

Use this worksheet to start thinking about how you can get involved in decisions that affect you and your peers under the ESSA.

# STUDENTS: TAKE ACTION ON ESSA!

## What you need to know about The *Every Student Succeeds Act*

- The *Every Student Succeeds Act*, or ESSA, is the United States' national law for public education from pre-K through grade 12.
- ESSA impacts school improvement, which is the process of learning about a school community and working toward equity for all students.
- District and school administrators lead the school improvement process, but you can take a leadership role and affect their decisions!

## What is Equity?

Equity means ensuring that students have access to the things they need in order to succeed.



## Students are leading inspiring actions to promote equity in schools. You can too!

- Revise your school's or district's disciplinary rules to focus on restorative practices, empathy, and relationship-building, rather than suspension or other harsh punishment.
- Organize your district or your entire state to have student feedback inform teacher evaluation and school curriculum.
- Work with your adult allies to edit your school's needs assessment. A needs assessment is your school's way of finding out what their community needs — like a questionnaire or survey. Make sure that it includes student voices!

# GET INVOLVED! TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL

## 1. Research

- **Talk to peers, family and school leaders** about the issue to get their perspective. Do online research to see what others have done across the country. Conduct a formal survey.
- **Visit your school's principal** and/or office administrators, teachers, counselors, or aides. Find out what the timeline is for local planning – who is making decisions about the school vision, programs, and budget and when?

## 2. Take Initiative

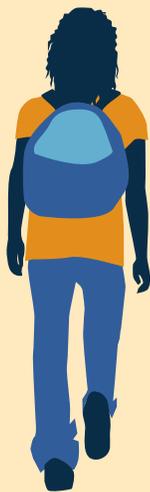
- **Use your research to request meetings** with community members in and outside of schools – like principals, legislators, and officials in the school district.
- **Present your findings** at a town hall or school committee meeting, or through a school newspaper or bulletin.

## 4. Refine

- **Keep fine-tuning your action plan** until there is a win! Never hesitate to dive into the continuous cycle of researching, taking initiative, growing your impact and refining your efforts.

## 3. Grow Your Impact

- **Ask for a seat and voting power** on leadership committees or teams that have decision-making power on these issues (e.g. school improvement plan team, local school board, or student government).
- **Educate and involve your peers** through fliers, social media, petitions, position statements and events. Work with adult allies who are willing to support your work.
- **Host an event, meeting, or class** to share your experiences as a student and what change you envision, or educate policy makers in person (e.g. your superintendent or school board) about the issues.



**Make sure to read your state's ESSA plan to know what may work best for your school!**  
Find your state's plan at [www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/statesubmission.html](http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/statesubmission.html)



# YOUR ACTION PLAN!

## ESSA TIMELINE:

### Dec. 2015

ESSA was signed into law

### Since Then

States wrote “ESSA Plans” explaining state decisions

### Spring 2018

States will identify which schools need additional support to improve

### Summer 2018

Schools and districts start to plan for “school improvement” - a process you can be involved in!

### Going Forward

School improvement is a continuous process. Stay involved!

- What matters most to you about your school, and what is one thing about your school that you want to change?
  
- Who is affected by this issue and why is it a problem?
  
- Who are adult allies that can help you think through this change you want to see and/or point you in the right direction? What will you ask them?
  
- What are three concrete next steps you will take to get involved and how will you do them?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  
- How will your efforts benefit future students? What legacy do you want to leave behind?

