

State ESSA Plans to Support Student Health and Wellness: A Framework for Action

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) recognizes the vital role that health and wellness play in education. This document focuses on supporting advocates who are interested in working with state-level policymakers to develop state ESSA plans. It provides practical resources and emphasizes several key areas with the greatest potential impact on student health.

To learn more, visit:

healthyschoolscampaign.org/state-essa-framework

Second Edition: Updated December 2016



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMPAIGN

Table of Contents

1	The Opportunity
3	Overview of ESSA
5	Getting Started
8	How to Engage Stakeholders in a Way that Ensures an Effective ESSA State Plan is Developed and Implemented
10	How to Implement a State Accountability System that Supports the Health and Learning Connection
13	How to Create a State School Report Card that Supports the Health and Learning Connection
15	How to Ensure Health and Wellness are Integrated into Standards, Assessments and a Well-Rounded Education
17	How to Integrate Health and Wellness into School-Level Needs Assessments
20	How to Support Student Learning through Staff Wellness and Professional Development
22	How to Support the Transition from Early Childhood Programs to Elementary School
22	Transferring Funding to Strengthen ESSA Health and Wellness Programming
24	Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant
25	Conclusion + Looking Ahead
26	Authors + Acknowledgments
27	Links

Welcome

Healthy students are better prepared to learn and succeed in school. Now, we have a new opportunity to ensure all schools support student learning by thoughtfully addressing health and wellness.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the first major overhaul of our national education law since 2001, recognizes the vital role that health and wellness play in education. It also transfers significant authority from the federal government to states. This means that states have an opportunity to develop strategies and plans for implementing ESSA in ways that support student health and wellness.

We are pleased to share this resource to support advocates who are interested in working with state-level policymakers to develop state ESSA plans. This document emphasizes several key areas with the greatest potential impact on student health.

This work is deeply connected to schools' core mission of education and to the health sector's renewed focus on prevention and community care. It is focused on making the most of limited resources and using data to identify both the most effective strategies and the areas of greatest need in each state.

It is also driven by a commitment to equity and a recognition that our nation faces vast health disparities that have an impact on education. Low-income students and students of color bear the overwhelming burden of these disparities. Supporting health and wellness at school is a proven strategy for addressing disparities and supporting learning for all students.

For many years, Healthy Schools Campaign and Alliance for a Healthier Generation have worked to support our nation's schools in creating the conditions for health. We believe that on-the-ground leaders—from teachers and parents to local policymakers—have a vital voice in our nation's dialogue about health and education. Throughout this document, you will find spotlights on these leaders and the lessons they can share for advocates nationwide.

We applaud you for your commitment to working with state leaders to make the most of this opportunity. The state plans discussed in this document are an important step in transforming the way our nation supports health and wellness in schools.

Sincerely,



Rochelle Davis, President + CEO
Healthy Schools Campaign



Brian Weaver, Chief Program Officer
Alliance for a Healthier Generation

The Opportunity

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) recognizes the need for schools to support the whole child and specifically acknowledges the importance of health and wellness in supporting learning and academic achievement. Under ESSA, states have more authority and flexibility in establishing their plans and strategies. Thus, as states begin to implement ESSA, it is critical they do so in a way that supports health and wellness.

The link between health and learning is clear: healthy, active and well-nourished children are more likely to attend school, be ready to learn and stay engaged in class.¹

Despite widespread agreement on these facts, too many students spend their days in buildings with unhealthy air, have limited opportunities for physical activity, and have inadequate access to fresh water, nutritious food or a school nurse. Many students come to school with one or more health problems that hinder their ability to learn. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the incidence of chronic diseases—including asthma, obesity and diabetes—has doubled among children over the past several decades. These conditions affect students' abilities to learn and succeed at school. They also affect students' long-term health outcomes: We know that students who achieve success in school are more likely to achieve better health over their lifetime.

This challenge is especially critical in light of the nation's vast disparities in health and education. Low-income students and students of color are at increased risk of health problems that hinder learning. These students are also more likely to attend schools with unhealthy environments and schools that do not invest in evidence-based prevention. Unless we address these disparities in health status and school environments, efforts to close the education achievement gap will fall short.

¹ Basch, C., Gracy, D., Johnson, D., Fabian, A. (2015). Health Barriers to Learning and the Education Opportunity Gap. Progress of Education Reform, Volume 15 (Issue 3), Retrieved from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/20/69/12069.pdf>.

ESSA provides an opportunity to ensure equitable access to quality education and the conditions that support student learning. It also provides clear opportunities for engagement and collaboration—so schools do not need to do this work alone. ESSA calls for stakeholder engagement from multiple sectors to create state ESSA plans. The vision ESSA presents of supporting the whole child aligns closely with the visions of other sectors, including the public health sector.

Like the nation's previous education law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), ESSA shares the goal of improving academic performance; yet ESSA offers a different pathway, one that explicitly and implicitly recognizes the need for schools to support the whole child. ESSA specifically acknowledges the importance of supporting student physical and mental health and wellness in a number of important ways. Examples include:

- Health education (HE) and physical education (PE) have been added to the list of subjects that define a student's "well-rounded education." Schools eligible for Title I grants may use funding to develop and implement "well-rounded program[s] of instruction."
- Each State Education Agency (SEA) is required to create a state accountability system with at least four indicators of their choosing, including three academic indicators and one non-academic indicator (a measure of school quality or student success). Examples of non-academic indicators listed in ESSA include measures of school climate and safety, such as chronic absenteeism and incidences of violence.
- Each SEA must release an annual state report card describing how the state is meeting Title I requirements. In addition to measures such as per-pupil expenditures and student achievement, the report cards must include rates of chronic absenteeism and incidences of violence, including bullying and harassment. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to prepare and disseminate report cards that include the same minimum requirements as the SEA report cards (e.g., the requirement to include rates of chronic absenteeism) and can include additional data, including health data.
- Title I funded schools with Schoolwide Program Plans

Key Principles

Throughout this guide, you will find resources and recommendations based on two foundational principles:

Comprehensive approach. *The most effective approach is a comprehensive one linking accountability systems and report cards to needs assessments, evidence-based interventions and professional development.*

Building on existing structures. *Identifying and building on existing policies and data systems is a powerful way to leverage existing resources in support of your goals.*

must design these plans based on comprehensive needs assessments for the entire school. While the plans should focus on the needs of all children in the school, designers should place particular emphasis on the needs of high-risk students. This may include counseling, school-based mental health programs and specialized instructional support.

- In order for SEAs to receive Title I grants, ESSA requires them to develop state plans in coordination with specialized instructional support personnel. Specialized instructional support personnel include school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses and others.
- States receiving Title I funding must have state plans that describe how they will improve school conditions for learning through reducing discipline practices that remove students from the classroom and reducing aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health.
- Title IV, Part A of ESSA consolidates 49 grant programs, some of which focused on student health, into a new grant program called the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant. SEAs and LEAs can use these grants to promote student health, increase access to a well-rounded education and improve the use of technology.
- Access to professional development has been expanded under Title II of ESSA to include all teachers, as well as administrators and other staff. This expansion of eligibility, along with a broadening of acceptable programs, allows for professional development of all staff to include health and wellness-related issues.

