



Delaware's Final Draft ESSA Plan

Delaware (DE) recently posted its final draft ESSA plan at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib09/DE01922744/Centricity/domain/425/feb%2028%20release%20documents/FINAL%20Draft%20w%20intro%20letter%20-%20ESSA%20State%20Plan.pdf>.

Public input can be submitted to ESSAStatePlan@doe.k12.de.us until March 30, 2017.

We have outlined the most critical issues with the plan below:

DE should be applauded for lowering its N size to 15.

Advocates should review the claims in the plan about meaningful consultation with groups representing students with disabilities (SWDs) and make sure the information is being presented accurately.

Goals for proficiency rate on assessments only get SWDs to about 50-60% proficient in 15 years. We don't know how DE will get students college and career ready AND meet the 4-year graduation rate goal of 81.9% in 2030 if the goal is so low for proficiency by 2030. Also, there isn't a commitment to keep these goals instead of adjusting them downward if targets aren't met along the way. DE could lower the goals even further (Maryland has a commitment in its plan not to adjust the goals).

It looks like DE is still including proficiency in Science and Social Studies as part of its academic achievement indicator when only math and ELA are supposed to be part of that indicator. DE is adding a number of school quality and student success indicators based on "community input". Many of these indicators do not have strong evidence linking them to improved academic outcomes and will dilute the weight of important school quality indicators like chronic absenteeism and suspensions.

DE is weighing growth more than proficiency and much more than graduation rate. Growth is important but there has to be more pressure to actually get students to be proficient and earn a regular high school diploma.

DDOE says that it has been using an equation to factor assessment participation rate in with proficiency rates for the overall academic achievement score for each school. This equation does not comply with ESSA. It is not equally rigorous as the options laid out in the regulations regarding how to deal with schools falling short of 95% assessment participation for all students and for each subgroup.

The plan does not specify that only the 4-year graduation rate will be used for identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement as required by ESSA. This is important to clarify because the plan talks about extended graduation rates of 5 and 6 years in the discussion about the graduation indicator.

The plan does not clearly explain how the state will define consistently underperforming subgroups for purposes of identifying schools for targeted support and improvement if one or more subgroups is/are consistently underperforming. We recommend that a school be considered consistently underperforming if it has not met the state's long-term goals and interim measures for the subgroup for two years.

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See ESSA resources at <https://www.ndscenter.org/political-advocacy> (click on policy documents and webinar archives)

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See ESSA resources at www.advocacyinstitute.org/ESSA

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