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Quality Counts Report Examines State Scramble to Put Federal ESSA Law Into Effect

For the Third Straight Year, Nation Earns C, Massachusetts Ranks First in 'State of the States' Report Card

Grades and Highlights Reports Issued for Nation, All 50 States, and D.C.

WASHINGTON—Jan. 4, 2017 —*Education Week* today releases **Quality Counts 2017: Under Construction—Building on ESSA's K-12 Foundation**, the latest installment of its long-running annual report on the state of education in the United States. The 2017 edition of **Quality Counts** takes a comprehensive look at the steps states are taking to turn the federal Every Student Succeeds Act's blueprint into a finished structure. The challenge of doing it by the start of the 2017-18 school year will likely be compounded by leadership changes at both the White House and the U.S. Department of Education.

Many features of ESSA will be familiar from the No Child Left Behind Act, the previous version of the half-century old Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That includes mandatory state testing at certain grade levels, tagging and intervening in low-performing schools, and federal sign-off on state accountability plans.

But the new law, passed with bipartisan support in Congress just over a year ago, also offers the prospect of new flexibility and a lighter federal rein on how states shape the specifics in such contentious areas as teacher evaluation, how to fix low-performing schools, and assessment. In addition to traditional school quality accountability measures, the law requires all states to incorporate at least one "other indicator" into their systems, opening the door to a variety of options.

"ESSA's implementation remains very much a work in progress at both the federal and state levels," said Mark W. Bomster, an assistant managing editor at *Education Week* and the report's executive project editor. "**Quality Counts 2017** examines a wide range of efforts now underway, as well as the capacity challenges state policymakers face and the views of education leaders at various levels about the new law, its challenges and opportunities."

In addition to original reporting on the implementation of the new law in this postelection environment, **Quality Counts 2017: Under Construction—Building on ESSA's K-12 Foundation** includes original Education Week Research Center survey data on teacher and administrator perceptions of the new law. District leaders weighed in on their priorities for implementing the new law, while teachers shared their views about which "non-academic" factor should be included in state accountability systems and how those factors should be assessed.

THE STATE OF THE STATES

In addition to the special focus on the Every Student Succeeds Act, **Quality Counts 2017** features the report's hallmark report card on the state of education for the nation and states. This year, the Education Week Research Center issues overall summative grades, as well as scores in each of the three categories that comprise the report's grading rubric: Chance-for-Success, School Finance, and K-12 Achievement.

The nation receives an overall grade of C on its 2017 report card, with a score of 74.2 out of a possible

100 points, nearly identical to the 74.4 the nation posted a year ago. Massachusetts earns top marks this year with a score of 86.5 and a B. Consistently a strong performer, this is the third year in a row that the state has taken first place. Five other states also earn grades of B: New Jersey (85.6), Vermont (83.8), New Hampshire (83.4), Maryland (82.8), and Connecticut (82.7). At the other end of the spectrum, Nevada is at the bottom of the list as it was in 2016, receiving a D and a score of 65.0. Mississippi (65.8) and New Mexico (66.3) also receive grades of D. Grades and scores for those three states remain relatively unchanged from last year's outcomes.

Quality Counts' signature Chance-for-Success Index—which captures the role of education in a person's life from cradle to career—shows the nation earning a C-plus in 2017, holding steady in its efforts to promote positive learning experiences for youths and opportunities for adults to make good on a good education. For a decade now, Massachusetts has stood at the top in this category and continues to lead the nation with a grade of A-minus (91.0). New Hampshire is the only other state to earn an A-minus (90.3) and is followed by three states at B-plus—New Jersey (87.8), Connecticut (87.4), and Vermont (86.8). At the low end of the rankings, New Mexico is the sole state to receive a D (66.4).

Education Week Research Center's annual analysis of school finance examines educational expenditure patterns and the distribution of those funds within states. Data are from 2014, the most recent year available. The U.S. earns a C for school finance, with the national grade showing little movement over the past seven years. With a score of 89.5 and an A-minus, Wyoming earns top marks in school finance this year, regaining its spot at the top of the rankings after slipping to second place in the 2016 report. This is followed by four states with grades of B-plus: New York (88.7), New Jersey (88.1), Connecticut (87.4), and Maryland (86.6). Idaho is the only state to get an F (58.9).

The Education Week Research Center's K-12 Achievement Index, last updated in 2016, assesses the performance of a state's public schools against 18 indicators capturing: current achievement levels, improvements over time, and poverty-based gaps. The nation earned a C-minus for K-12 Achievement—a grade that has remained steady over time. Massachusetts (85.2) ranked first, posting the only B. It has been the leader in the rankings for nearly a decade. New Jersey (81.0), the only other state with a grade higher than a C-plus, earned a B-minus. Mississippi (60.0) and New Mexico (61.8) received the nation's lowest grades at D-minus.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT EDWEEK.ORG

- The full **Quality Counts 2017** report, including in-depth reporting on ESSA's impact on states and districts: <http://www.edweek.org/go/qc17>.
- State and National Highlights Reports assess each state's performance on key indicators, including information not available in the print edition of **Quality Counts 2017**: <http://www.edweek.org/go/qc17shr>.
- Interactive map and report card for delving into **Quality Counts'** signature grading rubric: <http://www.edweek.org/go/qc17map>.
- ESSA Video Explainer, in which **Education Week** unpacks the details of the new law and what it means for schools, educators, and students: <http://www.edweek.org/go/essa-video>

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Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) is the independent, nonprofit publisher of Education Week and other print and online products serving educators, researchers, policymakers, and the public with high-quality reporting and analysis on pre-K-12 education. EPE's mission is to raise awareness and understanding of critical issues facing American schools. Since its founding in 1981, Education Week has been recognized as America's pre-eminent source of news and information in pre collegiate education.