Incorporating health and wellness into state ESSA

plans in a comprehensive fashion will provide educators, policymakers and the public with a more complete understanding of how health factors are shaping learning and academic outcomes. Instead of stigmatizing parents and students or blaming educators, this decision-making compass will help schools develop effective improvement strategies. Parents and community members also benefit from knowing more about how their schools are supporting and promoting student health and well-being. Other community institutions, most notably hospitals and public health departments, can help support schools in their efforts to ensure students are in school, healthy and ready to learn.

States can take a comprehensive approach to developing their state plan by using the different elements to support each other. For example, an ideal state plan might include:

- A state accountability system that requires schools to maintain healthy school environments
- State and local report cards that publicly track how schools perform on additional indicators not appropriate for an accountability system
- State assessments that ensure school districts are offering a well-rounded education by testing students on the state's existing, or emerging, standards in health education, PE, or social and emotional learning
- Needs assessments that consider health and wellness, and identify evidence-based policies, practices and programs that lead to learning readiness and school improvement
- A professional development program that equips educators to better meet the needs of the whole child

This guide is intended to support school health and wellness advocates who want to work with their state policymakers as they respond to the new requirements and opportunities in ESSA. It focuses on a few key sections of the law, where the potential impact on student health is the greatest, and provides recommendations and advice for how health and wellness priorities can be integrated into state plans.

Spotlight: Recommending a Comprehensive Approach in Illinois

If accountability systems recognize the full experience of a student—including health conditions that might impede learning—educators can develop a more comprehensive understanding of student performance, and can deploy resources to schools and students at greatest risk. Healthy Schools Campaign’s [response](#) to Illinois’ state plan articulates this type of comprehensive approach.

Stay Informed When Rules Are Finalized

The U.S. Department of Education has issued regulations to implement the standards and accountability portions of ESSA. This document is based on those regulations. In the event that the regulations are modified, this document will be updated. Email Ryan Mann (ryan@healthyschoolscampaign.org) to be notified if the document is updated.

Note About Links

For those reading a print version of this document, please note that the Links section (pages 27-29) includes full URLs for the links referenced throughout.

Overview of ESSA

The Every Student Succeed Act is the name given to the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that occurred in 2015. It is the main federal law that controls how the U.S. Department of Education (ED) disperses the federal education funding that states receive. The last time ESEA was renewed was in 2001, when it was called No Child Left Behind.

ESSA is organized into nine sections, or titles. An overview of each title follows:

Title I requires states to use the federal funds to make sure that all students receive an equitable education, and that states work to close achievement gaps. It is also the section that outlines the federal requirements for state academic standards, assessments, accountability systems and report cards.

Title II focuses on how states use federal funding to provide professional development.

Title III addresses language instruction for English language learners and immigrant students.

Title IV outlines various grant programs. Most significantly, Part A describes the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, which states can use to support safe and healthy students. Grants for after-school programming and charter school expansion are also included here.

Title V describes the ability to transfer funds among titles, and it describes a rural education program.



Title VI addresses Indian, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Education.

Title VII outlines a program that gives additional funding to school districts where a large portion of their land is owned by the federal government, to offset the fact that they have less land available to tax in order to raise revenue for education.

Title VIII includes key definitions and details about the process that states will go through to receive the funding. Also included here are specific items that the federal government chooses to either weigh in on, or explicitly state they have no role addressing, such as student prayer or the possession of guns on school campuses.

Title IX covers education for homeless students and creates a new preschool development grant program.

States are now creating plans that explain how they intend to meet the requirements of ESSA. ED is allowing states to decide between two different deadlines for submitting those plans: April 3, 2017 or September 18, 2017. Rather than submitting separate plans for each of the areas for which they are required, states have the option to create one consolidated plan that encompasses multiple elements.

Consolidated state plans must include these sections:

- **Consultation and Coordination:** States must explain how they engaged with stakeholders to develop the plan and how they intend to coordinate the activities of different programs within the plan.

- **Challenging Academic Standards and Academic Assessments:** States must explain the academic standards and assessments that they have chosen to use.
- **Accountability, Support and Improvement for Schools:** States must describe their accountability system, and how they will support schools that fail to perform on the different indicators of the system.
- **Supporting Excellent Educators:** States must describe their professional development plan, including how the state will ensure that low-income students and students of color are equitably taught by qualified teachers.
- **Supporting All Students:** States must describe how they will ensure that every student is able to meet the state academic standards and graduate from high school.

States must revisit their state plans, in consultation with stakeholders, at a minimum of every four years. These revisions will also be submitted to, and approved by, ED.

Though ESSA technically went into effect on July 1, 2016, the timeline is a little more complex as ED will need to issue regulations and states will need time to create and submit their plans. Planning for this transition is taking place now but full implementation has been pushed back to the 2018-2019 school year. States must submit their plans to ED no later than April 3, 2017 or September 18, 2017.



Getting Started

You can play a key role in speaking up for health-promoting ESSA implementation in your state. The following steps provide an overview of ways to get started. In the sections that follow, you will find detail about specific elements of the state plans.

Get to know your state board of education.

In almost every state, the state board of education holds the most responsibility for creating, or giving final approval to, state-level education policy. They are like a board of directors that oversees the state department of education. It is a good idea to understand how your state board is structured, which can help you determine where the key points of influence might be. Most state board members are either elected or appointed to their office, and some boards may have both types of members. Knowing how they earned their positions can give you an idea of where members might stand politically and who may influence them.

Find other key state-level education decision makers.

When it comes to state ESSA plans, it is also important to determine how other high-ranking state-level education policymakers will be involved. Try to learn more about how these key players feel about school health and learning readiness, and whether they are likely to become champions of certain issues (your issues or others).

Others to learn more about include:

- Chief state school officer; may be called the state

superintendent, secretary of education or other title

- Education advisors in your governor's cabinet
- Chairs and members of your state legislature's education committee
- Key staff members to the state board of education, state department of education or state legislature's education committee

Additionally, though ESSA shifts authority to the state level, it is valuable to determine whether your congressional representatives might also be active in developing your state plan. If your representatives sit on the federal [Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee](#), or the [House Education and the Workforce Committee](#), they had a big role in crafting ESSA and might be especially interested in making sure their state's plan follows the law as they envisioned it.

The state board of education will need the governor's sign-off and the state legislature's input on the final state plan. The power is distributed differently in each state and it may not always be clear who is in charge. Being aware of how the different players might be involved is a good place to start.

Get to know state education department staff.

In most cases, staff will be responsible for doing most of the analysis and making recommendations about how the policy-makers should take action—so don't discount people just because they don't hold an official office. Figure out which staff members might have an important role in your state, such as the Title I coordinator or federal programs coordinator.



Determine what policies are already in place.

In addition to understanding the process of education policymaking in your state, it is also important to know about the current policy environment and identify opportunities to align the state's new accountability system and/or report card with these existing policies. An understanding of the state's policy landscape will help in two ways. First, implementation of existing policies can be strengthened by incorporating them into a state's ESSA plan. Second, gaps can be identified and can thus be addressed through ESSA implementation. For example, if your state already requires schools to administer physical fitness assessments, you might have enough data to consider including this information on the state report card or in the accountability system. If your state does not have this type of requirement, you might want to start by using the report card to show how much PE and/or recess is available to students.

Examine available data.

