

## ESSA Advance Newsletter Draft – 10/29/19, Edition CLXXVIII

*SUBJECT LINE OPTIONS: The importance of ESSA’s innovation provision, some states still have work to do while others are looking beyond letter grades, CSS to host ESSA anniversary discussion, and more*

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### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

1. How innovation in educational assessment works and why it matters;
2. Some states lead while others still lag behind;
3. ESSA four-year anniversary event.

### EVENTS

#### **12/10: In-Depth Discussion Looking Back on Four Years of ESSA**

On Tuesday, December 10, the Collaborative for Student Success is hosting an [afternoon discussion](#) of ESSA four years to the day after the law was signed. Taking place at the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington, D.C., this special event will include a conversation with ESSA’s Congressional authors as well as discussions on equity and school improvement plans, accountability and testing, school finance data, the Military Student Identifier, and more. Lunch will be provided and a reception will follow. The event is free, but registration is required. [Register today](#) and stay tuned for more information.

### IN THE NEWS

#### **10/14: Taking a Closer Look at the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority Provision of ESSA**

In a two-part series for the Center for Assessment, Charlie DePascale takes a close look at the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) provision of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which “ostensibly offers states the flexibility needed to ‘establish, operate, and evaluate an innovative assessment system’ with the goal of using that educational assessment to meet the ESSA academic assessment and statewide accountability system requirements.” In [part one](#), DePascale examines the role of innovation in large-scale educational assessment, the role advancements in technology play, and the push-and-pull relationship between efficiency and validity. In [part two](#), DePascale follows up his original post by taking a closer look at the realities of developing and implementing a process or product that changes large-scale assessment in a significant and meaningful way; in other words, an innovation.”

### STATE ACTIVITY

#### **AL: 10/25 – Alabama Chief Emphasizes Importance of Alabama Schools’ Culture, Climate**

Even as educators across the state continue to celebrate Alabama’s high marks in the recent release of school report cards, State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey is urging superintendents and education officials to [look beyond the letter grades](#) and see “what kind of improvement schools have shown over the past three years.” Specifically, Mackey sites “a measure of a school’s culture and climate, which means how students and teachers feel when they are at school” as lacking from current letter-grade evaluations. This focus has been critical to Pike County Superintendent Mark Bazzell as well, who has helped transform his rural school district “from one with multiple failing schools to one that is regularly visited by educators to see how change was made.” Bazzell credits the academic turnaround to “transforming the district’s culture.” Looking to next year, Mackey said he will form a new committee to consider possible changes to the report card to include additional measures of a school’s culture and climate—including, among other things, college and career-ready indicators, apprenticeship programs,

and more. However, “because those indicators are part of federal accountability under the Every Student Succeeds Act, any changes would have to be approved by the U.S. Department of Education.”

**ID: 10/24 – Idaho’s K-12 Education Task Force Debates New School Accountability Standards**

As [Clark Corbin reports](#) in the Idaho County Free Press, Governor Brad Little’s K-12 education task force debated a recent proposal “to launch a new school accountability system that is based around growth in K-3 reading scores.” Instead of evaluating proficiency levels, the new system would “focus on growth to proficiency” by using the “Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) test as the tool for measuring K-3 reading levels.” Idaho’s current school accountability system is still relatively new, having been approved by the Department of Education in 2018 “as part of Idaho’s consolidated state plan to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act.”

**ID: 10/27 – Latino Student Performance in Idaho Lags Behind White Peers**

Despite being recognized as “critical to Idaho’s economic future,” the success of Latino students in the state continues to lag behind their peers, according to [this piece](#) in Idaho EdNews. “The number of Latino student in Idaho schools has nearly doubled in the past two decades,” however, lower average test scores, fewer postsecondary degrees, and a “significant achievement gap between white and Latino youth” continue to indicate that efforts to improve Latino student performance are failing to gain traction. While the Idaho State Department of Education has set a long-term goal to improve Latino outcomes and shrink the achievement gap, in compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act, it “left the strategy for reaching that goal to districts and schools.”

**NY: 10/22 – Foster Youth Data Still Being Unreported in NYC, Several Districts Statewide Despite ESSA**

[Once again](#), “school achievement data for foster youth, considered one of the most vulnerable and least tracked student groups, will not be reported for the nation’s largest school district...despite it being mandated” by ESSA. The New York City Department of Education says, “it will identify which students are foster youth in the pupil data it sends to the New York State Education Department starting with the 2019-20 school year.” However, this information should have reported beginning with the 2017-18 school year under mandates included in ESSA. In fact, “more than half of New York state’s 721 districts did not identify a single foster youth student in 2017-18.” Without this data, the performance and challenges facing such a high-risk group often goes unnoticed, making it significantly harder for education officials to address inequities or to know where to invest time and resources to focus on student improvement.

**OR: 10/22 – Oregon Department Education Adds 70 Schools to “Must Improve” List, for a Total of 270**

According to the “must-improve” list [released by the Oregon Department of Education](#), “70 [Oregon] schools have joined the 200 that were already on the list.” While the state is “moving away from federal oversight of education as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act,” according to Intermountain Education Service District Superintendent Mark Mulvihill, “the list can be helpful.” Mulvihill indicated that his team is looking into the data to gain a better understanding of the solutions that will be necessary to improve student performance, including specific demographics that may need improvement, teacher training, aligning teaching to tests, and more.

Click [here](#) to view each state’s submitted plan.