title I funding to support students with a well-rounded education.

Engagement

The Minnesota Department of Education has worked with a diverse group of stakeholders, including consultation with Minnesota’s 11 unique sovereign Tribal Nations, to shape the state’s ESSA plan. Engagement has been ongoing since January 2016, and the department has hosted many activities, providing multiple means for Minnesota residents to provide input on the state plan. These activities included topic-specific meetings, public listening sessions, committees for specific areas of the plan, focus groups, social media “Town Hall” meetings, surveys and community meetings.

Over the course of 20 months, MDE engaged with stakeholders at nearly 300 meetings and public events throughout the state to educate, listen and receive critical input from Minnesota citizens.

We asked students, parents, educators, education partners, advocacy organizations, business leaders, community members and members of the public to participate in five committees to delve into specific topics. The five committees were accountability, assessment, English learners, school improvement, and educator quality. The purpose of the committees was to meaningfully involve voices of Minnesotans to support the development of Minnesota’s ESSA plan. All meetings were open to the public.

Attendees of these many meetings were encouraged to strive to bridge gaps in understanding, and seek creative resolution of differences in order to integrate the needs of all stakeholders. Members were encouraged to build consensus on options by considering and including the perspectives and needs of all stakeholder groups. Members raised, reflected on, and found equitable solutions throughout the process.

The shared work reflects a vision of an aligned, pre-K through grade 12 education system where all children succeed.

Equity

Equity is at the center of all work at the Minnesota Department of Education, and throughout the state of Minnesota. The department’s mission statement is “Leading for educational excellence and equity. Every day for every one.” This is expanded upon in the department’s vision statement:

The Minnesota Department of Education provides an excellent education for Minnesota students by implementing Governor Mark Dayton’s 7-Point Plan for Better Schools for a Better Minnesota. We strive for excellence, equity and opportunity by focusing on closing achievement gaps, supporting high-quality teaching, using innovative strategies to improve educational outcomes, and ensuring all students graduate from high school well-prepared for college, career and life.

Governor Dayton’s 7-Point Plan lays the framework for a long-term vision for pre-K through grade 12 education in Minnesota over the coming years. Fundamental to the plan is the belief that an aligned vision for educational excellence must be created from the ground up. Stakeholder engagement and collaborative partnerships are essential to our success. Building on our strengths is equally important. That concept of taking what is good and making it better provides a clear path for Minnesota to create a strong system of public schools, in which excellent teaching and learning are recognized, supported and celebrated, every day in every school.

Minnesotans want an equitable system. This was evident in the development of our state’s NCLB flexibility waiver, and it remains true today. Our ESSA state plan emphasizes meaningful inclusion of all students in the system and upholds the civil rights spirit of ESSA by holding every public school accountable for the outcomes of every student group. During our work on this plan, and with the input of stakeholders, it was important to work from a shared definition of what equity means. **Minnesota’s definition of education equity** was written by Voices for Racial Justice, and reviewed and adapted by members of the ESSA committees.

Minnesota’s Definition of Education Equity

Education equity is **the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunity to learn and develop to their fullest potential.** The pursuit of education equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their race, income, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunity requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student’s situation to ensure an equitable outcome.



A series of guiding questions were developed to ensure that discussion and decision-making held up our shared commitment and belief in the importance of equity.

- What groups are impacted by the decision and what is the nature of the impact?
- What are the potential positive, neutral or harmful impacts on the identified groups?
- Have representatives from these groups been collaboratively engaged on the decision?
- How will the decision advance equity, address structural barriers, and reduce or eliminate disparities?

Conclusion

Minnesota’s state plan reflects the input of stakeholders from across Minnesota and is rooted in the goal of an equitable, well-rounded education for all students. It reflects lessons learned under No Child Left Behind and Minnesota’s NCLB flexibility waiver. While the work of transitioning to ESSA is far from complete—much remains to be done at state and local levels with respect to implementation—the vision laid out here is a starting point. The Minnesota Department of Education is committed to continuing and building on the work that was done to reach this point in close collaboration with the students, families, educators, school and district leaders, and engaged community members of this state.

Standards and Assessments

ESSA requires that states continue to test the same grades and subjects as were required under No Child Left Behind. This means that students will continue to take reading and math tests in grades 3-8 and once in high school, and they will take science tests in fifth grade, eighth grade and once in high school.

In the plan

States are required to provide a quality assessment system that assures students receive a fair, equitable and high-quality education. Each state must provide evidence that it has adopted challenging academic content standards and academic assessments. **Under ESSA, Minnesota will continue to administer the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS). These assessments are aligned to the most recent version of Minnesota's Academic Standards.**

ESSA also requires that states define what languages other than English are spoken by a significant portion of the state's student population and describe a timeline for how states will develop tests in those languages. **Minnesota stakeholders determined that Spanish, Somali and Hmong are present to a significant extent in the participating student population. Beginning in 2018, Minnesota will provide translations of academic words throughout the math and science MCAs in these languages.**

Minnesota will continue to test the progress toward English language proficiency of English learners in the domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Going forward, stakeholders will convene to develop considerations for Minnesota's next assessment system. Additionally, a process will be established for the state to consider a nationally recognized high school assessment in place of the high school MCAs.



