

MEANINGFUL LOCAL ENGAGEMENT UNDER ESSA

A Handbook for LEA and School Leaders

- Summary -

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) offers state and local education leaders an opportunity to shape their state's education policy agenda and to play a greater role in ensuring educational equity with the help of stakeholders who represent the core beliefs and needs of the communities and students they serve.

ESSA requires each state, district, and school to consult with an array of stakeholders on issues ranging from how best to disburse ESSA funds to how to support schools that serve struggling or high-need students. The specific consultation requirements vary across the programs, but the focus on engagement across ESSA is consistent. This gives states and districts a chance to commit to engagement with all stakeholders in an ongoing and meaningful way.

This Handbook is designed to support local engagement with stakeholder groups around ESSA at the local level.

Who Should Use This Handbook?

This handbook is intended to support and provide helpful guidance to local education agencies (LEAs)—including school districts, county offices of education, regional education offices, and charter schools—and school leaders as they engage with stakeholders to think about how ESSA can be best leveraged locally. This guide can also be used by state education leaders to support local leaders in their transition to the new federal law.

- **State education leaders** can use this tool as they transition from plan development to implementation and continuous improvement to focus on engagement with, and support for, district and school leaders.
- **School and district leaders** can use this handbook as a source of strategies to employ as they build their comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy
- **Advocates** can use this to inform their efforts to engage with their local political and education leaders.



A Joint Publication of Partners *for* Each and Every Child (Partners *for*) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), developed in collaboration with Education First and many national and local contributors

What is in the Handbook?

Part 1: LEA & School Planning: Why Local Engagement?

Part 1 connects engagement around local planning to new state systems under ESSA, aligning engagement with local decision-making.

Part 2: Making Engagement More Effective

Recognizing the differing information, participation, and engagement needs and assets of various stakeholder groups, Part 2 offers a compiled set of engagement resources, tailored to meet the needs of specific constituent groups:

- ▶ Students and Youth
- ▶ Parents, Families, and Guardians
- ▶ Educators (Teachers and Leaders)
- ▶ Rural Communities
- ▶ Tribal Leadership and Native Communities
- ▶ Policymakers
- ▶ Leveraging Community Partnerships

These resources are not exhaustive, nor necessarily specific to ESSA conversations. Rather, they provide suggestions to LEAs on how to best plan, organize and implement effective stakeholder conversations to encourage meaningful participation and feedback, and create a sense of shared responsibility to achieve equity goals.

Part 3: Tools For Building an Engagement Strategy

Part 3 includes four resources to begin understanding and strategizing around engagement at the local level.

Part 4: Reference Material

Why Meaningful Engagement?

Engaging stakeholders is not only required under ESSA, but is a strong best practice to effectively improve schools.

Making decisions on education policy in an inclusive and transparent way leads to better decisions and encourages stakeholders to contribute and become partners in achieving the goals in the state and local community. Communities will support improvement strategies that they help to develop. Partnerships with outside stakeholders, including parents, philanthropy, community-based organizations, and others will build local capacity to implement innovative and ambitious strategies for meeting the needs of all students.



Coming Soon! Additional Resources to Support Local Engagement

Later in 2017 we will be releasing additional guidance on how LEAs can make the most of specific issue areas and opportunities within ESSA, including engaging with stakeholders around school improvement and resource allocation.