

ESSA Notes



In This Issue

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- Michigan ESSA Plan Submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. 1
- ESSA Plan Follows Revised USED Template 2
- Public Comment Period Yields Nearly 700 Responses 3
- What's Happening Now 3

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Michigan ESSA Plan Submitted to the U.S. Department of Education

A more whole-child, well-rounded education for Michigan children is the focus of the state's plan for the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The plan was signed by both Michigan Department of Education (MDE) State Superintendent Brian Whiston and Governor Rick Snyder and submitted April 17, 2017, to the U.S. Department of Education (USED).

"This is a thoughtful and dynamic plan to keep Michigan schools moving forward," said Whiston. "Michigan's ESSA plan builds upon the goals and strategies outlined in the [Top 10 in 10](#) initiative and the [Governor's 21st Century Education Commission](#)."

Michigan's ESSA plan and plan overview, along with other supporting documents, are available through the links below and on the [ESSA Web page \(www.michigan.gov/ESSA\)](#).

- [Overview of Michigan's ESSA Plan](#)
- [Michigan's Submitted ESSA Plan](#)
- Supporting Documents:
 - ◆ [Press Release for April 17, 2017 submission](#)
 - ◆ [Giving Michigan Schools a Jump on ESSA](#)
 - ◆ [Cover letter from State Superintendent Brian Whiston](#)
 - ◆ [Cover letter from Governor Rick Snyder](#)
 - ◆ [Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Activities](#)
 - ◆ USED [Crosswalk of Consolidated State Plan Requirements](#)

In signing the plan, Governor Snyder expressed his support for further discussion on greater transparency in the school accountability portion of the plan.

Continued on next page

ESSA FACTS

ESSA was passed in December 2015 by wide margins in Congress (Senate 85-12, House 359-64) in order to ensure greater state and local flexibility. The changes were supported by business groups, teachers' unions, civil rights groups, and supporters of school choice.

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“Given Michigan’s historically low performance nationally, we must ensure that our accountability system is transparent, honest, and works for every student in the state,” Snyder said. “Parents have a right to know that their schools are providing a quality education for their child.”

Key components of Michigan’s ESSA plan

At its core, Michigan’s ESSA plan centers on Michigan’s children – their opportunity to learn; to access excellent educators and meaningful supports; and to successfully transition to college, career, and life. Key components of the plan include:

- Defining the **purpose of school accountability** as providing direct supports to the districts, rather than labeling and sanction.
 - A **differentiated response to schools** based on their academic need, with the most intensive interventions and supports being provided to those most in need.
 - A true **focus on the whole child** and the aspects of a well-rounded education, including not only academic subjects like fine arts and physical education, but also areas related to safety, health, school culture and climate, food and nutrition, early childhood, postsecondary transitions, and social-emotional learning.
 - **Flexibility** in the interventions and actions taken by districts and schools, rather than prescribed certain models or interventions. This plan helps local districts diagnose their needs across the whole child spectrum, identify evidence-based practices, and implement a plan that is tailored to their needs.
 - Integration and focus on **alignment with early childhood** initiatives and goals.
 - **Educator quality** that goes beyond a focus on “highly qualified” (which was required under NCLB), to supporting teachers and leaders throughout their careers.
 - **Assessment systems** that are designed to measure within-year student growth in addition to proficiency on rigorous content standards.
- An accountability system that provides **clear information** to all stakeholders, based on areas that relate to the progress toward being a Top 10 education state in 10 years.

Next steps

The plan now will be reviewed by the USED, including review by USED staff as well as a structured peer review process for specific sections of the plan. ESSA law provides the U.S. Secretary of Education 120 days to review and approve state plans.

The MDE will leave the MDE-ESSA@michigan.gov email account open for any additional feedback as the state works with USED on plan approval and work moves forward toward implementation.

To read Michigan’s ESSA Plan, an Overview of the plan, and a one-page explanation on why the state is submitting for Spring 2017 review, go to the [ESSA web page](http://www.michigan.gov/ESSA) (www.michigan.gov/ESSA).

ESSA Plan Follows Revised USED Template

During Michigan’s ESSA Draft Plan public comment period, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) released an updated template for plan submission. Michigan’s ESSA plan follows the updated USED template.

The new template aligns with state plan requirements in the ESSA law, whereas the previous template, which had guided Michigan’s DRAFT Plan development, had been based on requirements in the regulations that were overturned on March 27, 2017 under the Congressional Review Act.

Along with the revised template, USED provided a [crosswalk](#) between the new template and the previous version that was part of the overturned regulations in order to guide states in the development of their ESSA plans as well as plan reviewers. These resources are all available at the [USED ESSA website](http://www.ed.gov/essa) (www.ed.gov/essa).

Public Comment Period Yields Nearly 700 Responses

Michigan's ESSA draft plan was open for public comment February 14 through March 16, 2017. MDE staff reviewed and considered all comments before submitting its revised final plan to the U.S. Department of Education on April 17, 2017, following Governor Rick Snyder's review of the plan.

Approximately 680 formal comments were submitted to the MDE via email or U.S. mail. The MDE received additional input through meetings with legislators, other stakeholders, and at meetings of the State Board of Education. Most comments touched on key aspects of Michigan's ESSA plan, including school accountability, transparency dashboard, Michigan's assessment vision, teacher and leader quality, and supports for schools. Other comments addressed non-ESSA related topics such as school funding and other general areas of school policy. Some individuals and groups offered suggestions for plan implementation and expressed a willingness to partner with MDE and schools in the process.

Public comment trends to note:

- Comments reflected the diverse perspectives of the individuals and groups who responded, with little clear consensus on key plan elements.
- The final ESSA plan reflects some significant changes based on feedback received, including: addition of library/media services and deletion of educator longevity in the additional accountability indicator; strengthened references to fine arts and music, physical education, and services to gifted and talented students; clarifications on educator quality; and a move away from "A-F" summative grades for schools.

- Nearly 300 comments (including those in 268 form letters from several groups) supported delaying plan submission. However, the majority of respondents either supported Michigan "taking the lead" with Spring submission or did not address timing at all. The MDE has prepared a [one-page information sheet](#) to describe the benefits of the spring submission.
- Several groups/organizations generated "form letters" around opposition to Common Core and federal oversight/authority (243). **Note:** Michigan's State Standards are established through a process outside of the state's ESSA plan.
- Special education advocates recommended a lower accountability N-size, particularly for students receiving special education services (25).
- Comments related to the accountability and transparency dashboards included support for the inclusion of fine arts and music within the additional indicator for accountability (126) and calls for a health education indicator; recommendations advocated by public school academies (37); suggestions related to gifted and talented students (21); and support for an indicator showing access to/time spent in health education programs (10).
- Many of the comments, while not resulting in a change to the plan will be implementation considerations and are a key part of the next phase of our work.

The MDE has posted a [Summary of ESSA Stakeholder Engagement Activities](#), which includes public comments, along with Michigan's ESSA plan, on the [ESSA web page](#) (www.michigan.gov/essa).

What's Happening Now

- ♦ Michigan's ESSA Plan is awaiting review by U.S. Department of Education staff and peer reviewers. ESSA law provides the U.S. Secretary of Education 120 days to review and approve state plans.
- ♦ MDE staff have begun work towards implementation of Michigan's ESSA plan and continue to move forward on the goals and strategies within the [Top 10 in 10](#) initiative.