Take a look at the data that is publicly available from your state, LEA and school that could be included in the new accountability system or report card. The report card and accountability system should complement each other. Existing data (and data gaps) should inform the creation of both. When searching for this data, consider that some states use a "dashboard" or other terminology to display their accountability system data.

If you have any questions, have trouble accessing any of the information referenced above or have suggestions to add, please email Ryan Mann at ryan@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

Key questions

- What school health policies and regulations already exist?
- What measures are currently included in your state's accountability system?
- What measures are on your state school report card?
- What measures are on your school district report card?
- What do your state academic standards look like? Do they include any health topics?
- Does your state conduct and post the results of any student or school health surveys?
- Does your state offer guidance around needs assessments?
- How does your state support professional development for school staff?
- How does your state support schools that have been identified as the lowest performers?
- Which department in your state manages the licensing for early childhood programs?
- Does your state have a Children's Cabinet or other inter-agency group focused on children's well-being?

Key resources

- To learn more about your state's existing education policies and the ESSA planning process in your state, see the [PTA list of all state ESSA pages](#).
- NASBE's [State School Health Policy Database](#) catalogs all state policies related to school health.



- The [State School Health Policy Matrix](#) explains the different types of state school health policies.
- [How Schools Work and How to Work with Schools](#) gives great advice for building strong partnerships with the education community.
- The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors [School Health Project](#) page is a great resource for learning how to effectively work with educators.
- The National Association of State Boards of Education has two great resources to consult if you aren't familiar with your state board: the [State Education Government Matrix](#) and the [State Education Governance Models Chart](#).
- ED maintains an [ESSA resource page](#) that is updated regularly.
- ASCD has created a [Comparison of the No Child Left Behind Act to the Every Student Succeeds Act](#). ASCD also provides a [map](#) with helpful ESSA resource links for each state.
- The Education Commission of the States has a [set of issue papers](#) that explains the different pieces of ESSA in detail.
- Coalition for Community Schools has a [Stakeholder Engagement Guide](#) with helpful resources included and Partners Four has [A Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement](#).

1305 Grants: Connecting with State Health Departments

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides funding to state health departments to work in schools through “State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health” grants, more commonly known as 1305 grants. All state departments of health receive some amount of funding, so it is worth doing some research to determine how they might be working with their partners in the department of education, in the early childhood sector or directly with LEAs in your state. Though the state ESSA plan will be developed by your state education agency, existing coordination through the 1305 grant could help provide some examples of how your state health department can get involved.

Important to Note: Lobbying Regulations

Advocating around a state ESSA plan would not be considered lobbying according to IRS lobbying regulations. However, in some states it could be considered lobbying under state lobbying rules.

In those situations, an organization or employee might

have to register as a lobbyist and potentially report the hours spent on this activity. Please consult your state lobbying law or a lawyer experienced with your state's lobbying reporting requirements. Learn more in the Alliance for Justice's [excellent guide to nonprofit advocacy rules](#).

How to Engage Stakeholders in a Way that Ensures an Effective ESSA State Plan Is Developed and Implemented

What is meaningful stakeholder engagement and why is it important to supporting health and wellness?

SEAs will be seeking the input of key stakeholders throughout the development of their plan. Not only is this required in ESSA, it is also good practice to ensure that different perspectives are considered. Genuine engagement broadens the constituency for public education to include a much wider range of people and organizations. Planning should be seen not as the domain of a single group of individuals but as a dynamic process that intentionally engages diverse stakeholders whose views are valued and considered from multiple perspectives. This kind of outreach creates the opportunity to address the health and wellness of students and ensures that health care systems and public health professionals are involved and well-positioned to help.

What does the law say?

ESSA requires state plans to be developed by SEAs with timely and “meaningful consultation” with:

- The governor
- Members of the state legislature
- Members of the state board of education (if the state has a board of education)
- Local education agencies (including those located in rural areas)
- Representatives of Indian tribes located in the state
- Teachers
- Principals
- Other school leaders

- Charter school leaders (if the state has charter schools)
- Specialized instructional support personnel
- Paraprofessionals
- Administrators
- Other school staff
- Parents

Stakeholders must be involved during the plan’s development, before the final version is submitted (states must offer a 30-day comment period) and prior to the submission of any revisions to ED.

Action Steps

1. Figure out how your state department of education is planning to specifically involve stakeholders in the development of the state ESSA plan. A good place to start is your state department of education’s website. Find out if the department has a special page for ESSA and, if so, familiarize yourself with what is there. Some questions to consider include:

- Do they have a schedule for listening sessions?
- Is there a timeline for releasing the state plan and receiving public comments?
- Are there opportunities to comment online?
- Are they asking for any type of specific feedback?
- Have they created an advisory committee? If so, who are the members and is there an opportunity for you to get involved?

2. Additionally, getting in the habit of monitoring the agendas and meeting schedules of the state board of education and the state legislature’s education committee can be a great way to stay informed about how these policymakers are making decisions about the state plan. Many of these meetings are broadcast live online, and they usually post minutes and handouts when the meeting is over. If possible, try to attend meetings in person so you become a familiar face in the crowd before becoming vocal about your priorities.

3. Finally, determine if any advocacy organizations are active in your state. Are they currently pursuing a school health agenda that aligns with your priorities?

Some possibilities to consider include:

- Teachers unions ([American Federation of Teachers](#) and the [National Education Association](#))
- State chapters of organizations such as [National PTA](#), [School-Based Health Alliance](#), [National Association of School Nurses](#), [National Association of State School Nurse Consultants](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [National School Boards of School Administrators](#), [American Heart Association](#), [Society of Health and Physical Educators \(SHAPE America\)](#) or others.
- Nontraditional messengers such as local businesses, [Council for a Strong America](#) or the [Chamber of Commerce](#)
- Partners from other sectors, such as early education leaders, hospitals and health systems, district attorneys or local housing agencies

What is a subgroup?

Different parts of ESSA talk about the need to disaggregate data, or otherwise pay attention to student subgroups.

When the term “subgroup” is used, unless stated

otherwise, it is meant to include:

- *Economically disadvantaged students*
- *Students from major racial and ethnic groups*
- *Children with disabilities*
- *English language learners*

How to Implement a State Accountability System that Supports the Health and Learning Connection

Why is including measures of school health and wellness in state accountability systems important?

Accountability systems are used by SEAs to determine how LEAs are serving their students and how the state can help LEAs with specific types of support. They are used to determine how LEAs are meeting the state's priorities, so each system will encompass a different set of indicators. These systems also create what is essentially a ranked list of schools, where the lowest performers are put into a group that receives intense support from the SEA. Inclusion in this group is usually not seen as a positive thing from a school or LEA's perspective.

By including health and wellness indicators connected to learning in the accountability systems, states explicitly validate the importance of these issues and require that districts and schools address identified needs. It is important to ensure that the indicators selected are appropriate for this purpose. Indicators that are easy to accomplish without making significant improvements in the school health environment may not result in actual impact.

What does the law say?

For all public schools, ESSA requires the state's accountability system to measure how students and each subgroup of students perform on the state's academic assessments, as well as at least one additional indicator of student academic proficiency. All schools must also show how all students and each subgroup of students perform over time on those assessments, called "student growth," and how students who are learning English achieve proficiency. High schools must also be held accountable for their graduation rates for all students, as well as each subgroup of students.

