

Minnesota's Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Approved by the U.S. Department of
Education January 11, 2018.



Equity and
excellence
every day for every one.

Cover Page

Contact Information and Signatures

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By signing this document, I assure that:

- To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.
- The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304.
- Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers.

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Authorized SEA Representative (printed name) Phone

Brenda Cassellius September 11, 2017
Authorized SEA Representative (signature) Date

MARK DAYTON August 1, 2017
Governor (printed name) Date SEA provided plan to Governor
under ESEA 8540

Mark Dayton September 11, 2017
Governor (signature) Date

Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

Instructions: Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the [State Educational Agency, i.e., the Minnesota Department of Education] SEA included in its consolidated state plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated state plan, but is eligible and wishes to receive funds under the program(s), it must submit individual program plans for those programs that meet all statutory and regulatory requirements with its consolidated state plan in a single submission.

Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated state plan.

or

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below that the SEA includes in its consolidated state plan:

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children
- Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
- Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (McKinney-Vento Act)

Federal Template Instructions

Each SEA must provide descriptions and other information that address each requirement listed below for the programs included in its consolidated state plan. Consistent with ESEA section 8302, the Secretary has determined that the following requirements are absolutely necessary for consideration of a consolidated state plan. An SEA may add descriptions or other information, but may not omit any of the required descriptions or information for each included program.

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Minnesota has been a leader in developing a coherent accountability system, starting with our NCLB flexibility waiver in 2012 and followed by the adoption of our state accountability plan—the World’s Best Workforce—which requires school districts to annually align their budgets and improvement strategies to common statewide goals. The World’s Best Workforce aims to ensure all students have access to high-quality curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned to rigorous career- and college-ready standards. It includes a focus on equitable access

to effective teachers and the need to diversify our teacher workforce for every Minnesota district, so that our students learn from teachers who reflect their experiences and cultures.

A thorough review of Minnesota’s ESSA plan shows that it aligns and amplifies our World’s Best Workforce system and is an important complement to addressing educational disparities and inequities. It raises the bar on accountability and equity in our schools and includes rigorous statewide goals focused on tackling opportunity and achievement gaps. Every school and district in our state will measure and report progress against these goals in a clear and transparent way. Improvements to our data reporting systems will offer a clear, easy-to-understand overview to help families and communities better examine school performance and financial practices.

We hold high expectations for the academic performance of every student, in every student group, on every accountability indicator for every Minnesota school—not just those receiving Title I funds. We will be transparent about where we are succeeding and where we are falling short. Schools will be identified for support and expected to develop plans to improve if they fall short in just one student group, even when all other student groups are proficient. High schools, historically under-scrutinized and left without meaningful support, will be identified for assistance if any student group’s graduation rate falls below 67 percent.

Minnesota’s plan places a renewed focus on supporting English learners. For the first time, every school that serves 20 or more English learners will be held accountable for their progress, and every school serving 10 or more will be required to report progress. It is one of the first checks in our identification process that places significant weight on how students who are learning the English language are progressing in their quest to become proficient.

All told, Minnesota will identify and support approximately 300-400 schools, more than double the number identified and supported under our NCLB flexibility waiver.

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

This plan also describes how Minnesota will put into place federal programs that support:

- Low-income students
- Students of color and American Indian students
- English learners
- Migratory children and youth
- Neglected, delinquent, or at-risk children and youth
- Homeless children and youth
- Effective instruction
- Well-rounded education opportunities
- Community learning centers

- Rural and low-income schools

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

Although Minnesota has been working steadily to develop its state plan since the passage of ESSA in 2015, federal requirements regarding state plan development—including the template provided to states by the U.S. Department of Education—have changed during this time. In March 2017, a template was released that was more concise than previous versions and organized by federal Title program rather than by theme. Given this streamlined federal approach to the state plan template, Minnesota’s state plan has been written to describe how our state plans to use, manage and monitor federal funds to ensure all students are successfully meeting the state’s rigorous state academic standards.

