



## NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact Ryan Foor by phone (402-471-5030) or email ([ryan.foor@nebraska.gov](mailto:ryan.foor@nebraska.gov)) or David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email ([david.jespersen@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NEBRASKA SUBMITS AMBITIOUS ESSA PLAN TO U.S.D.E.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has submitted the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan to the U.S. Department of Education for review. ESSA was signed by President Barack Obama in 2015 and requires states to set their own long-term achievement goals.

The ESSA planning process provided Nebraska an opportunity to blend the recently-developed Strategic Vision and Direction and its accountability system, AQuESTT. Nebraska approached the ESSA plan by considering where to focus federal resources to better support struggling schools, historically underserved students, and the recruitment and development of highly-effective educators.

Under the plan, Nebraska's overall 10-year goal is a 50 percent reduction in the number of students not proficient on the statewide assessment. The plan also sets specific achievement benchmarks for subgroups of students and a target for a four-year graduation rate of 94.4 percent for all students.

Further, ESSA requires states to create an accountability system that identifies schools most in need of support and intervention. Nebraska's plan uses AQuESTT to track indicators including academic achievement, academic progress, graduation rate, progress for English Learners, and chronic absenteeism to help determine school quality and student success. ESSA mirrors the state's own efforts to improve its schools Most In Need of Support to Improve, or Priority Schools. In the future, Priority Schools will continue to receive support (state-funded improvement activities) as will roughly 24 schools identified as In Need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement, qualifying them for federally-funded improvement activities.

Nebraska's ESSA plan was created through extensive outreach including a statewide listening tour held in seven locations from Scottsbluff to Omaha, online partner facilitation resources, and an online feedback survey with more than 1,700 responses. NDE staff also engaged in productive dialogue with Governor Pete Ricketts and received a letter of support from the Governor and from Senator Deb Fischer.

A more comprehensive look at Nebraska's plan can be found on NDE's ESSA website: <https://www.education.ne.gov/ESSA/index.html>.

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David Jespersen  
Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education  
402-471-4537  
[david.jespersen@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)  
@NDE\_News