



ESSA Task Force Overview

July 2017

Background on ESSA

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA sets education provisions at the federal and state levels, with the goals of ensuring equity, increasing achievement, and fostering innovation. States are required to set long-term and short-term goals for student achievement, and Washington DC's ambitious ESSA Accountability Plan was approved by the DC State Board of Education and is currently being reviewed by the US Department of Education.

The District's plan goes into effect in the 2017-2018 school year. It calls for 85% of students to score proficient in reading and math – regardless of ethnic background, home language, or disability status – by 2035. The plan's other targets include a citywide graduation rate of 90% and a citywide updated school report card that will evaluate all public schools on academic success, gains in achievement, and family satisfaction.

The ESSA Task Force

Now that the ESSA Accountability Plan is in place, the DC State Board of Education is creating a task force to implement the plan. The task force will have four subcommittees over the course of two years:

- **School Report Cards**
 - States are required to create a unified report card that will help families understand how schools are performing. This subcommittee will approve a template for school report cards that will allow stakeholders to understand how DC schools are performing as a group as well as how individual schools compare to one another.
- **Access and Opportunity**
 - Under ESSA, states need to guarantee opportunities for all students. This subcommittee will identify areas of inequity and take steps to resolve them.
- **High School Growth Measures**
 - The new ESSA plan will reward student achievement and, in the future, student growth. This would allow low-performing schools to receive credit for significant gains in student growth. The subcommittee will examine ways to reward both growth and performance.
- **Pilot Studies**
 - An important component of school quality is climate, or the way students and parents perceive the school environment. DC does not have an approved measure of school climate. This subcommittee will review OSSE school climate pilot studies and examine existing school climate surveys used by some District schools, as well as those in place in other districts and states. Subcommittee members will then identify a school climate measure that is well suited for use across the District.

In Summer 2017, the Board will launch an application for this task force. The task force will run through June 2019.

Benefit for DC Students

The Board is excited about the projects this task force and its four subcommittees will undertake on behalf of District students. This work will conclude in Summer 2019, and the results will be user-friendly school report cards that help families choose the best schools for their students, greater access and equity, school climate measures that will help District families evaluate school environments, and a school evaluation system that rewards high schools making significant progress in educating students.