Accountability

Minnesota's accountability system sets a high bar to close opportunity and achievement gaps. The system focuses on ensuring all students, including students with disabilities, students in poverty, English learners, students of color and American Indian students are successful. It holds every school in the state accountable for the performance of every student group. Accountability indicators are publicly reported for all schools and disaggregated at the student group level. Schools will be identified and prioritized for support based on need.

Statewide Long Term Goals

ESSA asks states to describe ambitious long-term goals which include measurements of interim progress toward meeting the goals for all students and separately for each student group.

- 90 percent of all Minnesota students will be proficient in reading and math by the year 2025. We **target achievement gaps** with our goal of ensuring that at least 85 percent of students in every student group are proficient.
 - 90 percent of all Minnesota students will score proficient or higher in reading by third grade, with no student group below 85 percent, by the year 2025.
 - 90 percent of all Minnesota students will score proficient or higher in math, with no student group below 85 percent, by the year 2025.
- 85 percent of English learners will be making progress in achieving English language proficiency by the year 2025.
- 90 percent of all Minnesota high school students will graduate in four years by the year 2020, with no student group below 85 percent graduating in four years.
- 95 percent of all Minnesota students will consistently attend school by the year 2020, with no student group below 90 percent consistently attending.

Aligning with World's Best Workforce

Minnesota's new accountability system is aligned with many of the same goals as World's Best Workforce. Two of the goal areas, school readiness and career and college readiness, will continue to be developed with an eye toward even further alignment between the ESSA and WBWF systems.

Minnesota's Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) is a helpful tool in providing districts with real-time data to help plan and support teachers in their daily instructional practice. This data can also help teachers and families as children transition from an early learning environment to kindergarten. Full inclusion of data from the KEP in our ESSA system will be dependent on both legislative changes and additional funding.

Additionally, ensuring all students are well-prepared for career and college surfaced as a top priority for stakeholders during the ESSA engagement process. MDE is committed to reporting data as available on the Minnesota Report Card and moving toward the longer-term plan of including a measure of career and college readiness as a school-quality or student-success indicator.



Identifying Schools for Support and Improvement


Minnesota’s accountability indicators will be used to prioritize support for identified schools. This required aspect of ESSA is one part of an overall approach to school accountability. Public reporting of data and efforts to recognize high-performing schools will also be important. Each student group at a school will receive equal weight in order to **meaningfully include all students**.

Under ESSA, any public high school in the state with a **graduation rate below 67 percent overall or for any student group** will be identified for support.

Minnesota will also use a stage-based decision process to find those schools that are low across all indicators. The process first checks school performance on the academic indicators, including academic achievement, English language proficiency, academic progress and graduation rates, and lastly, the process evaluates every school’s consistent attendance rates.

Under ESSA, **Minnesota will identify and support between 300 and 400 schools**, much more than under our No Child Left Behind waiver. In addition to identifying the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools for support based on low overall performance, we further tackle the achievement gap by examining student group performance at **all public schools** to see where student groups may be underachieving. Pages 9-11 of this document explain how the decision process is applied at the elementary and middle school levels as well as the high school level, for both comprehensive and targeted support and improvement.

ESSA also requires that states factor test participation into their accountability systems. **In Minnesota, students who do not take the MCAs for their grade will count similarly to students who are not proficient, although they will not be labeled that way in state records or reporting to parents.**



Additional help for high schools

Our model estimates that 246 high schools will be identified for low graduation rate support and improvement. Under No Child Left Behind and Minnesota’s NCLB waiver, we were supporting very few high schools.

Minnesota’s Accountability Indicators

Indicator 1 - Academic Achievement: all schools

An achievement rate using math and reading tests will give points for students in the “meets standards” or “exceeds standards” levels. Any student that does not participate in an assessment, with the exception of medically-exempt students, will count as “not proficient” in the academic achievement indicator calculation.

Indicator 2 - Academic Progress: elementary and middle schools

A transition matrix using math and reading tests will award points for students increasing achievement levels (e.g. moving from “does not meet standards” to “partially meets standards”).

Indicator 3 - Graduation Rate: high schools

The indicator will use a school’s four-year and seven-year graduation rates.

Students who drop out after less than half an academic year at a school will be counted at the high school they attended for the most time.

Four-, five-, six- and seven-year rates will be reported on the Minnesota Report Card.

Indicator 4 - Progress Toward English Language Proficiency: all schools

A growth index will measure how each English learner scored relative to their individual growth-to-proficiency target on the ACCESS test.

Indicator 5 - School Quality/Student Success: all schools

This new indicator will shift over time as more data becomes available.

2018: Consistent attendance will be used to identify schools.

2019/2020: Consistent attendance will be used to identify schools. Well-rounded education and career and college readiness data will be separately reported as available.

2021: Consistent attendance, well-rounded education, and career and college readiness data will be used to identify schools.

