

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law on December 10, 2015. It reauthorizes the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was previously reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) developed a summary of each major section within our state’s ESSA plan.

Guiding Principles

The IDOE developed guiding principles to drive ESSA plan development:



School Improvement Overview

Under ESSA, schools have three categories of support: Targeted, Comprehensive, and State Intervention. Please note that the identification and support will begin in the 2018-2019 school year.

Category for Improvement	Identification Criteria	Exit Criteria
<i>Comprehensive Support</i> – designed to support districts or schools that are chronically underperforming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowest 5% in the accountability system Graduation rate is 67% or lower Chronically underperforming subgroups (at least five years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attain a grade of ‘C’ on the accountability system Demonstrate a strong plan for sustaining progress
<i>Targeted Support</i> – designed to target support to chronically underperforming subgroups of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subgroup in the lowest 5% in the accountability system If a subgroup is chronically underperforming for 5 years, the school is moved to Comprehensive Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attain a grade of ‘C’ on the accountability system Demonstrate a strong plan for sustaining progress
<i>State Intervention</i> – schools that do not exit comprehensive support within four years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A school that does not exit Comprehensive Support within four years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined by the Indiana State Board of Education

Supports for Schools

Planning Grants for All Comprehensive Support Schools

The IDOE will award planning grants to schools in their first year of Comprehensive status. With these grants, schools should achieve the following objectives:

1. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, aligned to an evidence-based framework for school improvement;
2. Develop a school improvement plan that is driven by the qualitative and quantitative findings from a comprehensive needs assessment, aligned to an evidence-based framework for school improvement; and
3. Ensure the required conditions (e.g., leadership at all levels, academic strategy, student supports) are in place to enable successful implementation of the entire school improvement plan during the following school year.

Implementation Grants

The implementation grant application and its corresponding scoring rubric will be anchored in the same evidence-based framework for school improvement around which the comprehensive needs assessment and school improvement planning template are organized. Applications will only be awarded funding if the proposed evidence-based interventions meet the requirements of being in one of the top three tiers of evidence as required under ESSA. Once these Title I school improvement implementation grants are awarded, the IDOE will integrate its monitoring of these recipients into its ongoing cycle of supports for the Comprehensive Improvement Support Schools and their districts, with an additional emphasis on periodic resource allocation review to ensure Title I school improvement funds and other resources are promoting equity and excellence for all students.

If a district's Title I school improvement implementation grant application for a Comprehensive Improvement and Support School is not approved, the IDOE will continue to provide supports to that school and its district, as specified within its State Plan. Furthermore, the IDOE will consider awarding a Title I school improvement planning grant for a second year to a Comprehensive Improvement and Support School that applied for, but was not initially awarded an implementation grant, based on the quality and potential of their application.

Multiple-School Improvement Grants

The IDOE will also create a multiple-school Title I school improvement grant specifically for districts with four or more Comprehensive Improvement and Support Schools. These funds will be leveraged to help districts design and implement sustainable, large-scale school improvement initiatives (e.g., Transformation Zones, Innovation Networks) that meet student needs and improve student outcomes in multiple Comprehensive Improvement and Support Schools. Districts will not be required to include each of their Comprehensive Improvement and Support Schools in their application, but will need to explain how they plan to support these schools separately, drawing on evidence from each school's comprehensive needs assessment. To encourage locally-driven school improvement innovations, the IDOE will otherwise limit its guidelines and guardrails for this grant to the regulations for the use of Title I, Part A funds, as well as the evidentiary requirements for evidence-based interventions under ESSA.

To improve the likelihood that a district's multiple-school strategy for school improvement will have a demonstrable, sustainable impact on student outcomes, the IDOE will adopt the same differentiated planning and implementation grant phases as outlined above for the school-specific Title I school improvement grants. Unlike the school-specific Title I school improvement planning grant, this multiple-school school improvement strategy planning grant will be awarded in a rubric-based, competitive manner. The IDOE will require districts to apply for a one-year planning grant, with three specific objectives.

1. Fully operationalize the multiple-school strategy, including but not limited to long-term goals, short-term benchmarks, and budgets that demonstrate the district's capacity to sustain the strategy long-term;
2. Meaningfully engage stakeholders in the process of developing and refining the strategy across the planning period; and
3. Ensure the necessary conditions are in place to enable successful implementation of at least the first phase of the multiple-school improvement strategy during the following school year.

Districts could also petition the IDOE for the right to apply directly for a multi-year, multiple-school implementation grant by citing evidence that they have already fulfilled the requirements of the multiple-school planning grant with fidelity.

Where Can I Learn More?

- To view other ESSA section summaries, or review the entire draft plan: <https://www.doe.in.gov/essa>
- For additional information, contact: Jennifer Watts, Director of Policy, jwatts1@doe.in.gov