

# FACT SHEET FOR TEACHERS



## ESSA Accountability & New York Schools: Understanding New School Ratings

The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, the main federal law for K-12 public education, aims to ensure all children get a quality education. The law requires that states hold public schools accountable for how students achieve. ESSA does give states flexibility—their accountability systems can measure much more than just test scores.

ESSA promotes educational equity, which means that all students succeed and thrive in school no matter who they are, where they live, or where they go to school. Accountability systems help make this possible by sparking an honest conversation about what schools are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Accountability systems provide opportunities to learn from high-performing schools and direct funds and resources to districts and schools that need to improve.

### The New Accountability System

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has established a new set of indicators to measure school performance. Developed with the input of thousands of people—parents, educators, experts—from across the state, these indicators are broader than in the past. They have a much stronger focus on student growth and school progress. And, while assessments are an important part, school accountability is based on a much more comprehensive look at how a school is performing. The indicators are:

- **Student academic achievement:** For **all** schools, measures achievement on state assessments in English language arts (ELA), math and science. For **high schools**, this also includes social studies.
- **Student growth:** For **elementary and middle schools**, measures student growth on statewide assessments in ELA and math in grades 4-8 by comparing students' scores in the current year to the scores of students in the same grade, but from previous years.
- **Academic progress:** For **all** schools, measures overall student progress on state assessments in ELA and math against schools' long-term goals and measures of interim progress.
- **English language proficiency:** For **all** schools, measures the progress of English Language Learners in meeting their individual progress targets on state assessments.
- **Chronic absenteeism:** For **all** schools, measures the percentage of students who miss 10 percent or more of the days they were supposed to attend school.
- **Graduation rates:** For **high schools**, measures the rate of graduation for individual cohort of students who first entered grade 9—4, 5, and 6 years ago.
- **College, Career and Civic Readiness:** For **high schools**, measures the percentage of students who achieve various type of diplomas and credentials and the degree to which students enroll and succeed in advanced courses or career and technical education programs.
- For each of these indicators, every school earns a score of “1” to “4.” One is the lowest. Four is the highest. Schools get a score for all students and for student subgroups, such as members of racial and ethnic groups, low-income students, students with disabilities, and English language learners.

- Over time, new indicators will be added to the system, beginning with out-of-school suspensions, which will first be reported using 2017-18 school year data and included in the accountability system beginning with 2020-21 school year results.

### How Schools are Classified

The accountability system classifies schools as either In Good Standing, a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school, or a Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school. Both CSI and TSI schools are eligible for additional support.

A school can be identified as CSI because the school performs at level “1” on a combination of the new indicators or for high schools, if for all student groups the graduation rate is less than 67 percent. Beginning in 2018-19, New York will identify every three years at least 5 percent of all schools statewide as CSI.

A school can be identified as TSI if one or more student subgroups performs at a level “1” on a combination of the new indicators. If a school had been in Good Standing, then it takes two years of low performance before the school becomes TSI.

### How the Rankings are Put to Work

This classification system is all about achieving equity. By identifying schools that need the most attention, NYSED and the district can focus resources on these schools.

If your school has been identified as a **CSI school**, several steps will happen:

- Your school will conduct an assessment to determine what works well and what does not—school staff, parents and community members will have the opportunity to take part in this. Then, your school will develop a school improvement plan.
- Once approved by the district and the state, the improvement plan will be implemented, including at least one school-wide improvement strategy, such as changing how resources are allocated or strengthening how classrooms support students’ social and emotional health. Professional development for teachers and staff will take place. Your school will be eligible for funds to support the improvement strategy.
- Your school will ensure that parents and students have opportunities to help decide how some school funds are spent or engage in other activities that give voice to students and parents.
- If your school does not improve, additional actions will be required, and if low-performance persists a school may be placed into Receivership.

If your school has been identified as a **TSI school**, several steps will happen:

- Your school will conduct an assessment to determine what works well and what does not—school staff, parents and community members will have the opportunity to take part in this. Then, your school will develop a school improvement plan.
- Once approved by the district, the improvement plan will be implemented, including at least one school-wide improvement strategy. Your school will receive additional technical support from the district.
- Your school will survey parents, teachers and students every year.
- If your school does not improve after several years, your school could be classified as CSI.

Thank you for all you do to help your school, district and the state strive to ensure an excellent education for all students.