School Support

For districts with schools identified under the accountability model, Minnesota’s Regional Centers of Excellence partner with leadership teams to facilitate school improvement efforts focused on equity for underserved student support groups. The centers provide on-the-ground assistance to districts and schools to create the capacity and conditions that support change and continuous improvement. Minnesota also provides Title I school improvement grants to districts that serve the most significant numbers of identified schools. Details on the levels of support provided to districts and schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement are found on pages 9-11 of this document.

In the plan

States are required to provide more rigorous interventions for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to exit their support and improvement status. **Minnesota will support reidentified schools with an externally facilitated, on-site needs assessment, requirements for the use of Title I dollars to fund improvement activities, and increased requirements for approving and monitoring their support and improvement plans.**

In their plans, states must describe how school improvement resources are being used. **Minnesota will provide support to districts serving identified schools by using school improvement funds and state funds to: (1) make grants to the Minnesota districts serving the highest proportions of schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement and that have capacity to support school improvement activities in schools; and, (2) make grants to regional educational service agencies—the Minnesota service cooperatives—to serve schools implementing comprehensive and targeted support improvement plans through Minnesota’s Regional Centers of Excellence. The department reviews resource allocations between grants to address inequities.**

Minnesota worked with stakeholders to lay out a theory of action for how the state will approach supports for identified schools, as well as reinforce the focus on eliminating achievement gaps and inequities while improving outcomes for all students. Minnesota will provide differentiated assistance to districts and schools to conduct comprehensive needs assessments, select appropriate evidence-based interventions and strategies, develop and implement school improvement plans, and address resource inequities.

Strong criteria for exiting support and improvement status

Minnesota will identify schools for support every three years. In addition to not being reidentified, in order to exit support and improvement status, schools must also meet the criteria below.

Exiting comprehensive support and improvement status:

A school must not fall below the 25th percentile of Title I schools in any Stage 1 indicator. A school must also show improvement on all indicators which led to its initial identification. If a school fails to do either of these things, even though it was not reidentified for comprehensive support, it will be moved to targeted support and improvement.

Exiting targeted support and improvement status:

The student group for which the school was identified must not perform below the 25th percentile of Title I schools in any Stage 1 indicator. The student group for which the school was identified must also show improvement on all indicators which led to its initial identification. If a school fails to do either of these things, the school will remain in targeted support and improvement status.

Formula for Success at Minnesota’s Regional Centers of Excellence

Minnesota’s statewide system of support uses a stage-based framework with schools that incorporates three core support elements:

1. Building and using implementation teams to actively lead implementation efforts.
2. Using data and consistent, frequent feedback loops to drive decision-making and promote continuous improvement.
3. Developing an implementation infrastructure that includes innovation-specific capacity, general capacity and enabling contexts for implementation and continuous improvement.

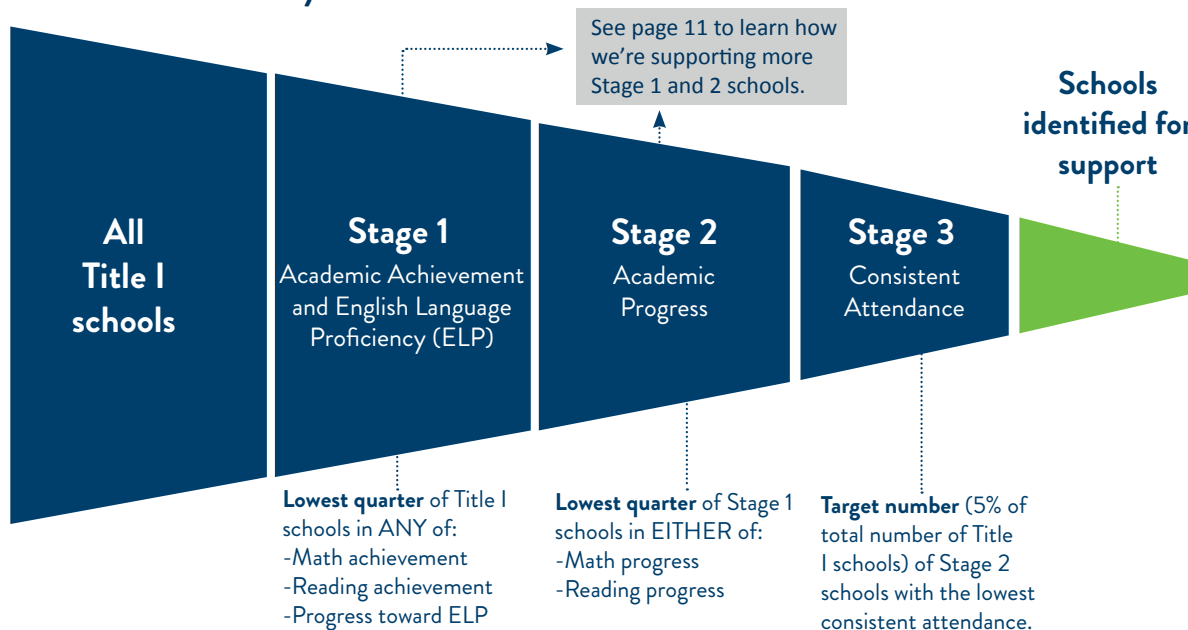
Identification and Support: How it Comes Together

