



**National  
Urban League**

**State:** Alabama

## **ESSA State Plan Equity Report Card**

As part of our Equity & Excellence Project (EEP), the National Urban League has reviewed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plans for 36 states and the District of Columbia where we have Urban League affiliates. Under ESSA, the U.S. Department of Education tasked each state with developing a consolidated, streamlined set of requirements for states to address in their plans and submit for federal approval. All plans were approved as of September 2018. These plans provide a preliminary indicator of how states intend to implement the new law and represent a blueprint for state- and district-level decisions that will work to move each state from promise to practice during implementation.

During our analysis, we assessed how well states incorporated equity into their plans and developed a series of report cards that use a green-yellow-red highlight system to rate the plans on 12 Equity Indicators including: early childhood learning, supports for struggling schools, and resource equity. These indicators were selected based on the evidence demonstrating their effectiveness for advancing equity and excellence for vulnerable students in our nation's public schools.

These report cards do not constitute an assessment or analysis of a state's school system. Rather, they identify the extent to which states have included the 12 equity indicators in their ESSA plans. Each state's ranking was determined based on its weighted average performances across each of our 12 equity indicators. Extra weight was placed on those areas that the National Urban League believes are especially critical to advancing equity—subgroup performance, supports, and interventions for struggling schools and for resource equity.

We believe these Consolidated State Plans are a reflection of each state's priorities and represent a road map that will guide a state's investments in districts, schools and communities. We hope that the absence of information in a state's plan is not an indication of its commitment to these education equity priorities and we remain optimistic that states and districts will continue to adopt these 12 equity levers into their plans as they move into implementation.

For more information on our findings, please read our executive summary and full report on [naturbanleague.org](http://naturbanleague.org).



**State:** Alabama

Plan Approved: April 17, 2018; Link to full text can be found [here](#).

Equity Indicators	NUL Score
<p><b>1. Goals and Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alabama State Department of Education’s (ALSDE) long-term goal for all students and all groups of student is for 69.6% of students to be proficient in reading and 72% of students proficient in math by 2030.</li> <li>The ALSDE’s school quality and student success indicators are: chronic absenteeism for all schools; college and career readiness (students completing at least 1 of the following readiness indicators: achieving benchmark score on the ACT® or ACT WorkKeys, passing an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam, earning college credit, earning an industry credential, or enlisting in the military) for high schools.</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p>
<p><b>2. Subgroup Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state plan’s system of annual meaningful differentiation uses an index (100-point scale) based on subgroup performance to identify schools for targeted support; it does not otherwise rate schools.</li> <li>The ALDE’s chosen n-size is 20 which could be strengthened to count more students by lowering to 10, the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) recommended number.</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p>
<p><b>3. Supports &amp; Interventions for Struggling Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s definitions for “additional targeted support and improvement” (ASTI) and “targeted support and improvement” (TSI) designations are not meaningfully different, making it unlikely that more students will receive the support and resources they need.</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor</p>
<p><b>4. Resource Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s plan includes a resource equity indicator in its accountability system. The college and career readiness indicator measures access and success in a variety of high rigor courses.</li> <li>The ALSDE’s plan is in compliance with the requirement to publicly report resource inequities in areas like per-pupil expenditures and the equitable distribution of effective teachers.</li> <li>The ALSDE’s plan should provide more detail into how it intends to support local education agencies (LEAs) to identify and address resource inequities including through the use of set-asides.</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p>
<p><b>5. Educator Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state’s plan provides definitions for “out-of-field,” “inexperienced,” and “ineffective” teachers, but should provide more detail, including a strategy with timelines and targets for reducing the rates of disproportionate access to effective teachers for students of color and low-income students.</li> <li>The ALSDE’s plan prioritizes the use of Title I school wide program funding recruitment and retention of effective teachers, particularly in high-need subjects, and offers a mentorship program for all first-year teachers. It also prioritizes pipeline strategies to recruit individuals from other fields to become teachers through the use of Title II, Part A funds.</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p>



State: Alabama

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE could strengthen these efforts by focusing on evidenced-based strategies that improve the equitable access to effective and <i>diverse</i> teachers, principals and other school leaders such as, cultural competency training and diversity pipeline programs.</li> <li>Since the ALSDE has chosen not to use the Title II, Part A, state-level set-asides, it should provide more clarity on how it promotes equitable access to effective teachers, principals and leaders through the leveraging of other Federal, State, and local funds.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s plan describes efforts to meaningfully engage a variety of stakeholders although the equitable engagement of diverse communities is unclear and the plan for continued engagement is vague.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p><b>7. Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s plan prioritizes the use of high quality school discipline data, restorative justice practices and the use of positive behavioral supports and interventions for school improvement to reduce the overuse of exclusionary discipline practices.</li> <li>The ALSDE could strengthen these efforts by including a measure of school discipline in its accountability system and reporting discipline rates on its public report card.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p><b>8. Equitable Access to Early Childhood Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s plan describes efforts the SEA will take to work with LEAs to enhance early learning and improve coordination and alignment of early learning programs from birth through third grade across Titles I, II, III, IV, V, and VII.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p><b>9. Equitable Implementation of College and Career Standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s accountability system includes a college and career readiness (CCR) indicator that gives credit for achieving a benchmark score on the ACT, scoring a 3, 4, or 5 on an Advanced Placement exam/scoring a 4, 5, 6 or 7 on an International Baccalaureate exam, scoring silver level or above on ACT Work Keys, earning a transcript-ready college credit while still in high school, earning an Industry Credential, or being accepted for enlistment into any branch of the military.</li> <li>The state reduces summative scores by 2% for schools not meeting the 95% participation testing requirement for two years.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p><b>10. Out of School Time Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ALSDE’s plan adopts the allowable use of Title IV funds for out of school time learning.</li> <li>In addition, its plan prioritizes increased learning time as an allowable school improvement strategy under Title 1, Part A based on the needs assessment.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p><b>11. Equitable Access to High Quality Curricula</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state’s accountability system includes a college and career readiness measure which gives credit for scoring silver level or above on ACT Work Keys, as well as, earning an Industry Credential.</li> <li>The state has also made an effort to provide professional development opportunities that focus on CTE.</li> <li>Alabama should consider developing a stronger science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) focus and also identify social and emotional learning (SEL) as a substantial component of its teaching and learning approach.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor



State: Alabama

**12. Clear Reporting and Transparent Data Systems That Are Easy to Understand**

- The ASDE's report card shows all indicator data reported by subgroup as well as federal, state, and local expenditures by student as required by ESSA. It should also consider reporting on information beyond what is required for compliance such as school climate.
- Alabama's plan uses an index to annually differentiate schools and identify schools for support under ESSA (Note: Alabama gives A-F grades to all schools as part of a separate, non-ESSA, state accountability system.)

- Excellent  
 Sufficient  
 Poor

**Overall Rating**

**Sufficient**