



**National
Urban League**

State: Tennessee

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: Tennessee

Plan Approved: August 30, 2017; Link to full text can be found [here](#)

Equity Indicators	NUL Score
<p>1. Goals and Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennessee’s plan sets long-term goals of having 69.6% of high school students proficient in reading and 65.4% proficient in math by 2025. By 2025, Tennessee’s plan states it will reduce by 50% the number of students in each subgroup not proficient. The plan outlines the following School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicators: science achievement and chronic absenteeism for all schools; “ready graduate” (college- and career readiness measures multiplied by high school graduation rate) for high 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"> Tennessee’s plan outlines subgroup performance at 40% of each district’s and school’s rating (numeric scores in 2018 instead of A–F grades) However, Tennessee persists in having a minimum cell size (n-size) for accountability as 30 and 10 for public reporting. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p>3. Supports & Interventions for Struggling Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennessee’s plan defines schools that earn a score of 1, or lower overall, or that have a subgroup performing in the bottom 5% for that subgroup across 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"> Tennessee is committed to adding data from its transparency metrics (public reporting) to its accountability system and has a plan for review; e.g. access and success in Early Post-Secondary Opportunities (EPSOs) for all students not just graduates. Tennessee makes no mention of the 7% set aside for school improvement. The state’s plan identifies Early Post-Secondary Options as a part of their Ready to Graduate indicator. This measures completion of International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP) courses, career and technical education (CTE) certification, and dual enrollment. In order to meet ESSA’s per-pupil expenditure requirement, Tennessee’s plan outlines a plan to develop a single statewide procedure through a Fiscal Transparency Working Group. The state plans to conduct a pilot in the 2017-18 school year and meet reporting requirements in the 2018-19 school year. Tennessee’s plan states that based on the input from stakeholders in the Student Support Working Group, the state will opt not to utilize the flexibility within Title I for a three percent Direct Services set-aside. Tennessee’s plan also states that districts may receive less than 95% of the school improvement set-aside in order to serve all Title I districts. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p>5. Educator Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennessee describes coordinating Title I and Title IV funding to offer professional learning opportunities across the state, including, but not limited to, cultural competency. Tennessee provides research-based definitions for ineffective, out-of-field, and novice teachers. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennessee commits to using funding for professional development. 	
<p>6. Stakeholder Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tennessee plan is an exemplar for stakeholder engagement. The thoughtful inclusion of feedback, the commitment to future opportunities to engage and the incorporation of stakeholder input at the aggregate-level is admirable. 	<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"> Tennessee’s plan includes an accountability indicator, Chronically Out of School, that includes out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, but does not include in-school suspensions. The plan also outlines its intent to employ restorative practices in an effort to reduce exclusionary discipline alongside their multi-tiered system of support framework. 	<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"> Tennessee’s plan discusses expansion of early childhood and learning opportunities as a strategy for school improvement. The state’s plan does not discuss its intent to use Title II funds for the purpose building professional development capacity in the early childhood and learning space. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p>9. Equitable Implementation of College and Career Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inclusion of early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) in the SQSS measure ensures that there is some accountability for a college preparatory curriculum. Accountability focus should be expanded to K-12. The "Ready Graduate" indicator multiplies the graduation rate by the percentage of students: (1) receiving a 21+ composite score on ACT (or an equivalent SAT score); (2) completing four EPSOs (Early Postsecondary Opportunities); (3) completing two EPSOs and earning industry certification in an approved CTE program of study (EPSOs may be general education or included in a CTE pathway); or (4) completing two EPSOs and earning a state-determined designated score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (ASVAB). EPSOs also include AP, IB, and dual enrollment. Schools are penalized by receiving an “F” for said group(s) when the participation rate does not meet the 95% threshold. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
<p>10. Out of School Time Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan speaks to developing the whole student and the use of Title IV funds. There is no priority on Out of School Time Learning. 	<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"> Tennessee prioritizes CTE and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curricula. CTE is included in the EPSOs which is in turn part of the accountability system. It has been working to better introduce, train teachers on, and integrate STEM curriculum. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input 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"> Tennessee uses an A-F grading system that appears on its report card along with dashboards produced with data from the Tennessee Longitudinal Data System (TLDS). The state’s plan should update links to the dashboards and report cards to show how data is disaggregated by subgroup. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Poor



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Overall Rating

Sufficient