Comprehensive Support and Improvement: Lowest 5% of Title I Schools

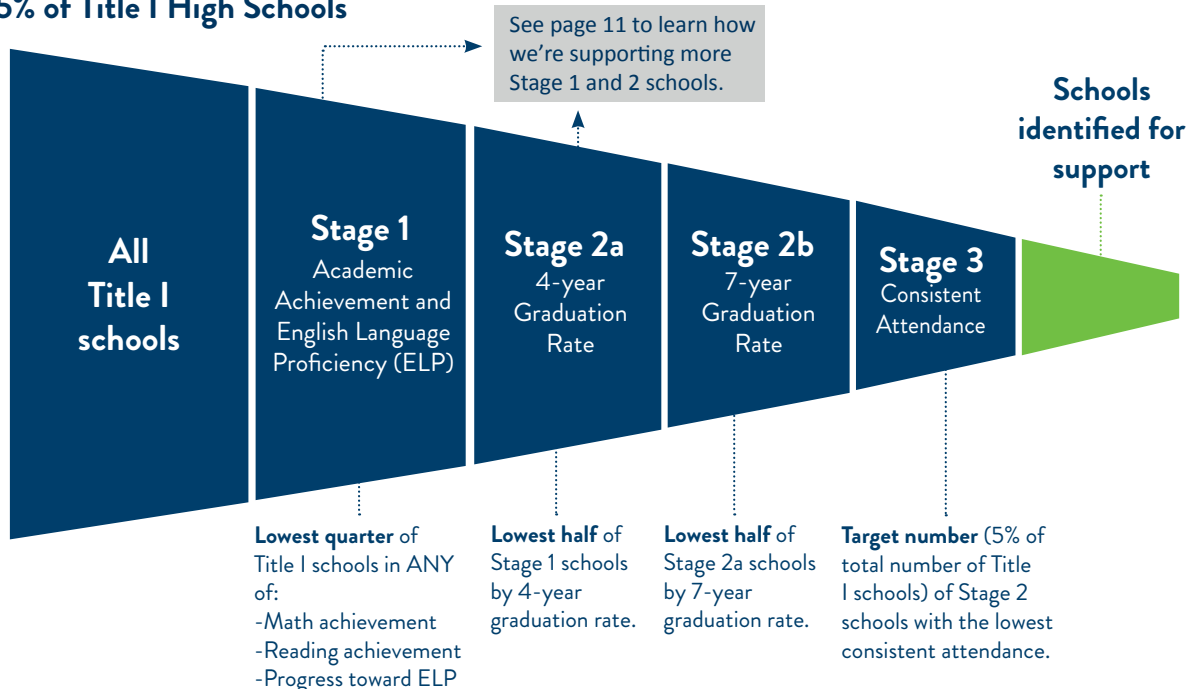
Schools identified in this category will receive the most support from Minnesota’s Regional Centers of Excellence. The centers will offer supports through content specialists in the areas of reading, math, equity, special education, implementation, high school reform and dropout prevention, English learning and data. Schools will receive intensive onsite coaching 2-4 times per month from the specialists. Districts and schools at this level will also have access to networking opportunities and receive the training supports available to schools identified for targeted support and improvement. Implementation of schools’ support and improvement plans will also be monitored quarterly.

Approximately 50 schools will be identified for this highest level of support.

