

IOWA

Report Card

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

gave all states an opportunity to be creative, ambitious and inclusive with their new education plans to best meet the needs of students with disabilities and close achievement gaps for all students. But did Iowa take full advantage of this opportunity?

IOWA RATINGS:

Accountability Systems: Does Iowa's accountability system under ESSA include students with disabilities?

Support for School Improvement: Will Iowa help struggling schools by providing supports that work for students with disabilities?

Inclusive Planning: Did Iowa align its ESSA plan with special education initiatives?

KEY:

- **Green** = Meaningful support
- **Yellow** = Partial support
- **Red** = Not supportive

HIGHLIGHTS OF IOWA'S PLAN:

- Includes a detailed description of the evidenced-based support the state will provide to struggling schools including a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
- Includes a detailed description of the process the state took to engage representatives of students with disabilities, including teachers of students with disabilities, parents of students with disabilities, and advocacy groups.

HOW CAN IOWA IMPROVE IT'S ESSA PLAN?

- Include a better indicator of "School Quality and Student Success" instead of a student survey regarding conditions for learning across the following domains: safety, engagement and environment. Iowa's current student survey is not applicable to all grade levels. While student surveys can provide valuable information, it is challenging to design a valid survey.
- Include a more detailed description of how goals under ESSA and under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are aligned and how the state plans to support English learners with disabilities.

LONG-TERM GOALS FOR IOWA

Graduation Rate Goals for 2021

97%
ALL STUDENTS

97%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

States set long-term goals for each group of students under ESSA. Setting ambitious goals for all students is essential to making sure all students can succeed.

Iowa set the same graduation rate goals for students with disabilities as their non-disabled peers, however Iowa set lower achievement goals for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL RATINGS

Under ESSA, most states do not include the performance of students with disabilities in their school performance ratings. This means a school could earn a high score, even if students with disabilities and other subgroups are doing very poorly.



Iowa does not include subgroup performance in its school rating system.





Iowa Report Card

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE SURE YOUR DISTRICT HAS AN EQUITABLE PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER ESSA?

ADVOCATE FOR STRENGTHS-BASED IEPs

- A strengths-based IEP uses students' abilities to improve weaknesses.
- IEP goals are built around the students' skills.
- Helping students identify and leverage their strengths, interests and preferences can lead to more self-awareness and self-advocacy.

ASK YOUR DISTRICT TO...

1. Use strengths-finders to identify abilities, interests and preferences
2. Prepare students to participate in IEP meetings and advocate for their needs
3. Start every IEP meeting with a discussion about strengths
4. Update IEP forms to include space to talk about strengths
5. Weave strengths into IEP goals as a way to set high expectations

Get started by visiting u.org/schoolwide and downloading our advocacy tools

Strengths-Based IEPs: Fact Sheet

Parent Toolkit: How to Ask for Schoolwide Teacher Training to Help Kids With Learning & Attention Issues

Design for Learning (UDL):

UDL is not...

- A curriculum or technology platform.
- One method of teaching all students.
- A variety of methods are used to give all students an equal opportunity to succeed.
- An "us" vs. "them" resource. UDL benefits all kids, not just those who struggle.

UDL helps optimize lesson plans for all learners

Information in more than one format—like audio, video and hands-on access material in ways best suited to their learning strengths.

Offer flexibility in how kids interact with the material and show what posing to take a test, give an oral report or do a group project.

Different ways to motivate students and sustain their interest, like and giving them assignments that feel relevant to their lives.

UDL helps schools work on...

- Using technology tools and other materials that align UDL principles
- Making assessments accessible to all and providing timely interventions
- Maintaining high expectations for kids with IEPs and English language learners

UDL

Using new skills and collaborating. Here are some ways Newberry School started transitioning to UDL in 2009:

- Made time for teachers to work together to identify which skills they want to target
- Piloted different presentation formats and different options to demonstrate learning
- Enabled teachers to meet regularly to help evaluate and refine these approaches

Understood National Center for Learning Disabilities u.org/schoolwide