

Talking Points on Family Engagement

PTA and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



Talking Points

- ESSA acknowledges the critical role parents and other stakeholders play in student success and school improvement efforts by requiring that they are involved and consulted in the development of new education plans and the implementation of the law. Parents and families are essential partners in education, and research shows the positive impact on student outcomes when families and schools work together.
- PTA is committed to ensuring that a parent representative is part of ESSA working groups or committees in every state to speak on behalf of the unique needs and concerns of families across the state. Our association also advocates that this person must exclusively represent parents and families and not other stakeholder groups or constituencies as well.
- PTA members are urging district and state leaders to provide multiple opportunities and avenues for families to give input and be engaged in the development of education plans, including in-person, online, after work hours and in locations other than just school buildings.
- PTA members also are encouraging state and district leaders to provide materials on ESSA in parent-friendly language to ensure that all families have the ability to have a say in their child's education.
- With new accountability systems taking effect with the implementation of ESSA, PTA members are advocating to states and districts to produce and distribute report cards in a format that all families can understand and access, which includes appropriate translations and accommodations for families.
- Under ESSA, written family engagement plans are required for Title I school districts and must be developed in collaboration with parents. Our association is committed to ensuring that PTAs are involved in the writing of these plans and that all parents have the opportunity to contribute. In addition, 1% of Title-IA funds are required to be used for family engagement activities. PTA members are dedicated to making sure that these funds are used in alignment with the written family engagement plans and evidence-based strategies.

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- With ESSA, parents are required to be consulted on improvement plans for schools that are identified as being in need of support. Districts must meaningfully collaborate with families to create an improvement plan that meets the needs of all students in the school as well as the community as a whole.
- In addition to advocating with state and district leaders to ensure families are consulted in the development of education plans, PTA members also are dedicated to educating families about ESSA and empowering them to be at the table and active participants in the implementation of the law.
- National PTA has developed a wide range of resources at PTA.org/ESSA to help families learn more about the law and ways they can get involved.
- PTAs across the country are committed to helping families engage and collaborate with their school and district leaders as well as providing families with information and gathering their feedback.

Questions

If you have questions about these talking points or ESSA in general, please contact Jacki Ball, director of government affairs, at jball@PTA.org or (703) 518-1243.