

# WDE FAQ

## Accountability *updated 8/15/2021*

### 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 has a system that supports schools while meeting both state and federal requirements.

**State accountability** is defined in the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA). This law takes into account measures specifically related to educational goals in Wyoming.

**Federal accountability** is defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under ESSA, each state submits its own plan with achievement and graduation rate goals for schools, measures for how well schools are doing, and priorities for the use of federal funds.

### 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 replaced No Child Left Behind.

### What Are the Goals for Schools?

Under ESSA, states set their own long-term and interim goals for schools. Wyoming's plan contains goals for achievement in math and reading, the on-time graduation rate, and English language proficiency.

Wyoming's goals are based on having each school perform as well as schools in the top 35 percent:

- 88 percent Graduation Rate
- Grade 3-8 Math = 57 percent of students Proficient or Better
- Grade 3-8 Reading = 59 percent of students Proficient or Better
- High School Math = 47 percent of students Proficient or Better
- High School Reading = 53 percent of students Proficient or Better
- Growth for students learning English = 59 percent of students learning English making progress

All Wyoming schools will have 15 years to meet the long-term goals.

### How Are Schools Measured?

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 English language proficiency. Based on these indicators, schools receive one of four overall performance ratings: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, or Not Meeting Expectations.

For alternative schools, the measures are similar to traditional schools with Climate and Engagement as additional indicators.

Under ESSA, schools that are struggling the most are identified for support.

## **How Do The Ratings Affect Schools?**

Under WAEA, schools that are rated as Partially Meeting or Not Meeting Expectations have to submit a school improvement plan which addresses areas that need improvement.

Under ESSA, schools with a graduation rate below 67 percent and the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools are identified for state-led support. Additionally, schools with specific student groups in the bottom 10 percent are identified for support and intervention led by the local school and district. This information will be included in the Wyoming Measures Up ESSA report card.

## **How Will Wyoming Get Information About Student Performance?**

ESSA 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 students in grades 3-10 take the Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress, or WY-TOPP.

A 95 percent participation rate is required on statewide assessments per the WAEA and ESSA. ESSA does not include provisions for opting out of statewide assessments.

## **How Has The COVID-19 Pandemic Affected Accountability?**

Due to the COVID pandemic, WAEA School Performance Ratings and ESSA school identifications were not calculated for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Schools will continue to hold the identification and School Performance Rating they received for the 2018-19 school year.