TENNESSEE RATINGS:

Accountability Systems: Does Tennessee’s accountability system under ESSA include students with disabilities?

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

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

KEY:

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF TENNESSEE’S PLAN:

• Includes a detailed discussion of Tennessee’s State Systemic Improvement Plan under IDEA, demonstrating how the state’s IDEA and ESSA plans are aligned.

• Includes a description of how the state will address the needs of English learners who have disabilities.

HOW CAN TENNESSEE IMPROVE IT’S ESSA PLAN?

• Tennessee uses a super subgroup for all black, Hispanic and Native American students, which makes it impossible for schools and parents to access subgroup-specific data. Tennessee should disaggregate data for all subgroups, which would allow schools to better target improvement strategies, and parents to make informed choices about their child’s education.

LONG-TERM GOALS FOR TENNESSEE

Graduation Rate Goals for 2022

- 95% ALL STUDENTS
- 87.7% 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.

In addition to setting lower graduation rate goals for students with disabilities New York also set lower achievement goals.

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.

Tennessee includes subgroup performance in its rating system.
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