



**National
Urban League**

State: Colorado

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.



State: Colorado

Plan Approved: May 7, 2018; Link to full text can be found [here](#)

| Equity Indicators | NUL Score |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Goals and Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For its School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicators, Colorado chose: science achievement for all schools; change in chronic absenteeism for elementary and middle schools; and dropout rate for high schools. Colorado’s goal is for all students to be proficient in mathematics and English by 2037. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>2. Subgroup Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado’s plan has two n-sizes: the first one is 16, for achievement and high school graduation; and the other is 20, for academic growth indicators. Subgroup performance is 33% of each indicator used to calculate an overall index score and school rating, known as “performance bands” (described as “does not meet,” “approaching,” “meets,” or “exceeds.”) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>3. Supports & Interventions for Struggling Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The definition of consistently underperforming identifies schools with a student subgroup that earns the lowest rating on at least three indicators based on aggregated performance over 3 years in Colorado’s plan. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>4. Resource Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado’s plan includes high school dropout rates as an SQSS indicator, but does not include a College and Career Readiness (CCR) indicator for high schools. Colorado's plan promises technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) to annually adjust resources where gaps are identified in the supports districts provide to identified schools, and implies that the state may adjust its allocation of resources among districts. Colorado could move to excellent by describing the decision criteria and data review processes applied at the state and district level more specifically, linking state decisions to set-aside funding, and making explicit how resource allocation decisions will be linked to district and school needs assessments and performance in the accountability system. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>5. Educator Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan describes professional learning around culture only in the context of English learners, with no strategy and timeline for expanding or targeting the development of cultural competence aligned with district or school needs. Colorado has focused on guidelines and standards for induction and mentoring programs as a key strategy to reduce turnover and improve effectiveness, but the plan could be more specific about how technical assistance will ultimately impact the distribution of inexperienced, out-of-field and ineffective teachers. In addition to promoting induction and mentoring, Colorado describes supports for districts to develop teacher cadet programs to attract and recruit new teachers. The plan could demonstrate excellence by targeting these strategies to high-needs districts and those with the greatest inequities. Colorado could move to excellent by broadening its use of state set-aside funds to explicitly improve teacher diversity as well as inequities in teacher distribution. Colorado provides definitions and also includes a timeline and targets. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |



State: Colorado

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado has a place-based Rural Low-Income School Program which aims to help rural districts use federal resources to improve instruction and student achievement. | |
| <p>6. Stakeholder Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado convened a series of workgroups that were called “hubs” and “spokes.” Their work was separate, yet collaborative and fed into each other as a feedback mechanism. The Urban League of Metropolitan Denver was involved in one of the hub committees during the development of the ESSA plan. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has committed to ongoing engagement with stakeholders in a variety of methods through implementation. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>7. Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding school discipline, Colorado provides grant opportunities for low performing schools to visit and network with high performing schools to learn how to implement effective strategies such as positive behavior supports within their own schools. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>8. Equitable Access to Early Childhood Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado's plan articulated how Title I funding, if allocated towards early childhood by the school district would be used to support, coordinate or integrate services. Colorado is one of the only states where Title II professional development funds may be used for early learning capacity building. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>9. Equitable Implementation of College and Career Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado does not use a college and career readiness indicator in its accountability system. The CDE does not credit schools for untested students if participation falls below 95%. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>10. Out of School Time Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado's plan describes how Title IV funds can be used extended learning time programs. To move to excellent, it should also detail the same for the use of Title I funds. The CDE is building out its ESSA website and resources to LEAs to emphasize the creativity allowable within Title I funding, including extended learning opportunities. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>11. Equitable Access to High Quality Curricula</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado’s plan prioritizes CTE by ensuring that it receives pertinent Title funding from the federal government as well as WIOA eligibility, where applicable. Colorado plans for a working group to explore the incorporation of social-emotional learning measures as a part of its long-term strategy for refining its additional indicator. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>12. Clear Reporting and Transparent Data Systems That Are Easy to Understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado provides all of the indicators and data it will report for accountability and transparency. Colorado does not use a summative rating and instead uses an index score to annually differentiate schools and identify schools for support, based on total percentage of points schools earn across the five ESSA indicators. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>Overall Rating</p> | <p>Excellent</p> |

State: Colorado



**National
Urban League**