



NDSC-NDSS EDUCATION ALERT

September 14, 2016

Action Needed on Your State ESSA Implementation Plan

NDSC AND NDSS URGE YOU TO SUBMIT COMMENTS TO YOUR STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

The states are working RIGHT NOW on developing their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plans to interpret and implement the law locally. Your state is required to have meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including representatives of the disability community, as it develops the state plan.

Why is it important to submit comments?

ESSA Disability Accountability = High Expectations and Supports for Improvement

The decisions that are made in your state plan will determine how well both ESSA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will be implemented. ESSA is for all students, with a specific focus on historically underserved students, such as those with disabilities. Strong ESSA implementation in your state will make advocacy for your child under IDEA easier, because schools, districts and the state will be required to address low achievement of students with disabilities in a meaningful and timely manner.

There will be groups and individuals in your state submitting comments in an effort to weaken accountability for the achievement of the student subgroups listed in ESSA, including students with disabilities, English learners and students of color. They will be pushing for state decisions that make many of these students invisible in the accountability system and/or cause them to languish for many years in underperforming

schools before meaningful action is taken. It is important that YOUR voices are heard from the other side!

How and where to submit comments

To make it easy and quick for you to submit comments, NDSC has developed tools for your use!

- Sample Comments on State ESSA Plans [can be found here](#).
- A list of state-by-state ESSA stakeholder input activities and information [can be found here](#).

On the state-by-state list there is an email address for each state, which you can use to submit written comments. Some states are currently holding statewide ESSA stakeholder input meetings. If that is happening in your state, you could also bring your comments to one of the meetings.

Please contact Ricki Sabia at ricket@ndscenter.org or Heather Sachs at hsachs@ndss.org with any questions.

Recognizing the importance of education policy and how it will affect our constituents, you may receive informational emails, called Education Alerts, and Action Alerts from both the NDSC and NDSS. Our two organizations are committed to working together on education issues, including ESSA implementation, IDEA-related issues and other education matters. NDSC's Senior Education Policy Advisor, Ricki Sabia, will lead this collaboration, and will work closely with Heather Sachs, NDSS Vice President of Advocacy & Public Policy, coordinating education policy strategy to best serve the entire Down syndrome community.