



The Louisiana Association of School Superintendents Position Regarding Interests and Opportunities *Measuring School Quality Should be a Top Priority*



The Louisiana Department of Education submitted their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan to the U.S. Department of Education on April 15, 2017. Prior to submission, a series of public meetings were held to solicit input from various stakeholder groups from across the state. These meetings date back to June 2016. The draft ESSA Framework, that outlined five educational challenges, was used “as a guide for deeper conversations” during these meetings. (A detailed timeline of these meetings can be found in the ESSA Plan, pages 19 – 28.)

A new accountability system, that includes a 2025 transition plan, was created to reflect how schools would be measured under the more rigorous ESSA framework. The indicators for each measure include Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Graduation Rate, Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency, and School Quality or Student Success indicators. The LDOE created a delayed implementation timeline to develop the criteria for Interests and Opportunities, the measure for School Quality, that represents 5% of a school performance score (SPS). Their decision to delay the full implementation of the accountability system resulted in schools realizing only 95% of their SPS for a three-year period. See the statement below.

“The Interests and Opportunities Index will be developed over a period of three years. The Department will work with key stakeholders to outline a pilot index by summer 2017 for a learning year in 2018-2019. In building the index, the Department will explore opportunities to retain the flexibility originally contemplated as part of this measure while also ensuring fairness. Similarly, the Department remains committed to ensuring success on the measure is achievable by all.”

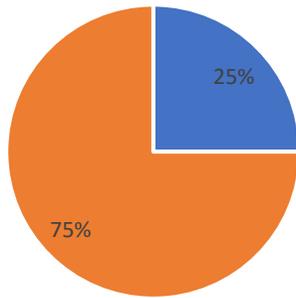
As stated in the plan, “The interest and opportunities indicator (five percent of each school’s score) will measure whether schools are providing students with access to a well-rounded education, exposing them to diverse areas of learning in which they can develop their skills and talents, including visual and performing arts, foreign language, technology, co-curricular activities, advanced coursework, health/PE, career pathways, etc. Per BESE’s motion, this will be measured through a “menu” approach that will allow districts to demonstrate a strong effort in a variety of ways. This indicator will also measure the extent to which schools are providing students the opportunity to take courses needed to successfully transition to postsecondary studies, including courses for college credit and those that lead to a recognized industry credential.”

Now, after three years of planning for this non-assessed measure, the LDOE seeks to delay the inclusion of Interests and Opportunities in the SPS for a fourth year. Yet, during that same time, they completed the Alternative Program initiative, revamped teacher certification for mentor teachers and content leaders, implemented SuperApp, the School Finder online platform, and a host of other initiatives within the ESSA Plan.

We see this continued delay as missed opportunities for our schools to be rewarded for their efforts to provide students with quality non-assessed programs. With that said, we are requesting that BESE honor the work of our educators and approve the original delayed timeline of implementation for Interests and Opportunities rather than extending it another year.

Only 95% of the Accountability System is being implemented under the new ESSA guidelines. Stakeholders in our communities, parents, and educators are not given a complete picture of how Louisiana's schools are performing.

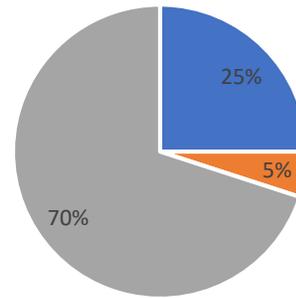
SPS without Interests and Opportunities for Elementary Grades



■ Growth ■ Test Results

Honoring the hard work of our educators and students should be a top priority in our state. Schools should be allowed to realize the full implementation (100%) of the Accountability System under the new ESSA guidelines.

SPS with Interests and Opportunities for Elementary Grades



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