



March 2018

THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA): PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL QUALITY INDICATORS

In 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and titled the new law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA requires every state to develop an accountability system for all public schools and local education agencies (LEAs) that includes the results of annual standards-based state assessments.¹ In addition, the accountability system must include: 1) English language proficiency of English learners;² 2) at least one indicator of school quality; 3) an additional academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and 4) for high schools, the four year or extended graduation rate.³ ESSA requires states to use this accountability system to determine which Title I schools are in the greatest need of supports to improve.⁴

In its Consolidated Plan for implementing ESSA in Pennsylvania, PDE selected the following six indicators for its accountability system:

- Percent of students who demonstrate proficiency on state standardized tests;
- Student growth as measured by state standardized tests;
- Growth for English learners;
- High school graduation rate; and
- Two school quality indicators:
 - **Chronic student absenteeism**
 - **Student career readiness.**

This Advisory discusses Pennsylvania's two school quality indicators in more detail.

Pennsylvania's Chronic Absenteeism Measure

¹ For more information about state assessment requirements under ESSA, see PSEA's Advisory [The Every Student Succeeds Act: State and Federal Student Assessment Requirements](#).

² PSEA's Advisory, [The Every Student Succeeds Act: State Accountability System Requirements](#) and [The Every Student Succeeds Act and English Learners](#).

³ States also must develop an annual school report card that includes the accountability indicators as well as additional indicators of school quality. This report card is called the [Future Ready PA Index](#). For additional information about the Index and ESSA report card requirements, see PSEA's Advisory, [The Every Student Succeeds Act: State and Local Education Agency Report Card Requirements](#). For additional information about the Future Ready Index, see PSEA's Advisory, [The Every Student Succeeds Act: Future Ready PA Index](#).

⁴ ESSA requires all states to use the state accountability system to determine the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools to receive Comprehensive Supports and Interventions (CSI). Other schools may receive Targeted Supports and Interventions (TSI) to reduce achievement gaps among student subgroups. For more information, see PSEA's Advisory, [The Every Student Succeeds Act: Pennsylvania's Consolidated Plan](#) and [The Every Student Succeeds Act: State Accountability System Requirements](#).

Pennsylvania defines chronic absenteeism as the number of students in a school who miss more than 10 percent of school days across the academic year for any reason.⁵ A student is absent if they are not physically participating in instruction or instruction-related activities on school grounds or at an approved off-grounds location for at least half of the school day. Any student enrolled for fewer than 60 days in a school will be excluded from the school's chronic absenteeism rate.

Thirty-five states in addition to Pennsylvania have adopted chronic absenteeism as a school quality indicator in their federal accountability plan⁶ because chronic absenteeism is one of the earliest research-based indicators of future academic difficulties and a strong predictor of drop out risk.⁷

Pennsylvania's Career Readiness Measure

Pennsylvania's career readiness indicator is designed to highlight the extent to which K-12 schools help students explore career opportunities and develop career goals. Current Pennsylvania regulation ([22 Pa. Code Chapter 4.12](#)) requires all LEAs to deliver instruction aligned with state academic standards in career education and work. In addition, each LEA must have a plan, approved by the local board of school directors, to implement a comprehensive, sequential program of career guidance services for kindergarten through 12th grade ([22 Pa. Code Chapter 339](#)).⁸

Each school's career readiness indicator reflects the number of students in grades 5, 8, and 11 who demonstrate evidence that they have met Pennsylvania's [Career Education and Work Standards](#) (CEW). Calculations will be applied to schools with a grade 5, 8 and/or 11:

1. For schools with a grade 5: The percent of all students and each subgroup⁹ of students who, by the end of grade 5, demonstrate engagement in career exploration and preparation aligned to the CEW standards by participating in a career exploration and preparation program/curriculum.
2. For schools with a grade 8: The percent of all students and each subgroup of students who, by the end of grade 8, create an individualized career plan¹⁰ and participate in career preparation activities aligned to the CEW standards.
3. For schools with a grade 11: The percent of all students and each subgroup of students who, by the end of grade 11, implement their individualized career plan through ongoing development of a career portfolio and participation in career preparation activities aligned to the CEW standards.

School Impact

Beginning in the fall of 2018, all LEAs must report all excused and unexcused student absences, including those resulting from suspensions or expulsions. LEAs also must report to PDE the percent of students who meet career readiness expectations.

⁵ See [Pennsylvania's ESSA Consolidated State Plan](#).

⁶ FutureEd's [Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism Under ESSA](#).

⁷ Attendance Work's [A Summary of Key Research on Chronic Absence](#)

⁸ PDE's [Chapter 339 Plan](#)

⁹ For accountability purposes, ESSA requires student achievement measures to be disaggregated for the following student subgroups: white, African American/black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, multi-racial, English learner, economically disadvantaged, and student with a disability.

¹⁰ For information and toolkits regarding Chapter 339 plans, see PDE's [Chapter 339](#) especially "[Tools to Developing a Comprehensive K-12 Guidance & Counseling Plan](#)."

These data will be reported on the PA Future Ready Index. In addition, the data will be used to identify low performing Title I schools to receive mandatory Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) services.¹¹

For More Information

For more information about Pennsylvania’s chronic absenteeism and career readiness accountability indicators, visit the [Pennsylvania Department of Education’s ESSA webpage](#). PSEA members may address additional questions to Brad Hull: bhull@psea.org. PSEA members with specific questions about local implementation should contact their UniServ Representative.



¹¹ See PSEA’s Advisory, [The Every Student Succeeds Act: Pennsylvania’s Plan to Identify Schools for Support and Improvement](#).