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

Minnesota’s NCLB flexibility waiver remained in effect until August 1, 2016. The 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years serve as transition years to our new accountability, reporting, school improvement and recognition system under ESSA. Some components of ESSA take effect this coming school year, while much of the data reporting, school improvement and accountability requirements are not in place until 2018-19. An [overview of ESSA requirements going into effect this school year](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/ESSA/Imp/) is available on our website (<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/ESSA/Imp/>).

Engagement

The Minnesota Department of Education has worked with a diverse group of stakeholders, including consultation with Minnesota’s 11 unique sovereign Tribal Nations, to shape the state’s ESSA plan. Beginning in January 2016, we hosted a broad array of engagement activities, providing multiple means for Minnesota residents to provide input on the Minnesota state plan. These activities included topic-specific meetings, public listening sessions, focus groups, surveys and community meetings.

Over the course of 20 months, MDE held almost 300 meetings and public events throughout the state to educate, listen and receive invaluable input from Minnesota citizens.

We asked students, parents, educators, education partners, advocacy organizations, business leaders, community members and members of the public to participate in five committees to delve into specific topics. The five committees were accountability, assessment, English learners, school improvement, and educator quality. The purpose of the committees was to meaningfully involve voices of Minnesotans to support the development of Minnesota’s ESSA plan. All meetings were open to the public and documents were posted to the [ESSA committee webpage](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/ESSA/meet/) (<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/ESSA/meet/>).

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

The shared work reflects a vision of an aligned, pre-K through grade 12 education system where all children succeed. In order to raise achievement and eliminate disparities between student groups, a guiding principal of the engagement work was an unwavering commitment to ensuring that Minnesota’s system be equitable, coherent and meaningfully guided by students, families and educators.

Equity

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

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

Governor Dayton’s 7-Point Plan, in place since February 2011,¹ lays the framework for a long-term vision for pre-K through grade 12 education in Minnesota over the coming years. Fundamental to the 7-Point Plan is the belief that an aligned vision for educational excellence must be created from the ground up. Stakeholder engagement and collaborative partnerships are essential to our success. Equally important is to build on our strengths. That concept—taking what’s good and making it better—provides a clear path for Minnesota to create a strong system of public schools, in which excellent teaching and learning are recognized, supported and celebrated, every day, in every school.

Minnesotans want an equitable system. This was evident in the development of our state’s NCLB flexibility waiver, and it remains true today. Our ESSA state plan emphasizes meaningful inclusion of *all* students in the

¹ More about Governor Dayton’s 7-Point Plan <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/about/cmsh/bsbmn/>.

system and upholds the civil rights spirit of ESSA by holding every public school accountable for the outcomes of every student group.

During the department’s work on this plan, and with the input of stakeholders, it was important to work from a shared definition of what equity means.

Minnesota’s Definition of Equity

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

Equity is different from equality; equity is a principle that is based upon justness and fairness, while equality demands everyone be treated at the same level.

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

Equity-Focused Guiding Questions

- What groups are impacted by the decision and what is the nature of the impact? Groups may include:
 - Students of color
 - American Indian students
 - Ethnic background
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students
 - Students with disabilities
 - Students in poverty
 - English learners
 - Gender
- What are the potential positive, neutral or harmful impacts on the identified groups?
- Have representatives from these groups been collaboratively engaged on the decision?
- How will the decision advance equity, address structural barriers, and reduce or eliminate disparities?

Conclusion

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

that was done to reach this point in close collaboration with the students, families, educators, school and district leaders, and engaged community members of this state.

A Note About Reading the Plan

The state plan includes language from the federal template, in the form of an outline, providing instruction to states on what to include. While this information is important for understanding the context of the state's responses, it does not lend itself to simple reading.

Language from the Minnesota Department of Education describing our plan in the following sections appears highlighted in green for added emphasis and clarity. An executive summary of the state plan is available on the Minnesota Department of Education's website which walks through the plan in plainer language. We hope this will be helpful in providing Minnesotans with an understanding of our state plan.