For the first time, ESSA also requires states to include a non-academic indicator in these systems, which can be an opportunity for them to measure factors related to health and wellness. The indicator that states choose to use must be:

- Valid
- Reliable
- Calculated in the same way for all schools across the state, except that the measure or measures selected may vary by grade spans
- Backed by research that shows it supports student learning
- A factor that every school is able to measure in order to compare across schools
- Something that aids in meaningful differentiation among schools by demonstrating varied results across schools
- Able to be disaggregated for each subgroup of students
- A measure that the state does not use for any other indicator in the accountability system

States must also weight the indicators in this system so that the non-academic indicator cannot be the only reason that a school is either identified as low-performing or able to exit the low-performing group.

Examples of school quality indicators that are suggested in the law include:

- Student engagement
- Educator engagement
- Student access to and completion of advanced coursework
- Postsecondary readiness
- School climate and safety

There are some examples of including these indicators in accountability systems. Several school districts in California, commonly referred to as CORE districts, developed an accountability system that includes social and emotional learning under an NCLB waiver. Learn more in this [case study on California CORE districts](#). In addition, Connecticut, which has moved quickly

to propose their accountability system, has included student fitness in their accountability system. Learn more in this [Connecticut case study](#).

Starting with the 2018-2019 school year, and at least every three years after, states must identify three specific groups of schools that need additional support:

- The five percent of schools receiving Title I funding that are ranked as the lowest performers on that state's accountability system
- All high schools that fail to graduate a third or more of their students
- Any school where a particular student subgroup is consistently under-performing on the state's academic assessments

When a school is identified as in need of support, the SEA will work with the LEA to develop and implement a plan for improvement that is informed by a needs assessment and designed to improve the school's performance based on the state's accountability system. It is possible that this status will trigger other provisions in state laws and regulations, such as an LEA's obligation to provide all students in these schools with the ability to transfer schools.

Action Steps

1. Look at your state's current accountability system and see if it already includes factors related to health and wellness. Also pay attention to the way that the system is designed, and at what level of specificity the other indicators measure student performance.

2. Determine what policies are already in place in your state to promote student health and wellness. An existing policy indicates some consensus in the state that the issue being addressed is important. In addition, it might point to an existing data source. It is more likely that in this first round of ESSA implementation, states will want to use existing data and might be reluctant, given the timeline, to collect new data.

3. When determining if an indicator might be appropriate to use in the accountability system, some additional questions to ask include:

- Would collecting data to support the measure, or

trying to meet the benchmark, create a significant burden for schools without sufficient available support from state or local education agencies?

- Does the measure resonate with other sectors and will it help drive collaboration? Do your partners agree that it would also help with their work?
- Is the measure a proxy for other issues? For example, chronic absenteeism has many potential causes, and encouraging schools to pay attention to chronically absent students could lead to plans that address some of the more common causes in your state, which might be health-related.
- Is the measure unfairly biased against high-poverty schools?
- Are there unintended consequences of making this a part of the accountability system, versus placing it on the state or local report card?
 - Any indicator that is a part of the accountability system requires schools to meet certain narrowly-defined benchmarks in that area, and this can sometimes be done without achieving the performance in the way that was intended. For example, schools that participate in the federal meal programs must serve meals that meet certain nutrition standards—but this can be done without ensuring quality or that the meals are acceptable to student tastes. There might be measures that are more appropriate for schools to publicly report so the community can help them attain what they define as acceptable performance, rather than trying to meet a certain performance definition in an accountability system.
- If a policy is new, or you have reason to believe that most schools are not yet hitting the mark, it could be discouraging or damaging to make that policy a part of the accountability system. Performance in certain areas might follow a continuum, with the schools in your state at the beginning of that spectrum. In these cases, it might be better to first require public reporting on state or LEA report cards. Once the majority of schools have achieved acceptable performance on that standard, the state could consider elevating it to inclusion in the state accountability system.

- Identify opportunities for cross-sector collaboration. Education agency personnel should work with colleagues at other agencies to share data and best practices.

Possible metrics include chronic absenteeism, school climate, social and emotional learning, school connectedness and school discipline. A brief description of each of these possible metrics follows below, with links to a more detailed overview.

Chronic Absenteeism: A school's disaggregated attendance data can point toward root causes such as chronic illness or discipline practices that might be causing absences and negatively affecting achievement.

School Climate: A comprehensive school climate survey tool can measure the percentage of students who report attending school with a positive school climate; percentage of students who report that discipline policies are applied fairly and equitably to all students; and the percentage of students who report that teachers and other adults have high expectations for them.

Social and Emotional Learning: Providing children with comprehensive social and emotional learning programs characterized by safe, caring and well-managed learning environments and instruction in social and emotional skills addresses many of these learning barriers through enhancing school attachment, reducing risky behaviors and promoting positive development, and thereby positively influencing academic achievement.

School Connectedness: Students are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically when they feel connected to school. Students who have a sense of belonging and identification feel connected to their school community and want to participate, thereby supporting school completion and preventing dropout. Connectedness can be measured through student surveys.

School Discipline: Research shows that exclusionary discipline practices that remove students from instruction—such as suspension and expulsion—place students at greater risk for numerous academic and personal consequences, including behavior problems, lower achievement, disengagement from school and increased risk of dropping out. Additionally, exclusionary and zero-tolerance disciplinary policies show no evidence of improvements in student behavior or increases in school safety.



How to Create a State School Report Card that Supports the Health and Learning Connection

Why is including measures of health and wellness on state report cards important?

While state accountability systems serve as a concrete way to ensure that schools are meeting state benchmarks for priority areas, state and LEA report cards are more of a community accountability system that can provide advocates with the information they need to push for changes. They can also be a good interim step for exploring new measures that could be added to the state accountability system in the future if the data shows that they are reasonable and meet the criteria.

What does the law say?

State report cards must be widely disseminated to the public in a format and language that parents can understand. They need to be concise, include a one-page overview section, and show data disaggregated for the following groups of students: migrant, homeless, foster care and military families. The previous year's report card must be shared no later than December 31 of each year.

ESSA includes a lengthy list of required elements for the state report cards. Some of this information is especially valuable to advocates interested in health and wellness:

- Clear and concise description of the state accountability system
- Information about the achievement of students, including subgroups
- Number of schools and the name of each school identified for comprehensive support
- For all students and the subgroups in elementary and middle school, information about their performance on the school academic indicators

- High school graduation rates
- Number and percentage of English language learners achieving proficiency
- Information about achievement on the school quality indicator
- Information on progress toward meeting the state's long-term goals
- Percentage of students assessed and not assessed, overall and also by subgroup
- Information from LEAs that is included in the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC): measures of school climate and safety, including rates of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, school-related arrests, referrals to law enforcement; chronic absenteeism; and incidences of violence (including bullying and harassment)
- Number and percentage of students enrolled in: preschool programs; advanced coursework to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school
- Professional qualifications of teachers, including: inexperienced teachers, principals and other school leaders; teachers who are teaching with emergency or provisional credentials; and teachers who are not teaching in the subject field for which they are certified or licensed
- Per-pupil expenditure of federal, state and local funds
- The number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities
- Results on the state academic assessments in reading and mathematics in grades four and eight on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), compared to the national results
- Where available, the rate at which graduates enroll in postsecondary education, both in and out of state
- Any other information the state determines will be helpful to the public

Action Steps

1. Determine what measures are already included on your state's report card.
2. Determine if your LEA has additional measures on their report card.

