

FAQ ACCOUNTABILITY

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What is accountability in education?

- Accountability means reviewing how well teachers, principals, and superintendents help students grow academically.

How does accountability work in Wyoming?

- Wyoming is held accountable at both a state and federal level.
- State accountability is defined in the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA), of 2013. This law takes into account measures specifically related to educational goals in Wyoming.
- Federal accountability is transitioning from the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to a locally controlled Wyoming accountability system that meets federal guidelines defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

What is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?

- The ESSA is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the principal federal law affecting K-12 education. It replaces No Child Left Behind.

What happens to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

- AYP does not exist under ESSA, and it will no longer be calculated for Wyoming schools and districts.
- Under ESSA, states set their own long-term and interim goals for schools. Wyoming's draft plan contains goals for Achievement in math and reading, the on-time Graduation Rate, and English Language Proficiency.
- Wyoming is setting its own long-term goals for achievement in math and reading, English Language Proficiency, and high school graduation rate. Additional goals for specific student groups are still being refined.
- All Wyoming schools will have 15 years to meet the long-term goals.

How are schools rated?

- School performance levels are determined from a variety of indicators and are calculated to help determine which schools are doing well and which schools are in need of support.
- WAEA looks at student growth, readiness, achievement, equity, and participation. Based on these indicators, schools receive one of four overall performance ratings: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, or Not Meeting Expectations.
- Under ESSA, accountability determinations will be based on the framework created under the WAEA.

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How do the ratings affect schools?

- Under WAEA, schools that are rated as Meeting, Partially Meeting, or Not Meeting Expectations have to submit a school improvement plan which addresses areas that need improvement.
- Under ESSA, the bottom 5% of Title I schools that are not meeting their interim targets for All Students and the bottom 20% of Title I schools that are not meeting their interim targets for a specific student group will be identified for support. Schools will not be identified for support until 2018-19. The school ratings are just one indicator of school quality. The best way to understand how your school is doing is to get involved. Take the opportunity to visit with teachers, parents, and principals at your local school.

What if a school is identified for support and improvement?

- School improvement strategies are not prescribed under ESSA, and the law prohibits the federal government from prescribing interventions.
- Under ESSA, there are two types of identification: Comprehensive Support and Targeted Support. Schools will be identified, as appropriate, beginning in 2018-19 based on their performance data from the 2017-18 school year.

How will Wyoming get information about student performance?

- ESSA still requires annual testing and reporting in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12, as well as in science once in grade spans 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.
- Wyoming will still require a 95% participation rate on statewide assessments per the WAEA. ESSA does not include provisions for opting out of statewide assessments.

Does ESSA affect standards?

- ESSA restricts the federal government's ability to influence standards. Wyoming will continue to set content and performance standards using the standards review process mandated in state law.

Does ESSA affect funding?

- Yes. State agencies are given more flexibility in utilizing federal funds, with the requirement that a certain percentage of federal funding go to identified schools. The ESSA State Plan includes processes and priorities for the use of federal funds