Lowest 5% of Title I Elementary and Middle Schools



Lowest 5% of Title I High Schools

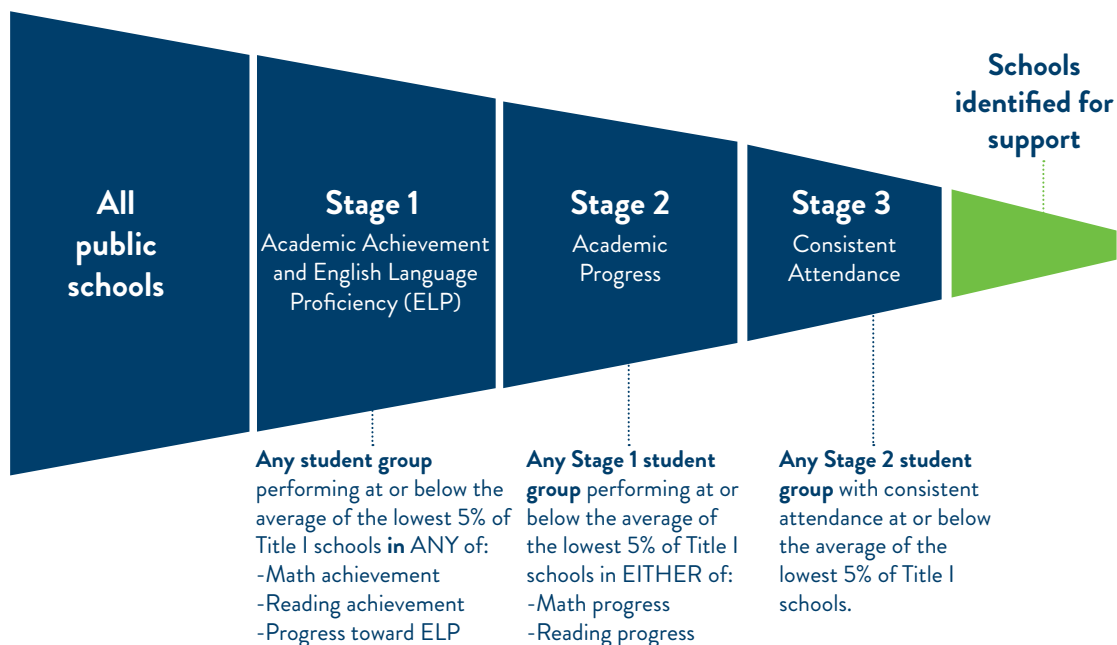


Closing the Achievement Gap with Targeted Support: Any Public School with Any Student Group Performing Similarly to the Lowest 5% of Title I Schools OR Any Consistently Underperforming Student Group

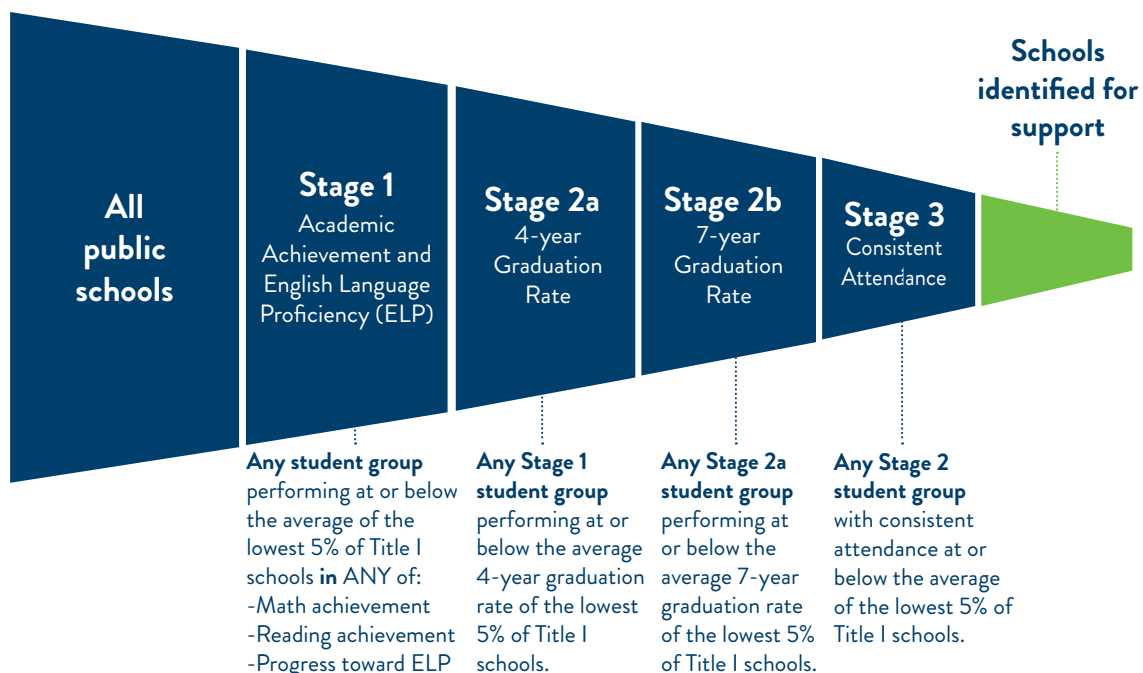
Districts with schools identified for targeted support and improvement will receive supports from the Regional Centers of Excellence. Supports will include access to intensive professional development and access to networking opportunities. These opportunities will focus on establishing school leadership teams, conducting comprehensive needs assessments, selecting appropriate evidence-based interventions and strategies, developing and implementing support and improvement plans, and addressing resource inequities.

Approximately 50 schools with student groups performing similarly to the lowest 5% of Title I schools and 117 schools with consistently underperforming student groups will be identified for this type of support.