3. Learn about the indicators that relate to student health that are required to be on the school report card. The following information is already being collected by the ED Office of Civil Rights (OCR); while not required, it is expected that many states will use this data.

- Measures of school climate and safety, including rates of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, school-related arrests and referrals to law enforcement
- Chronic absenteeism
- Incidences of violence, including bullying and harassment

Learn more about the OCR's [data collection protocol and definitions for these measures](#).

4. Create a menu of additional state school report card measures to support student health and wellness. Possible measures follow, with links to more detailed information on each:

- [School Climate](#)
- [School Connectedness](#)
- [Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- Access to physical and mental health services at school; learn more with [The Children's Health and Education Mapping Tool](#) and the [School-Based Health Alliance](#)
- Minutes of physical education, as outlined in [physical education guidelines](#) from SHAPE America
- Meal participation rates for [lunch](#) and [breakfast](#), from Food Research & Action Center
- [Presence of school nurses and other health professionals](#), collected by OCR
- Number of staff trained to conduct [trauma-informed interventions](#), described in the CDC Adverse Childhood Experiences study

5. Talk to your state or LEA policymakers about the possibility of including additional measures on report cards. Be prepared to offer suggestions about how these additional items can be included without making the report cards too long or difficult to understand.

Several states have already incorporated one or more of the above indicators into their report cards. For example, Michigan includes breakfast participation as a percentage of lunch participation, Tennessee includes how many schools meet the National PTA's standards for parent involvement and Chicago Public Schools reports on a comprehensive health-focused measure called the Healthy CPS Indicator. To learn more, read the case studies on [Tennessee](#) and [Chicago Public Schools](#).

Local Report Cards

LEAs are also responsible for posting their own report cards. These need to be concise and presented in an understandable format. They should be posted on the LEA's website or provided to the public in another way if the LEA doesn't have a website. The local report cards essentially mirror the state report cards but they must also include school-specific information, such as how schools in the LEA compare to state averages and how students in each school compare to LEA averages. LEAs also have the opportunity to add any additional information they determine will be useful to the public.

How to Ensure Health and Wellness are Integrated into Standards, Assessments and a Well-Rounded Education

Why is it important to integrate health and wellness into standards, assessments and a well-rounded education?

ESSA requires schools to provide all students with a well-rounded education. This replaces the concept of core subjects as described in NCLB. The definition of a well-rounded education is broadly defined to include health, PE and any other subject the state or LEA determines will provide an enriching academic experience. It also allows them to use this funding specifically on providing a well-rounded education.

Each state plan must provide an assurance that the state has adopted challenging academic content standards for math, reading or language arts and science and may have them for any other subject areas as determined by the state. In addition, states are required to implement a set of high-quality student academic assessments in math, reading or language arts and science and may implement assessments in other subjects. Assessments must be aligned with challenging state academic standards. Performance on these assessments is one of the required elements in the state's accountability system.

This presents an opportunity to develop and implement standards and assessments for content areas such as social and emotional learning, health education and physical education, or to refine existing standards to make deliberate connections to human health and well-being, such as through science standards. Developing standards and assessments on these content areas will also support the collection of statewide data on these issues and their possible inclusion in state

accountability systems. For example, Illinois has social and emotional learning standards but currently does not assess students' progress toward these standards. Assessing students' social and emotional learning would both promote implementation of the state's social and emotional learning standards and support the collection of data that would enable social and emotional learning to be included in the state accountability system and/or report card. Likewise, several states including California and Texas require fitness assessments for certain grades but do not yet use these assessments for accountability. Connecticut currently includes a measure of student fitness as part of the state accountability system.

What does the law say?

States are required to adopt challenging academic standards in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science. They may also choose to adopt standards in additional subjects. In developing their standards, states must work with their higher education institutes to ensure that these are aligned with their entrance requirements. State assessments are designed to ensure that students have hit the learning benchmarks of the state's academic standards.

NCLB required schools to teach "core subjects" (English, reading or language arts; mathematics; history; geography; science; foreign languages; civics and government; economics and arts). ESSA replaces this term with "well-rounded education," which includes activities and programs in English, reading or language arts; writing; science; technology; engineering; math; foreign languages; civics and government; economics; arts; history; geography; computer science; music; career and technical education; health; physical education; and any other subject the state or LEA determines will provide an enriching academic experience.

In their plans to the SEA for how they will spend their Title I funds, LEAs must explain how they will monitor students' progress in meeting the state's challenging academic standards by developing and implementing a well-rounded program of education. They must also explain how they will ensure that they are providing a well-rounded education to all or certain students in

several additional ways, including:

- LEAs must let parents of English language learners know how they can support their child in receiving a well-rounded education.
- Schools that choose to use their Title I funds to create school-wide programs must explain how they will use methods and instructional strategies to provide an enriched curriculum that may include courses necessary to provide a well-rounded education.
- Schools that have been identified as in need of targeted support may use their Title I funds to provide courses to students at the highest need in order to help them achieve a well-rounded education.

Action Steps

1. Determine what academic standards your state has in place for traditional academic subjects as well as other topics.
2. Figure out if your state has a policy in place to require or encourage assessments in physical fitness, health education, physical education or social and emotional learning. Because state academic standards must align with credit-bearing coursework in state colleges and universities, states may be reluctant to adopt standards for, and assessments about, non-academic topics such as health and PE. Talk to your state agency about the possibility of developing health and PE assessments that will not become a part of the accountability system, but instead will only be used to improve teaching and learning.

How to Integrate Health and Wellness into School-Level Needs Assessments

Why is it important to include health and wellness in needs assessments?

For years, high-need and low-performing schools have been required to develop plans for improvement. Despite hard work and the best intentions, many of the same schools and student population groups continue to face disparities in educational outcomes. By more explicitly addressing underlying factors affecting academic achievement, especially health, in the development and implementation of school improvement plans, states can achieve what the new law intends: that every student succeeds. This has important equity implications, given that schools likely to be identified as needing comprehensive support and improvement disproportionately serve low-income students and students of color, populations that are already at risk for poor health and education outcomes.

Needs assessments can provide advocates with an opportunity to ensure that schools and LEAs are considering the impact of health and wellness. Getting involved in the development and implementation of a needs assessment can ensure that factors such as school climate or opportunities for physical activity are examined as possible ways to improve academic achievement.

School-level needs assessments conducted under the proposed Title I regulations, and the resulting comprehensive support and improvement plans, could be strengthened by explicitly examining important health determinants and health issues that can contribute to student academic achievement and school performance. Several existing resources and assessment tools are available to support LEAs and schools in integrating health into their needs assessments and comprehensive support and improvement plans. In addition, schools and districts can forge partnerships with agencies, including those addressing mental and behavioral health, housing stability, food security, economic development and juvenile justice issues, to leverage resources and support common education and health goals.

