



Every Student Succeeds Act

## 7 Ways to Get Your State Ready for ESSA Implementation

Feeling behind on implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act? You're not alone. Every state is balancing competing priorities and trying to find ways to fit ESSA work into an already full calendar. Here are some immediate ways to break it down, prioritize, and get organized!

**Assemble an internal ESSA implementation team.** It may seem obvious, but the best way to get ESSA work moving in the right direction is to compile a strategic team of bright minds in your state. Work with your colleagues to create a cross-departmental, internal team that includes Government Relations, Communications, Governance, Instructional/Professional Development, and Organizing, among others. Make sure to include staff from other parts of the state.

### Take these steps to map out your relationships:

- **Identify allies and champions.** Take stock. How is your relationship with the governor? Do you have champions in the state legislature? In the state department of education? On school boards or local government bodies? Who can help you advocate for educators and their students? Find those people, brief them, and strategize together.
- **Do you have a state implementation committee or work group?** If so, establish your role on the team. And do it now, so you can help shape the agenda and make your voice heard.
- **Assess your organization's relationships with stakeholder groups.** How strong are your relationships with other education, civil rights, parent and community groups? Who are your allies? If you haven't already, convene a meeting with education groups in your state. Use this meeting to share information and find ways to team up around common goals. Remember: the person who convenes the meeting sets the agenda! Leverage power in your state on behalf of students.

### Need help? Plug into the conversation with NEA

Join us online at Ed Communities: [www.myNEA360.org](http://www.myNEA360.org)

Tune in on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. for the weekly ESSA webinar: <http://neaorg.adobeconnect.com/epp/>

- To sign in as a guest, enter your full name and the name of your state—e.g., Karen Johnson and DC
- To activate audio, click the phone icon at the top of the window, select dial-out, enter 1 and your phone number, and then click on join—the system will call you back.
- To dial direct, enter 1-719-325-2630 or 1-855-747-8824, followed by code 623523#

Watch previous webinars by topic on Ed Communities.

To attend an upcoming briefing or schedule a briefing in your state, email your lobbyist.

**Look at the policies in your state. Then start thinking bigger.** First, you need a working knowledge of your state’s education laws—it’s important to understand where you’re starting from. But don’t stop there. You have a real opportunity to effect change and get it right this time. Think through the larger goals and what you’re trying to achieve through ESSA implementation. What do you need to do to get there? Could you introduce new legislation to break down obstacles for educators and students? To help solve problems you consistently face?



**Run an opportunity dashboard audit.** NEA developed this exercise to help states choose the indicators that offer the best opportunities for improvement for students, educators, schools, and their communities. The indicators should be a top priority for your state’s ESSA plan. Check out NEA’s PowerPoint presentation on conducting an opportunity dashboard audit on Ed Communities.

**Assess your member communications plan.** Take a look at the ways you’ve communicated with members about implementation. Do they know what ESSA means to their daily work environment? Have you opened up a dialogue about priorities? The more educators understand about how much ESSA will affect them, the more likely they are to get involved.

Build a communications plan that reaches as many members as possible and gives them opportunities to talk to you and one another. Use tele-town halls, webinars, emails, social media posts, newsletters, and your website—whatever works in your state.

**Build a member advisory group.** Strive for inclusion and diversity. Pay attention to geography as well as membership categories—everyone needs a seat at the table. Reach out to education support professionals, teachers, SISPs, librarians, or any other group you represent. Assembling an inclusive group will help you access the knowledge and experience of all types of members for the long-term benefit of students. Encourage everyone to offer policy ideas and help engage other members.



**Start calling meetings!** Are you ready? Get set ... go! You’re not alone. It takes a village, and NEA HQ is here to help you. Email your lobbyist with questions or concerns. Other states may have faced the same challenges and your lobbyist can help by sharing their solutions.