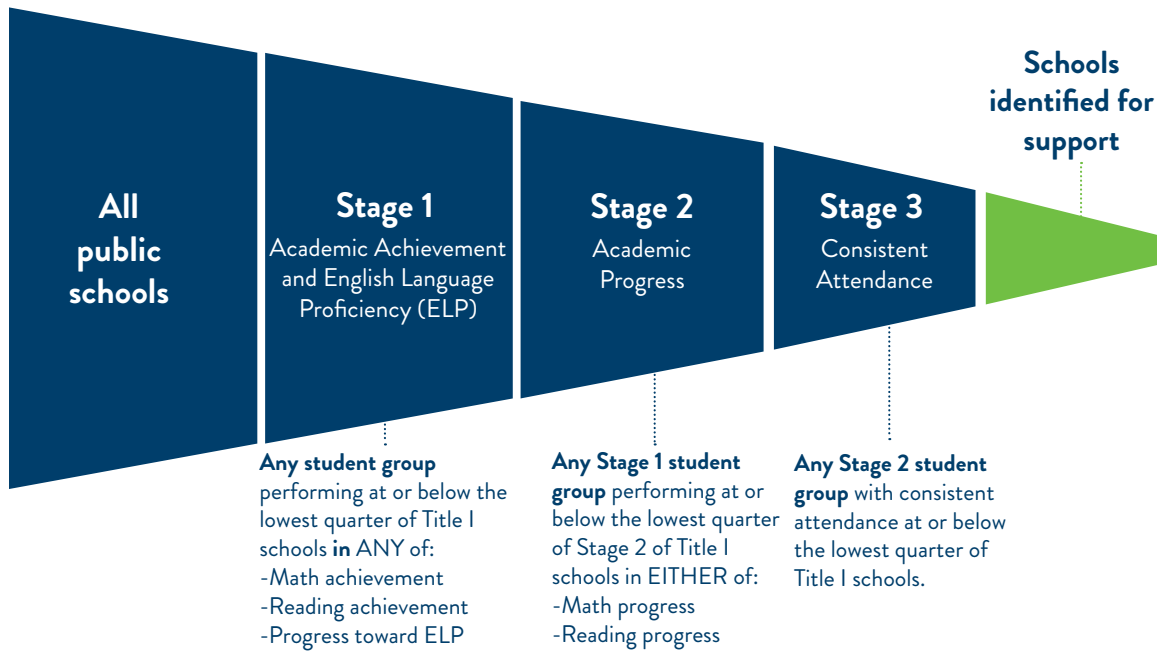
Any Student Group Performing Similarly to the Lowest 5% of Title I Elementary and Middle Schools



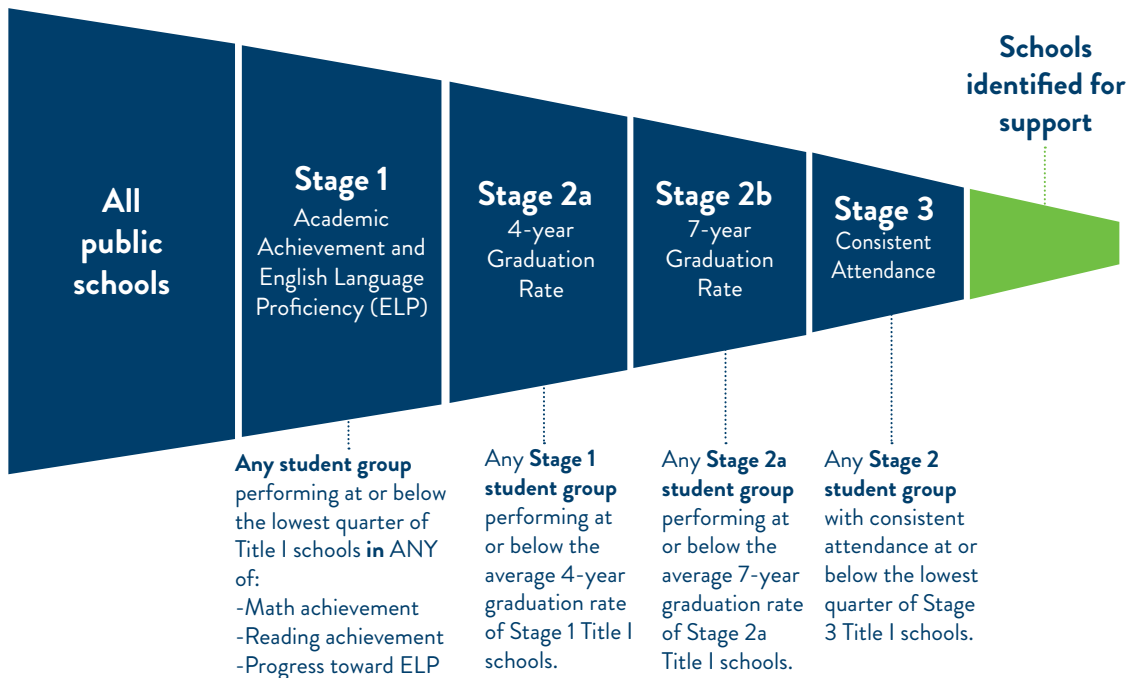
Any Student Group Performing Similarly to the Lowest 5% of Title I High Schools



Elementary and Middle Schools with Any Consistently Underperforming Student Group



High Schools with Any Consistently Underperforming Student Group



Supporting More Stage 1 and Stage 2 Schools with Enhanced Core Support

Stage 1 Schools: Title I schools in the lowest 25 percent for math achievement, reading achievement or progress toward English language proficiency that are not otherwise identified for support will be supported by the department under World’s Best Workforce. These schools will have access to additional networking and training opportunities focused on needs assessments, continuous improvement planning and using Minnesota’s Standards Portal to implement standards-based systems. Additionally, Title I schools in the lowest 25 percent of schools for progress toward English language proficiency will be recruited to participate in Minnesota’s English Learner **Leadership Institute**.

Stage 2 Schools: Title I schools that demonstrate low performance on all academic indicators at stage 1 and stage 2, but with consistent attendance higher than the threshold used to identify the bottom 5 percent, will be in the targeted support and improvement status. These schools are eligible for assistance through the Regional Centers of Excellence.

English Learners

The English learner (EL) population in Minnesota has increased more than 300 percent in the last 20 years. Currently, it is the fastest growing student population in the state. ESSA is an opportunity to ensure additional growth toward proficiency of the Minnesota English learner as well as creating opportunities to meaningfully include and support English learners.