Spotlight: State Approaches to Needs Assessment

Colorado: The Colorado Department of Education, with assistance from the Southwest Comprehensive Center of WestEd and in partnership with RMC Research Corporation, developed [A Guide for Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#) related specifically to NCLB-required needs assessments. Tools and resources on their website include links to data systems, needs assessment tools and survey templates. Their tools encompass a full array of educational issues and consider such wide-ranging factors as student data analytics, healthy youth, school climate and family feedback surveys on school improvement.

Maine: The Maine Department of Education created a [guide](#) and comprehensive needs assessment tool that provides background and guidance on the process for needs assessments, as well as sample probing questions for consideration. Topics include demographics;

student achievement; climate and culture; staff quality, recruitment, and retention; curriculum and instruction; family and community involvement; school organization; and technology.

North Carolina: The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction offers a comprehensive needs assessment [rubric](#) to help school districts understand their standing along a continuum of progress (Leading, Developing, Emerging, or Lacking) across domains such as instructional alignment, support for student achievement (including social and emotional support), leadership and professional capacity (including teacher recruitment and retention), resource allocation (including technology and facilities), planning and operational effectiveness, and family and community engagement. The rubric provides questions for consideration and guides districts in building action plans toward a high standard.

Needs assessments can also be developed to support indicators in the accountability system and/or school report card. For example, if chronic absenteeism is an accountability measure, then the needs assessment should help schools identify the root causes of chronic absenteeism specific to their student population. While the causes of chronic absenteeism are multifold, student health conditions present ongoing challenges to attendance and particularly affect young children in ways that can shape academic outcomes for their entire school career. The needs assessment should help schools create coordinated interventions that include school and community-based resources. In addition, the needs assessment can help reinforce existing state laws. Be prepared to make the case for how information in the needs assessment will support student achievement. Remember, interventions undertaken with Title I funds must be justified by the results of the needs assessment. As an example, Healthy Schools Campaign's [response](#) to Illinois' state plan articulates this type of comprehensive approach.

Several states have existing robust examples of needs assessments that, depending on the new accountability measures adopted by states, could be easily adapted and are comprehensive enough to consider the wide range of needs. Because many organizations and states

already offer existing models for needs assessments, from basic to comprehensive levels, education leaders could consider adapting these existing tools to meet the requirements of ESSA instead of creating new tools.

What does the law say?

ESSA requires needs assessments in several places:

- When a school is identified as being in need of comprehensive support from the SEA due to their performance on the state's accountability system, they must conduct a needs assessment that will help inform the remediation plan.
- Schools where at least 40 percent of the student population is living in poverty (or those that receive a waiver from the state) may decide to use their Title I funds to operate a schoolwide program. They must first conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to gain an understanding of the most pressing student academic needs and their root causes. The needs assessment will help them develop a comprehensive schoolwide plan to improve academic achievement.
- LEAs that receive \$30,000 or more of Title IV grant funding must complete a needs assessment each year to determine: student access to a well-rounded education, school conditions for student learning that

Resources to Support Needs Assessment

School needs assessment tools that consider these topics either exclusively or as part of a comprehensive instrument are publicly available and accessible. For example, many commercial vendors and nonprofit organizations offer tools that schools can use to assess instructional practices or curriculum design and implementation. SEAs often provide guidance or sample needs assessments to assist LEAs in their needs assessment process.

- CDC's [School Health Index](#) is an online self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs.
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation offers the [Healthy Schools Program Assessment](#), which focuses on schools' physical activity and nutrition environments

and is aligned to the CDC's School Health Index.

- ASCD, an organization representing educators dedicated to supporting teaching and learning, offers the [School Improvement Tool](#) that combines educationally-focused components, such as curriculum and instruction, with policies and programs to support the development and nurturing of children's educational and developmental needs.
- The Coalition for Community Schools' tool, the [Community Schools Assessment Checklist](#), can serve as a planning tool for schools to develop strategies to strengthen school-community partnerships, improve coordination of existing programs and services, and assess levels of financial and material support.
- The YMCA's [Community Healthy Living Index](#) provides suggestions of community resources that can complement or supplement a school's offerings.

create a healthy and safe school environment, and access to personalized learning opportunities.

Action Steps

1. Offer to partner with your SEA to develop guidance to support school districts in implementing needs assessments that include health and wellness metrics.
2. Ask your SEA to consider requiring school districts to collaborate with community partners, including local nonprofit hospitals and health departments, in developing and conducting needs assessments.
3. Ask the SEA if you can help train the staff involved with providing technical assistance on needs assessments so you can ensure they are considering health and wellness when they work with school districts.
4. Talk to your partners about creating and sharing a list of evidence-based practices that school districts can access to address the needs identified.

Health Impact Project

Healthy Schools Campaign and Trust for America's Health are partnering with the Health Impact Project on a companion piece, a health impact assessment that explores opportunities for promoting health and wellness through proposed ESSA needs assessment regulations.



How to Support Student Learning through Staff Wellness and Professional Development

Why is it important to integrate health and wellness into professional development programming?

Professional development programs provide an excellent opportunity to ensure that teachers and staff understand how to integrate health and wellness into their interactions with students, but such programs vary widely from state to state in the way that they address student health issues. As the adults who spend the most waking hours with children during the week, it is important that all school personnel are equipped to look out for the health and safety of their students. A recent study showed that elementary school teachers are already spending about 180 hours per school year addressing student health issues.^{1 2}

In addition to supporting professional development for teachers and staff, it is important to support workplace wellness. Positive working environments are important for teacher retention and teacher productivity. Additionally, there is a direct link between the well-being of teachers and the educational outcomes of their students. According to a [report](#) from Pennsylvania State University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, “elementary school teachers who have greater stress and show more symptoms of depression create classroom environments that are less conducive to learning, which leads to poor academic performance among students.” Effects of teacher stress range from lower scores on math tests, to more behavior problems

and lower levels of social adjustment and student engagement.

High stress and poor working environments lead many teachers out of the profession. Turnover is most likely to occur in poorly performing schools. This contributes to a long-term destabilization of low-income neighborhood schools. This cycle deepens existing inequities in the school system.

What does the law say?

ESSA provides funding to states for professional development. States are allowed to use those funds for efforts such as:

- Reforming teacher, principal or other school leader certification programs
- Helping LEAs with the design and implementation of teacher, principal or other school leader evaluation and support systems; recruiting and retaining teachers, principals or other school leaders; new teacher, principal or other school leader induction; coaching and mentoring programs
- Providing training for all school personnel on topics including preventing and recognizing child sexual abuse and the appropriate use of all student data
- Creating opportunities for teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals and early childhood education staff to jointly address the transition to elementary school

LEAs may also apply for funding, including funds that allow them to reduce class sizes to evidence-based levels, use data to improve student achievement and effectively engage families and partners to coordinate community services. They may also seek funds to train school personnel in topics such as:

- Helping identify and support students affected by trauma or at risk of mental illness
- Appropriately linking students to community services
- Forming partnerships between school-based mental health programs and public and private organizations
- Addressing issues in the school climate that can create barriers to learning, including safety, peer interaction, drug and alcohol abuse and chronic

1 Hill, N. J., & Hollis, M. (2011). Teacher time spent on student health issues and school nurse presence. *Journal of School Nursing*, 28(3), 181.

