



These next few months are the final stretch of effort to help shape the state ESSA plans before they are finalized—and the beginning of the work to support implementation.

Below is a **check-list of high-leverage activities** you can take over the next few months to impact the final drafts of state plans and to engage your stakeholders in the transition to implementing the state plans. Many of these suggestions emerged from the work plans partner organizations developed at the 100Kin10 ESSA Solution Lab co-investor meeting in April.

Remember to refer to the Every Student Succeeds with STEM [campaign hub](#) and [toolkit](#) for messaging and advocacy tools you can use when engaging in these activities.

Impact the final development of State plans through the **final public comment opportunities**.

What does this mean?

- For most states, ESSA state plans are still not final but are in draft stage and out in public for final review, which provides opportunities to influence the development of the final plan before they are submitted to meet the September 18 deadline.
- *Many states are still accepting public comment and feedback, and most will present the plan to the state board of education this summer in public session to seek approval to submit it to the U.S. Department of Education.* Department of education ESSA plan webpages in each state are usually the best source of information on the dates of public meetings for the summer. These meetings are opportunities to present your recommendations for making STEM a priority in ESSA.
- The states that submitted plans early to meet the April 3 deadline can still be modified as well (see more below).

How can I do this?

- Visit [Understanding ESSA](#) to see the status of and to review state plan drafts.
- Visit your state Department of Education website to review public comment opportunities.

Respond as states receive feedback from the U.S. Department of Education.

What does this mean?

- US ED is providing each state with guidance as well as feedback from the Peer Reviewers and are asking states to respond and, in some cases, revise their plans.
- This provides you an opportunity to speak out if you have concerns about US ED's review, such as their recent statement against the use of science and advanced coursework as accountability measures.

How can I do this?

- You can monitor this feedback and weigh in on your own with the state. (See the response letters US ED sends to each state [here](#).)
- Feedback can be given online on your website, through op-eds, or via Twitter.

- **Identify and share the best examples** from the early state plans.

What does this mean?

- There have been significant examples of STEM in ESSA in both the early state plans and the states with published draft plans. Reviewing your state plan and sharing best examples or models other states could incorporate will help other partners as states finalize plans, and help all partners as the focus moves to new ideas that will be implemented.

How can I do this?

- Best practices can be shared online on your website or via Twitter.

- **Organize around funding opportunities** in ESSA.

What does this mean?

- While Congress has appropriated some funding that can be used for ESSA implementation this year, how that funding will be distributed (in the case of Title IV) and what funding will be available in the future (in all cases) is still a moving target.
- Understanding how funding will flow and what uses are eligible will be among the priority topics many states will focus on this summer. And for organizations that can engage in advocacy, the ongoing uncertainty over federal funding provides an opportunity to weigh in as Congress debates the budget.

How can I do this?

- You can be a valuable source of information to stakeholders on allowable uses of federal funding for STEM in ESSA. Organizations who can engage in advocacy can also call on Congress to fully fund Title II and Title IV.
- For example: groups across the country—including the Museum of Science, Boston—are organizing around the hashtag #MoreTitleIV when Tweeting directly at their Congress members.

- **Begin to shift focus to implementation**, starting with informing and organizing your stakeholders, as well as state and district leaders.

We will be working together to go deeper on ways to support implementation later in the summer, but some of this work can begin now. And we've provided some new information on stakeholder engagement below to help.

What does this mean?

- Your key stakeholders and members will most likely not yet be fully aware of what is in the state plan—even though implementation begins in earnest this school year. You are in a unique position to convene your stakeholders to explain important elements of STEM in ESSA and inform them about what's in their new state plans, and this effort can begin long-term engagement with stakeholders around implementation of ESSA and future improvements to make STEM an even greater priority.
- Also, state and district implementation officials will begin their own work to reach out to educators and others this summer, and you will be in a position to partner with them to support their outreach efforts.

How can I do this?

The summer months can provide your organization or group with a chance to touch base with your stakeholders. Community management is an important element of building your momentum heading into ESSA implementation. It can provide you with an opportunity to:

- Update stakeholders about where we are on in the ESSA state plan process
- Inform stakeholders about ESSA implementation and STEM. Most will not have been watching as closely as you have been and will be looking for information.
- Foster collaboration and coordination among groups that will be implementing the priorities laid out in the state plans
- Hear from various groups about their concerns with ESSA state plan language
- Set the groundwork to work with districts as they receive updated guidance from state departments of education

There is no right way to engage stakeholders. It could come in the form of in-person meetings, virtual meetings, conference calls, or a convening. Today's technology gives us many options for reaching people. Possible vehicles could include: webinars, focus groups, in-person forums, Twitter Town Halls, video conferences, etc.

If you're engaging...*

Your own members	Your own members are your base. Start here as they will be the most bought in on the information you're looking to share.
Educators	The teacher organizations have the advantage here as they already have strong relationships with educators. Non-teacher organizations in this group should work with teacher organizations in this partnership to hear from educators.
District and school leaders (including principals, superintendents, and curriculum leads	The issues at play will impact schools so it will be critical to engage with principals as a key stakeholder group. They can bring a unique school-based perspective on programs and policies that address the most compelling challenges in schools. You can also offer to partner with the as they conduct their own outreach and information sessions to educators this summer.
State education leaders (including Chiefs and Governors)	As noted previously, state education leaders play an important role in developing and implementing state ESSA plans. Calls, in-person visits, and emails are all great ways to make a connection.
Legislators and staff	Reach out to the legislative leaders and education committee chairs to talk with lawmakers who have a special interest in ESSA-related issues. Use that outreach to get the conversation started with the leadership and interested lawmakers.
Parents	Work with state and local parent groups identify parents to involve in the process. Parents will be more likely to engage in this process if they see the importance of getting involved and feel like their voices will be heard and valued. Frame the issues around how the changes could impact their children and community.

* Note: information in the table is taken in part from the CCSSO [Stakeholder Engagement Guide](#)

What to talk to stakeholders about?

Weekly or monthly calls will help stakeholders feel more informed and better prepared for the next phase of ESSA implementation. Discussion areas could focus on the following topics:

- ESSA state plan content, particularly priorities around STEM
- Priorities around STEM in districts and schools
- Confusion regarding the policy
- ESSA implementation outreach
- Public comment period
- Additional needed resources