In the plan

ESSA asks that states describe how they will develop standard entrance and exit procedures for English learners with timely and meaningful input from districts. **Staff from the department met with educators and community members throughout the spring of 2017 to work on these procedures. Additional details and guidance, including an updated approach to the home language survey used to identify students as English learners and a more systematic approach to exiting students from EL status will be shared with schools, districts and communities.**

States must also describe how they will help districts meet the state’s long term goals for EL progress and help EL students meet the state academic standards. **Minnesota provides technical assistance to all districts receiving state aid for English learners, and districts only need to have one EL student to qualify. Districts serving a large number of ELs with limited and/or interrupted schooling, long-term English learners, or a large number of ELs and ELs with low rates of growth toward proficiency will receive enhanced technical assistance. Schools also have access to EL specialists at the Regional Centers of Excellence. In addition to content expertise, these specialists offer an outside perspective on schools’ efforts to increase student achievement and can guide and support staff at identified schools through the process of needs assessment, building and strengthening leadership teams, and developing continuous improvement plans.**

ESSA requires that the state monitor the progress of districts receiving Title III funds in helping ELs achieve English proficiency. In the state plan, states must describe how they will do that, and describe the steps that will be taken to help districts whose Title III strategies are not effective. **In Minnesota, all districts applying for Title III EL funds must submit a comprehensive needs assessment based on EL data; progress towards proficiency, and meeting the recommended growth target. Staff at the Minnesota Department of Education review the application and confirm that the district’s strategy is based on EL needs and able to be implemented well. Additionally, districts receiving EL funding are annually monitored, where districts are asked to provide evidence and support of critical compliance elements that follow requirements of Title III.**



Educator Quality and Equity in Access

Minnesota will continue to implement strategies and review and publicly report available data to ensure all students have equitable access to experienced and qualified teachers who are teaching in their licensure field. Additional focus will be brought to promoting equitable access to effective teachers and exploring ways to increase teacher diversity so more students have a chance to be taught by teachers similar to themselves.

In the plan

ESSA requires that states address how they will ensure that students from low-income families and students of color and American Indian students are not taught more often than their peers by teachers who are ineffective, not fully credentialed or inexperienced. **Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce law addresses this by requiring districts and charters to create local equitable access plans to ensure low-income and students of color and American Indian students are not disproportionately taught by inexperienced, ineffective or out-of-field teachers.**


At the state level, **Minnesota will create a statewide equitable access plan, and will provide guidance, training and other resources to support districts and schools in engaging in local equitable access planning.** Districts and schools will be able to use both state and local data in order to identify, document and report local gaps in equitable access.

Minnesota will define “ineffective teacher” as a **teacher who is not meeting professional teaching standards as defined in local teacher development and evaluation systems.**

ESSA also asks how states will use Title II funds in improving the skills of teachers and principals and increasing student achievement. **Minnesota will use these funds to support districts to design and implement teacher leadership, job-embedded professional development, teacher evaluation and performance-based compensation. Additionally, principal networks, communities of practice and other activities focusing on instructional leadership and equity will be provided through the state’s use of these funds.**

To improve the skills of teachers, principals or other school leaders to identify students with specific learning needs and then meet those needs, **the Minnesota Department of Education provides a variety of services to improve the skills of teachers, principals and other school leaders in areas such as special education, English learners, gifted and talented education, early learning and reading. Minnesota’s Regional Centers of Excellence provide on-the-ground support to identified districts and schools to address challenges and improve the overall skills of teachers and school leaders.**

In improving preparation programs and strengthening support for teachers, principals or other school leaders based on state needs, **Minnesota has a standard process in place for current and new programs, which focuses on a continuous improvement model using internal and external data on processes and results, where data is reviewed and concerns are discussed and focuses on areas where programs should focus their improvement efforts.**



Ensuring a high-quality education workforce through an emphasis on evaluation.

In order to be identified as “effective,” a teacher must be evaluated using the local teacher development and evaluation system. Pre-K teachers must also be evaluated in order to be considered effective.

Minnesota has a state law requiring districts and schools to implement local plans to develop and evaluate teachers based on common professional teaching standards and on student outcomes. The teacher development and evaluation law explicitly requires that districts identify teachers not meeting standards, support them to improve and discipline teachers who have not improved after being supported. While the statute provides the criteria that must be met, it is a local control mandate, giving districts and schools the flexibility to design evaluation systems that best meet the needs of their students, educators and communities.

More Programs for Supporting Students and Schools

ESSA funds additional programs aimed at improving overall school experiences, as well as several programs aimed at meeting specific goals and serving specific populations. Many of these programs already operate in Minnesota, and most will experience little to no change under ESSA.