2 Baisch, M. J., Lundeen, S. P., & Murphy, M. K. (2011). Evidence-based research on the value of school nurses in an urban school system. *Journal of School Health*, 81, 74-80.

absenteeism

- Preventing and recognizing child sexual abuse

States and LEAs that receive these funds must publish an annual report that talks about the activities and outcomes of the grant.

Additionally, ESSA allows states and districts to use Title II funds to conduct and publicly report on an assessment of educator and staff support and working conditions. This assessment would be developed through engagement with teachers, leaders, parents, students and the community.

Action Steps

1. Talk to your SEA about their professional development program, and ways that they might be able to integrate health and wellness. Some questions to ask include:

- Would you be willing to talk to the colleges and universities in the state to develop and implement standards for pre-service training around children's health and development?
- Could you require LEAs to include how they will support student health and wellness in their applications for professional development funding?
- Have you established state level supports to ensure LEAs have access to the resources and guidance necessary to implement evidence-based strategies to support student health?
- Are you open to partnering with organizations to provide professional development related to health and wellness?

2. Recommend that your state board conduct and publicly report on an assessment of educator support and working conditions, with an emphasis on stress and the condition of the school facility, and use those findings to inform other policies and practices.

How to Support the Transition from Early Childhood Programs to Elementary School

Why is it important to support a smooth transition from early childhood programming to elementary school?

It is important that early elementary school experiences build upon and complement those in early childhood, particularly those that support the needs of the whole child. This might include ensuring that elementary schools build upon age-appropriate wrap-around services, early learning development, nutrition education, behavioral support or social and emotional learning. It could also mean building connections between schools, early childhood programs and supportive community-based organizations.

Student transitions go more smoothly when schools and early childhood programs establish appropriate data sharing agreements. This helps families as well as students because it lets them focus on things like new routines and teachers rather than worrying that some of the things their child needs to succeed in the classroom may not be in place.

The quality of early childhood education is also important, and by providing opportunities for states and LEAs to expand their programs or start new

programs, more families might have access to high-quality programs that prepare their children to start kindergarten ready to learn.

What does the law say?

Though ESSA does not include a section focused solely on early childhood education, it is mentioned in significant ways in several parts of the law:

- Title I funds may cover early childhood education programs and state plans must explain how they will support LEAs that choose to use their funds in that way. State report cards must indicate the number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs. The state plan must also show how the state will coordinate activities with the Head Start Act and the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant.
- Also in Title I, LEAs must create agreements to work with Head Start providers and ensure that all early childhood programming paid for with ESSA funds complies with Head Start performance standards.
- Professional development programs in Title II may address early childhood education and school readiness, and early childhood staff may receive training.
- Many of the grants for specific groups of students (migrant students, those who are learning English, American Indian and Native students, homeless students, etc.) may also be used in early childhood education programs. Additionally, grants for specific

Transferring Funding to Strengthen ESSA Health and Wellness Programming

With some limitations, ESSA allows states and LEAs to transfer funds that were initially intended for a program under one title to a program under another title. This is possible because some of the funding is divided among all states through a formula, and not based on their request. For example, states can choose to transfer up to 100 percent of the Title II or IV money they receive into their Title I budget. Remember, Title II funding supports professional development and Title IV funding supports student health and wellness, civics and technology. They

can also move 100 percent of their funds between the programs in Title II and IV. This gives states a lot of flexibility in using the federal money. It can be used to increase spending on Title I programs, but the overall implications are not clear. For example, if the state creates an accountability system that supports health and wellness, transferring funds to support that system could be beneficial. However, if the plans for using the Title I funds are not aligned with a state's priorities, taking away from the Title II or IV budget could be a concern.

programs, such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers or Promise Neighborhoods, may also support early childhood education.

Preschool Development Grants are a new addition to Title IX. They are year-long matching grants awarded competitively to some states. They are intended to help states “develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination” among existing childcare programs in order to most effectively serve low-income and disadvantaged students.

Action Steps

1. Recommend that your state’s plan include language that promotes coordination of services and plans for continuity between early childhood and elementary school.
2. Determine whether early childhood and early elementary programs are using similar or coordinated age-appropriate comprehensive early developmental and behavioral screening tools and have similar protocols for acting on findings. Advocate for and support this coordination if it is not currently in place.
3. Encourage policymakers to put agreements in place to support the creation of data sharing between early childhood programs and elementary schools.
4. Recommend that Title I funds explicitly allow delivery of the same services in elementary schools that are available in early childhood programs, such as mental or behavioral health support services for students,

coordination with or referral to community-based organizations and other health-related supports.

5. Look for opportunities within the state plan to include early childhood education, such as state accountability systems or needs assessments.
6. Talk to your state leaders about applying for a Preschool Development Grant; offer to help design the strategic plan and write the application.



Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

In addition to state plans, it may be helpful for advocates to consider a section of Title IV focused on a new program called the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. While this program is not part of state ESSA plans, it is relevant in that it has implications for student health and wellness.

ESSA consolidates 49 grant programs, some of which focused on student health, into a new grant program called Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. SEAs and LEAs can use this to promote student health, increase access to a well-rounded education and improve the use of technology. Any school district that receives more than \$30,000 through this grant program must conduct a needs assessment and use the funding to address the needs identified. ESSA highlights the following examples of health programs that can be implemented using this funding: evidence-based drug and violence prevention programs; mental health services; programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle; and mentoring and school counseling for children at risk of academic failure, dropping out of school or delinquency.

Any LEA that receives \$30,000 or more through this grant program must conduct an assessment to examine the need for improvement with regard to a safe and healthy learning environment, access to a well-rounded education and personalized learning experiences supported by technology. The needs assessment must be conducted every three years. This language is very broad and allows flexibility regarding the assessments districts use. Here are some examples of activities that

districts can choose to fund under the law:

Safe and healthy activities: mental health awareness training, school-based counseling, student safety and violence prevention, professional development for specialized instructional support personnel, nutrition education, physical education, bullying and harassment prevention, and integrated systems of student and family supports.

Well-rounded education activities: college and career guidance programs, using music and the arts to promote student engagement, STEM and computer science programs, increasing access to accelerated coursework, foreign languages, environmental education, and almost anything else that supports a well-rounded educational experience.

Technology activities: educator professional development in the use of technology, building technology infrastructure, using blended learning projects and providing students in rural communities with resources for digital learning experiences.

While Title IV includes funding explicitly for school health, funding for this Title is limited at this time. Given the new flexibility of Title I, the part of ESSA with the largest budget, efforts at this time should be focused on making the case that supporting student health is a key ingredient to helping students achieve. For Title I funds to be used to support student health, it is helpful to have related measures in the accountability system and to include health-related measures in the needs assessment.

Conclusion + Looking Ahead

The development of ESSA state plans presents an excellent opportunity to incorporate health and wellness indicators into education planning and practice. Ensuring that our accountability systems, reports cards, needs assessments and professional development programs are fully integrated to support the health and well-being of students is a crucial step towards academic achievement, improved graduation rates, and college and career readiness.

But, the state ESSA plan is just one step. Advocates and stakeholders will need to stay engaged with state budgeting processes that will impact the viability of the best-intentioned plans, and will need to stay aware of competing demands that may distract from health and wellness goals. Further, the plans will be resubmitted to the U.S. Department of Education every four years.

In short, the process in which we are currently engaged is the beginning, not the end.

