



**National
Urban League**

State: Kentucky

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.



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Plan Approved: April 11, 2018; Link to full text can be found [here](#)

| Equity Indicators | NUL Score |
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| <p>1. Goals and Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kentucky’s long-term goals include 80.1% of high school students proficient in reading; 71.1% of high school students proficient in math by 2030; this reduces the number of students who aren’t proficient by half. The goal applies to all students and all student subgroups. Academic indicators weigh more heavily than the SQSS indicator. • The state’s chosen School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicators are: science, social studies, and writing achievement; “opportunity and access” (includes access to rich curriculum, equitable access of student subgroups to rigorous course work, and chronic absenteeism); “achievement gap closure”; and “transition readiness” for all schools. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>2. Subgroup Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kentucky is using an n-size of 10 students for both accountability and reporting purposes, which will help shine a light on subgroup performance. • The performance of subgroups counts in the rating of schools: schools cannot receive more than a 3-star rating (on a 5-star scale) if they are failing to close achievement gaps or have been identified for targeted support; schools identified for comprehensive support receive a 1-star rating; state rates each school on “achievement gap closure,” which compares student subgroup performance to the highest performing subgroup and 100% proficiency and constitutes 10–25% of the index score used to identify schools for support. | <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 in Kentucky’s plan identifies schools with a student subgroup performing at or below the lowest performing 10% of all students based on all indicators for two consecutive years. • This definition would be made stronger if it triggered intervention based on low subgroup performance across a subset of indicators as opposed to all indicators. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <p>4. Resource Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state is implementing an “opportunity and access” indicator (which includes access to rich curriculum, equitable access of student subgroups to rigorous course work, and chronic absenteeism); and achievement gap closure for all schools; and “transition readiness” for high schools. • Kentucky proposes to report on the following measures that do not contribute to school ratings: whole child support, access to state-funded preschool, percentage of students in full-day kindergarten, teacher turnover, percentage of first-year teachers, and suspension rates. • Kentucky could enhance these efforts by identifying ways to address resource inequities using the Title 1 7% set-aside for school improvement. | <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 Kentucky Department of Education’s (KDE) state plan includes efforts to implement professional development on cultural competence and efforts to increase teacher diversity. | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">The KDE proposes to report on teacher turnover rates and the percentage of first-year teachers as a strategy to reduce the incidence of low-income and students of color being taught by out-of-field, ineffective, or inexperienced teachers. | |
| <p>6. Stakeholder Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The KDE’s plan documents a robust process of stakeholder engagement, including numerous town hall meetings, diverse steering committees and work groups assigned to various aspects of plan development, and multiple opportunities for engagement around the state over months.However, the plan does not define an ongoing process of continuous improvement specific to the plan itself beyond cases where it cites unfinished work, primarily related to the process of rewriting all its academic standards and commissioning new state-developed assessments that the state has just begun.The plan could be strengthened by articulating how the state will use this information to inform its policies and practices moving forward. | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |
| <p>7. Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kentucky is proposing the addition of a school discipline measure for reporting purposes. Specifically, the percentage of students belonging to the following demographic groups assigned out-of-school suspension is equal to or less than the total percentage of the same demographic groups enrolled at the school: minority students with IEPs, students receiving free/reduced lunch, and EL students.The KDE supports schools with implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports.The KDE’s plan would be strengthened by including a school discipline measure in its accountability system and implementing strategies that address existing racial disparities in exclusionary discipline practice. | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |
| <p>8. Equitable Access to Early Childhood Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kentucky is proposing the addition of a preschool access indicator for reporting purposes for elementary schools that includes (1) a state-funded preschool ALL STAR rating, and (2) the percentage of kindergarten students served in a half day program and in a full day program.The KDE could strengthen its plan by articulating how Title I funding, if allocated towards early childhood by the school district, would be used to support, coordinate, and integrate services.Kentucky adopts ESSA flexibility to use Title II Professional Development Funds for Early Learning Capacity Building to Supporting Effective Instruction for Early Childhood Education. | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |
| <p>9. Equitable Implementation of College and Career Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The “opportunity and access” accountability indicator and “transition readiness” indicators measure college and career readiness including earning a passing score on Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) exams, success in Dual enrollment and CTE programs, and completed an approved apprenticeship or work experience.The state will not give any credit for untested students to ensure at least 95% of all students take annual, statewide assessments. | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |



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| <p>10. Out of School Time Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title IV Part B Funds are reserved for statewide professional development to support community learning centers in designing and implementing out-of-school time programs (before school, after school and summer) that will result in improved student achievement and be sustained through community partnerships.• Title I funds, in concert with 21st Century Community Learning Center program funds, can provide extended/expanded learning programs in schools to integrate enrichment and recreational opportunities with academic services. | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |
| <p>11. Equitable Access to High Quality Curricula</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The state’s new accountability system recognizes options for a student to pursue an industry certification, especially in the state’s high-demand industries; engage in an approved apprenticeship; or earn dual and/or articulated credit in approved career and technical education courses while still in high school.• The KDE identifies social and emotional learning (SEL) as a component of its teaching and learning approach. It will continue to provide resources for educators from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards body of knowledge, such as the “know your students” standard that provides content and grade-specific recommendations for addressing the academic and social-behavioral needs of each and every student.• The KDE’s AWARE initiative prioritizes the use of frameworks like PBIS, MTSS and Second Step to bring trauma-informed approaches trainings to the states professional development curriculum. | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |
| <p>12. Clear Reporting and Transparent Data Systems That Are Easy to Understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The KDE gives an example of their intended report card, detailing how data will be collected and how their reporting tool will be easily accessible and user-friendly to parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders.• The KDE proposes a 5-star system for rating schools as well as a dashboard of reported data such as teacher equity, school discipline and access to preschool. This model will immediately convey to parents, teachers and the public how well a school is performing. | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> |
| <p>Total Score</p> | <p>Excellent</p> |