



FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



ESSA Accountability & New York Schools: Understanding New School Ratings

The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, the main federal law for K-12 public education, aims to ensure all children get a quality education. The law requires that states hold public schools accountable for how students achieve. ESSA does give states flexibility—their accountability systems can measure much more than just test scores.

ESSA promotes educational equity, which means that all students succeed and thrive in school no matter who they are, where they live, or where they go to school. Accountability systems help make this possible by sparking an honest conversation about what schools are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Accountability systems provide opportunities to learn from high-performing schools and direct funds and resources to districts and schools that need to improve.

The New Accountability System

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has established a new set of indicators to measure school performance. NYSED developed these indicators with the input of thousands of people statewide—parents, educators, and experts. The new indicators go beyond a narrow focus on measuring achievement in English language arts and mathematics. They include other core subjects, such as science and social studies, and have a much stronger focus on student growth and school progress. Assessments are still an important part, but the new accountability system offers a more complete look at how a school is performing. The new system also includes nonacademic measures of school performance.

The new indicators include student academic achievement, student growth and school progress, progress of English language learners, chronic absenteeism, and, for high schools, graduation rates and preparing students for college, career and civic engagement.

For each of these indicators, every school earns a score of “1” to “4.” One is the lowest. Four is the highest. Schools get a score for all students and for student subgroups, such as members of racial and ethnic groups, low-income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners.



How Schools are Classified

The accountability system classifies schools into one of three categories: In Good Standing, a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school, or a Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school. Both CSI and TSI schools are eligible for additional support.

A school can be identified as CSI because the school performs at level “1” on a combination of the new indicators or for high schools, if for all student groups, the graduation rate is less than 67 percent. Beginning in 2018-19, New York will identify every three years at least 5 percent of all schools statewide as CSI.

A school can be identified as TSI if one or more student subgroups performs at a level “1” on a combination of the new indicators. If a school had been in Good Standing, then it takes two years of low performance before the school becomes TSI.

How the Rankings are Put to Work

This classification system is all about achieving equity. By identifying schools that need the most attention, NYSED and school districts can focus resources on these schools.

If your child’s school has been identified as a **CSI school**, several steps will happen:

- Your school will conduct an assessment to determine what works well and what does not. Parents and community members will have the opportunity to take part in this. Then, your school will develop a school improvement plan.
- Once approved by the district and the state, the improvement plan will be implemented. It will include at least one school-wide improvement strategy. This could include changing how funds are spent or strengthening how classrooms support students’ social and emotional health. Teachers and staff will take part in professional development. And your school will be eligible for funds to support the improvement strategy.
- Your school will ensure that parents and students have opportunities to help decide how some school funds are spent or engage in other activities that give voice to students and parents.
- If your school does not improve, additional actions will be required, and if low-performance persists a school may be placed into Receivership.

If your child’s school has been identified as a **TSI school**, several steps will happen:

- Your school will conduct an assessment to determine what works well and what does not—parents and community members will have the opportunity to take part in this. Then, your school will develop a school improvement plan.
- Once approved by the district, the improvement plan will be implemented, including at least one school-wide improvement strategy. Your school will receive additional technical support from the district.
- Your school will survey parents, teachers and students every year.
- If your school does not improve after several years, your school could be classified as CSI.

Thank you for your support as your school, district and the state work to ensure an excellent education for all students. Please contact your school’s principal to learn how you can be involved in building a stronger school.