



Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states, districts, and schools are implementing strategies and policies to enhance educational equity and support for underserved students. Through improving schools, recruiting and retaining effective teachers, aligning standards, and more, leaders continue to engage and improve outcomes for all students.

Celebrating the approval of nearly all states' ESSA plans, this week's newsletter highlights promising state policies that advance equity and help ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.

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## State Spotlights

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Virginia's "Virginia is for All Learners" initiative is driving the state's focus on equity.

Through this initiative, the state has reformed its accountability and school intervention systems to ensure that schools meet the needs of every student. The state recently hosted its first "Virginia is for All Learners Education Equity Summer Institute," and it plans to release a statewide equity dashboard as well as quarterly webinars to share equity-focused resources in the coming months.

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New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

Improving educational equity is the **New York** State Board of Regents' top priority and a driving component in New York's ESSA plan. The plan requires schools and districts to reduce gaps in performance among certain populations of students through targeted supports and improvements.

The state will also publish annual reports on per-pupil spending and equitable access to effective teachers, identify inequities in resources available to schools, and use Title I School Improvement Funds to increase socioeconomic and racial diversity in schools.

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In 2016, the **Connecticut** State Board of Education adopted a Five-Year Comprehensive Plan with three broad goals: high expectations for each and every student, great schools, and great teachers and leaders.

To advance the “great teachers and leaders” goal, the state develops and deploys strategies to ensure the most effective educators are in every school and classroom, including making progress on increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the state’s educator workforce.

The team has developed a strategy profile designed to increase the number of educators of color in Connecticut’s public schools from 8.3% to 10% - that’s 1,000 new certified educators of color, by 2021.

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The **Nebraska** Department of Education will lead for equity in education by playing multiple roles for districts, schools, and students: Champion, Regulator, Capacity Builder, Connector, and Change Agent.

Nebraska's Champions for Equity in Education program was created to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living. The state wants to ensure that all students, regardless of background or circumstances, have equitable access to opportunities for success.

With this commitment, the agency aims to better equip districts and partners to advance educational equity, and to increase the number of Nebraskans who are ready for success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life.

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## Must Read

NCSL's "Our American States" podcast explores how minority and low-income children have fewer opportunities to prepare and develop as young learners, due to reduced access to high-quality child care, pre-K, and afterschool and extracurricular activities.

The episode also discusses the economic arguments for closing these opportunity gaps for young children before they become achievement gaps.

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## Tools & Resources

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This special report from Education Commission of the States, *Equity in Education: Key questions to consider*, encourages leaders to be more intentional in developing and assessing policies by exploring equity-minded questions across four key state policy levers: teaching and leading, learning and transitioning, measuring and improving, and financing.

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**We want to hear from you!**

Send your state's stories or organization's resources to [communications@ccsso.org](mailto:communications@ccsso.org)

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The States Leading campaign celebrates the progress states are making toward providing equitable education for all students through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and innovative policies in other key areas of education, such as early childhood education, teacher preparation, and career readiness, among others.

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