# Every Student Succeeds Act – Summary

### Introduction

The ESSA plan advances the Commonwealth’s vision of increasing equity and excellence for all students in Massachusetts, particularly disadvantaged and high need students. Massachusetts’ strategies align closely to ESSA's priority areas: academic standards that help students become ready for post-secondary education and employment; world-class academic assessments that enable educators to identify and provide support for schools and districts; ensuring effective educators; and supporting all aspects of our students’ lives.

**What’s New and Different**

Our ESSA plan is designed to strengthen the **quality and breadth of the instructional program** our students experience, especially for English language learners, students receiving special education services, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This focus includes special attention to:

* Enhancing literacy skills in the elementary grades
* Enhancing mathematics skills in the middle grades
* Providing multiple high quality pathways to educational and career opportunities after secondary school

Our ESSA plan explicitly ties our recently revised world-class academic standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science to the **Next-Generation MCAS**, our new assessment system that will provide educators, students, families, and the public with the information they need to measure progress in these areas and make sound decisions about both policy and practice.

Our ESSA plan emphasizes the importance of **social and emotional learning, health, and safety**. The state will provide training, technical assistance, resources, and guidance to schools and districts as they ensure positive and healthy school environments.

Our ESSA plan highlights the value and importance of **student access to an ambitious, engaging, well-rounded curriculum.** We recently updated the state’s frameworks in science and technology/engineering and in digital literacy and computer science; completed a review and revision of the English language arts and literacy and mathematics curriculum frameworks; and are in the middle of a review and revision of the state’s **history and social sciences curriculum frameworks**. As a result of the feedback we received during our public consultation process for our ESSA plan, we are proposing to begin a review and potential revision of the state’s curriculum framework for the **arts**, which was last updated in 1999.

Our ESSA plan makes **changes to the school and district accountability system**. Student achievement, growth, and high school completion data, with an emphasis on closing gaps for historically low-performing subgroups, remain the foundations of our accountability system as specified in the law. However, in an effort to expand the measures included in the system to create a more comprehensive picture of student opportunity and outcomes, we will make the following notable additions:

* Include chronic absenteeism (definition: absent for 10% of days in membership) as an indicator of student engagement
* Include successful completion of ninth grade courses
* Include successful completion of a broad and challenging curriculum, including advanced coursework

As a supplement to the accountability system, ESE will develop **parent-friendly school and district report cards** with a wider range of information than our current report cards include, such as:

* Breadth of curriculum (e.g., access to courses beyond English language arts, mathematics, science, history and civics, such as the arts, physical education, computer science, and community service)
* School-level financial allocations and expenditures
* School climate information
* Enrollment in career and technical education and other pathways (e.g., early college)
* Percent of high school graduates achieving the competency determination without Educational Proficiency Plans
* Preparedness for post-secondary success, including access to advanced coursework
* Percent of third graders achieving proficiency in reading
* Percent of sixth graders achieving proficiency in mathematics
* Data related to pre-kindergarten experience/readiness for kindergarten