School Conditions

ESSA asks how states will support districts to improve school conditions for student learning, including reducing bullying and harassment incidences, limiting discipline practices that remove students from the classroom, and addressing behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety. **The Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act (2015) has enhanced the state's capacity to provide assistance to schools in identifying and addressing bullying and harassment, and to help schools implement preventative and positive approaches to discipline. Minnesota also provides districts and schools support on implementing restorative practices and social emotional learning as a central strategy for creating positive climates.**

School Transitions

Under ESSA, states must demonstrate how they will meet the needs of students at all levels making sure they are supported in making successful transitions between schools. **The Minnesota Department of Education has developed several tools and resources including the Minnesota Early Indicator and Response System and the Personal Learning Plans Toolkit to help educators, parents, counselors and administrators to support students throughout school. These tools help adults recognize the unique possibilities of each student and ensure that their plan for school reflects their own unique talents, skills and abilities throughout their growth and development.** Additionally, Support Our Students Grants, provided by the Minnesota Legislature in 2016, help schools hire student support services personnel including licensed school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses or chemical dependency counselors. These support services personnel are critical to the success of students, and especially those on the verge of dropping out.

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

Title IV, Part A of ESSA creates the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, which will be small grants awarded to districts to help students access a well-rounded education, experience safe and healthy learning, and benefit from the use of technology in schools. **In working to ensure a well-rounded education for all students, Minnesota will use Title IV, Part A funds to support a quality standards-based education system and increase the access and effective use of technology in instruction. Minnesota will also award subgrants for Title IV, Part A to focus on innovative programs that promote equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students. Priority will be given to programs designed to achieve the following: improved access to academic standards for all students; a collaborative professional culture that supports implementation of standards; and rigorous, multi-disciplinary learning experiences (including health and physical education, the arts, and career and technical education).**

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st Century Community Learning Centers offer opportunities for academic enrichment for students, and offer families of students served by the centers opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education. ESSA asks states to describe how they will use funds received under this program, including those funds reserved for state-level activities. **Minnesota will award competitive grants that support the creation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers to increase access to these centers and expand the opportunities they provide. Some of the funds will also be used for state activities such as monitoring and evaluation of programs and activities, outreach, training and technical assistance.**

States must also describe how funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants will be awarded. **Minnesota will use a competitive application and rigorous peer review process for awarding funding. Priority will be given to programs serving high-needs areas and those that are implementing support and improvement activities.**

Rural and Low-Income School Program

Under ESSA, states must provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under the Rural and Low-Income School Program, including how the state will use funds to help all students meet the challenging state academic standards. **Minnesota targets rural districts, charters, intermediate districts and education cooperatives serving large numbers of low-income students for grants awarded to promote effective implementation of the challenging state academic standards through state and local innovations. Awards are issued annually. The program objective for improved performance by students in rural and low-income schools will be to measure the academic achievement of students as described in the accountability system.** The Minnesota Department of Education will provide assistance in implementation, program activities and fiscal decisions. Ongoing assistance may be offered through webinars, conference presentations, one-on-one support and more.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth

In Minnesota, every school district is required to have a McKinney-Vento liaison that is actively working to identify, work with, and advocate for homeless or highly mobile students.

ESSA asks states to describe programs for school personnel to heighten their awareness of the specific needs of homeless children and youth, including runaway and homeless children and youth. **Minnesota provides a variety of training and technical assistance to districts and schools such as presentations, briefs, surveys and recommendations. Topics include identifying homeless and highly mobile students early to remove barriers to enrollment, ensuring eligible children and families are notified of programs like School Readiness, early learning scholarships and more.**

States must also describe how they will make sure that homeless children and youth have access to a variety of programs, including public preschool programs and secondary education and support services, and describe the steps taken to remove barriers to academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education programs, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs. **Minnesota offers extensive technical assistance to districts and schools to ensure they are trained in assessing policies that may pose barriers to any eligible student's participation in any activity. This technical assistance from the state is ongoing, including when new policies and procedures are being developed.**

Education of Migratory Children

Under ESSA, states must describe how they will address the needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school. **Minnesota identifies the unique educational needs of its migratory children through a regularly conducted statewide migrant comprehensive needs assessment, service delivery plan and evaluation cycle. The process begins with the comprehensive needs assessment, which then informs the development of the service delivery plan and continues on through the implementation and program evaluation. The results of the comprehensive needs assessment guides the overall design of the Minnesota Migrant Education Program on a statewide basis, and the Migrant Education Program assures that the findings of the comprehensive needs assessment are folded into the comprehensive state plan for service delivery.**

Prevention and Intervention Programs for Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk Children and Youth

Under ESSA, states must provide a plan for assisting the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs. **The Minnesota Department of Education will continue to collaborate with and support the Minnesota Department of Corrections and locally operated programs to ensure successful and seamless transitions for students. Programs and plans such as the Personal Education Plan, College and Career Readiness/Job Training, Assistance with Locating Transition Program/Services, and Check & Connect are part of this system.**

States must describe the established program objectives and outcomes that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Title I, Part D prevention and intervention programs in improving the academic, career and technical skills of children in the program. **Minnesota's objectives and outcomes describe how students in the program will: 1) improve achievement in reading and mathematics; 2) accrue course credits and are on track to graduate; 3) make successful transition to a regular program or other educational program; and, 4) participate in postsecondary education, career and technical education, or employment. Minnesota utilizes a variety of methods to assess the effectiveness of the program objectives and outcomes.**



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