As our nation moves forward with ESSA implementation, we urge you to stay engaged and focused on the shared goal of ensuring all our schools truly support student health, wellness and learning.

Stay connected

Healthy Schools Campaign and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation will be releasing additional information and resources on this issue in the coming months.

We invite you to share your experiences developing ESSA state plans, including the challenges, successes, questions or observations you encounter.

If you would like to receive updates and additional resources, or if you would like to share your experiences to help inform the national dialogue about this issue, please contact Ryan Mann at ryan@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

About Healthy Schools Campaign

Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC), an independent nonprofit, is a leading authority on healthy school environments and a voice for people who care about our environment, our children and education. HSC advocates for policies and practices that allow all students, teachers and staff to learn and work in a healthy school environment. Learn more at healthyschoolscampaign.org.

About Alliance for a Healthier Generation

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation empowers kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits, by ensuring the environments that surround them provide and promote good health. Get involved at HealthierGeneration.org.

Authors + Acknowledgments

Executive Editors

Rochelle Davis
President + CEO
Healthy Schools Campaign

Nancy Katz
Director, School Partnerships
Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Writers

Ryan Mann, Contributing Writer and Project Manager
Policy Consultant, Healthy Schools Campaign

Alex Mays, Lead Writer
National Program Director, Healthy Schools Campaign

Project Advisors

Dana Carr
Executive Director, Moringa Policy Consulting

Whitney Meagher
Senior Associate, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Editing

Tara Kennon, Senior Communication Specialist
Healthy Schools Campaign

Thank You

Thank you to Kaiser Permanente, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for generously supporting this effort.

Links

For those reading a print version of this document, please see below for links referenced throughout.

The Opportunity

- Healthy Schools Campaign's response to Illinois' State Plan: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/HSC_Response_ISBE_ESSA_Draft_Plan_Oct2016.pdf

Getting Started

- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee: help.senate.gov
- House Education and the Workforce Committee: edworkforce.house.gov
- Alliance for Justice's guide to nonprofit advocacy rules: bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Worry_Free_Lobbying_paywall.pdf
- PTA list of all state ESSA pages: pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4847
- State School Health Policy Database: nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs
- State School Health Policy Matrix: shapeamerica.org/advocacy/upload/final-state-school-health-policy-matrix.pdf
- How Schools Work and How to Work with Schools: cdc.gov/healthyyouth/cshp/pdf/nasbe_howschoolswork.pdf
- National Association of Chronic Disease Directors School Health Project: chronicdisease.org/page/SchoolHealth
- National Association of State Boards of Education State Education Government Matrix: nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/Governance-matrix-January-2016.pdf
- National Association of State Boards of Education State Education Governance Models Chart: nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/Governance-Models-Chart-August-2015.pdf
- ED ESSA resource page: ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa

- ASCD chart comparing NCLB and ESSA: ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/policy/ESEA_NCLB_ComparisonChart_2015.pdf
- ASCD map with ESSA resource links: ascd.org/public-policy/ESSA-State-Implementation-Map.aspx
- Education Commission of the States issue papers: ecs.org/every-student-succeeds-act-essa-resources
- Coalition for Community Schools Stakeholder Engagement Guide: communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Stakeholder%20Engagement.pdf
- Coalition for Community Schools Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement: partnersforeachandeverychild.org/P4_EngagementHandbook_ESSA_0616.pdf

How to Engage Stakeholders in a Way that Ensures an Effective ESSA State Plan is Developed and Implemented

- Find your state department of education's website: pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4847
- American Federation of Teachers: aft.org/about/state-and-local-websites
- National Education Association: nea.org/home/49809.htm
- National PTA: pta.org/newsevents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4206&navItemNumber=4184
- School-Based Health Alliance: sbh4all.org/about/state-affiliates
- National Association of School Nurses: nasn.org/AboutNASN/NASNAffiliatesChapters
- National Association of State School Nurse Consultants: schoolnurseconsultants.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org
- National School Boards Association: nsba.org/services/state-association-services
- Association of School Administrators: aasa.org/content.aspx?id=23878
- American Heart Association: heart.org/HEARTORG/localization/chooseState.jsp
- Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America): shapeamerica.org/about/districts

- Council for a Strong America: strongnation.org
- Chamber of Commerce: uschamber.com

How to Implement a State Accountability System that Supports the Health and Learning Connection

- Case study on California CORE districts: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-CA-CORE_Case_Study.pdf
- Connecticut case study: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Connecticut_Case_Study.pdf
- Chronic Absenteeism overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_Chronic_Absenteeism.pdf
- School Climate overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_Climate.pdf
- Social and Emotional Learning overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_SEL.pdf
- School Connectedness overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_Connectedness.pdf
- School Discipline overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_Discipline.pdf

How to Create a State School Report Card that Supports the Health and Learning Connection

- OCR data collection protocol and definitions: ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2015-16-all-schools-form.pdf
- School Climate overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_Climate.pdf
- School Connectedness overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_Connectedness.pdf

- Social and Emotional Learning overview: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Indicators_SEL.pdf
- The Children's Health and Education Mapping Tool: sbh4all.org/resources/mapping-tool
- School-Based Health Alliance: sbh4all.org/school-health-care/health-and-learning/mental-health
- Physical education guidelines: shapeamerica.org/standards/guidelines/peguidelines.cfm
- Meal participation rates for lunch: frac.org/pdf/national_school_lunch_report_2015.pdf
- Meal participation rates for breakfast: frac.org/pdf/school_breakfast_trends_and_factors2015.pdf
- OCR data on presence of school nurses and other health professionals: ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2015-16-all-schools-form.pdf
- Trauma-informed interventions: cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy
- Tennessee case study: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-Tennessee_Case_Study.pdf
- Chicago Public Schools case study: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ESSA-State-Framework-CPS_Case_Study.pdf

How to Integrate Health and Wellness into School-Level Needs Assessments

- Healthy Schools Campaign's response to Illinois' State Plan: healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/HSC_Response_ISBE_ESSA_Draft_Plan_Oct2016.pdf
- CDC School Health Index: cdc.gov/healthyschools/shi
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program Assessment: schools.healthiergeneration.org
- ASCD School Improvement Tool: sitool.ascd.org
- Coalition for Community Schools Assessment Checklist: communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/strength_part_assessment.pdf

- YMCA Community Healthy Living Index: ymca.net/communityhealthylivingindex
- Colorado Guide for Comprehensive Needs Assessment: cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/fedprograms/dl/consapp_na_guide.pdf
- Maine guide to needs assessment: maine.gov/doe/title-IA/planning/documents/sample-comp-assessment.pdf
- North Carolina needs assessment rubric: ncpublicschools.org/schooltransformation/assessments

How to Support Student Learning through Staff Wellness and Professional Development

- Pennsylvania State University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report: rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf430428

Stay connected!

We invite you to learn more, access resources
and lend your voice to this dialogue.

For questions or to discuss this issue,
please contact Ryan Mann at
ryan@healthyschoolscampaign.org.

Healthy Schools Campaign
312-419-1810

healthyschoolscampaign.org

 twitter.com/healthyschools

 facebook.com/healthyschools

Alliance for a Healthier Generation
888-KID-HLTH

healthiergeneration.org

 twitter.com/HealthierGen

 facebook.com/HealthierGeneration