2017 SCORE SUMMARY

OVERALL STATE GRADE		QUALITY COUNTS 2017		QUALITY COUNTS 2017		QUALITY COUNTS 2016		
		Chance For Success		School Finance		K-12 Achievement		
GRADE	TOTAL SCORE	GRADE	TOTAL SCORE	GRADE	TOTAL SCORE	GRADE	TOTAL SCORE	
B	86.5	A-	91.0	B	83.2	B	85.2	MASSACHUSETTS
B	85.6	B+	87.8	B+	88.1	B-	81.0	NEW JERSEY
B	83.8	B+	86.8	B	85.9	C+	78.8	VERMONT
B	83.4	A-	90.3	B-	80.5	C+	79.4	NEW HAMPSHIRE
B	82.8	B	84.9	B+	86.6	C+	76.8	MARYLAND
B	82.7	B+	87.4	B+	87.4	C	73.3	CONNECTICUT
B-	80.3	B-	80.3	A-	89.5	C-	71.2	WYOMING
B-	80.2	B-	81.4	B	84.5	C	74.6	PENNSYLVANIA
B-	79.8	B-	80.3	B+	88.7	C-	70.6	NEW YORK
C+	79.4	B-	80.7	B	86.3	C-	71.0	RHODE ISLAND
C+	79.3	B	86.0	C	75.9	C	75.9	MINNESOTA
C+	78.9	B	83.0	C+	79.1	C	74.6	WISCONSIN
C+	78.7	B-	80.1	B	83.5	C-	72.4	MAINE
C+	78.3	B	84.5	C	74.8	C	75.8	VIRGINIA
C+	77.0	B-	80.2	C+	79.5	C-	71.2	ILLINOIS
C+	76.8	B	85.4	C+	76.9	D+	68.1	NORTH DAKOTA
C	76.4	B	84.3	C	74.6	C-	70.3	IOWA
C	76.2	C+	79.0	B-	81.7	D+	67.9	DELAWARE
C	76.0	B	82.7	C	73.6	C-	71.6	NEBRASKA
C	75.0	B-	79.8	C-	71.9	C	73.2	WASHINGTON
C	74.7	C+	78.0	C-	70.8	C	75.3	INDIANA
C	74.2	C+	78.1	C	73.8	C-	70.7	OHIO
C	74.1	C+	79.1	C	72.7	C-	70.5	MONTANA
C	73.9	C	73.3	B	82.8	D	65.6	ALASKA
C	73.8	C+	78.6	NA ¹	NA ¹	D+	69.0	HAWAII
C	73.8	B	82.6	D+	67.1	C-	71.8	COLORADO
C	72.8	B-	80.4	C-	72.0	D	66.0	KANSAS
C	72.6	C	75.1	C-	70.3	C-	72.3	KENTUCKY
C	72.5	C	75.1	D+	68.5	C	73.9	FLORIDA
C-	72.4	B-	81.7	NA ¹	NA ¹	D	63.1	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
C-	72.1	C+	78.4	C-	70.4	D+	67.6	MISSOURI
C-	72.0	B-	81.3	D-	61.4	C	73.2	UTAH
C-	71.6	C	75.1	D+	68.5	C-	71.2	GEORGIA
C-	71.4	C	75.4	C	73.1	D	65.6	MICHIGAN
C-	71.3	C-	70.0	B-	81.1	D	62.8	WEST VIRGINIA
C-	70.9	C	73.7	D+	66.9	C-	72.0	TENNESSEE
C-	70.6	C	74.6	C	72.7	D	64.4	SOUTH CAROLINA
C-	70.5	C+	79.4	D+	67.1	D	65.2	SOUTH DAKOTA
C-	70.5	C+	76.9	D	65.4	D+	69.0	NORTH CAROLINA
C-	70.4	C	75.3	C-	69.5	D	66.4	OREGON
C-	70.2	C	73.9	D	65.9	C-	70.9	TEXAS
C-	69.9	C	73.4	D+	67.2	D+	69.3	CALIFORNIA
C-	69.8	C-	71.6	C-	71.7	D	66.0	ARKANSAS
D+	68.6	C	72.9	D-	62.3	C-	70.7	ARIZONA
D+	68.5	C-	71.9	D+	69.0	D	64.6	ALABAMA
D+	68.3	C-	70.6	C-	71.7	D	62.8	LOUISIANA
D+	68.3	C	72.9	D	66.0	D	66.1	OKLAHOMA
D+	67.6	C	74.5	F	58.9	D+	69.2	IDAHO
D	66.3	D	66.4	C-	70.6	D-	61.8	NEW MEXICO
D	65.8	C-	69.7	D+	67.7	D-	60.0	MISSISSIPPI
D	65.0	D+	67.2	D-	61.6	D	66.2	NEVADA
C	74.2	C+	77.6	C	73.9	C-	71.0	U.S.

Note: States are ranked based on unrounded scores.

¹ The District of Columbia and Hawaii are single-district jurisdictions. They are not issued grades for school finance, which analyzes distribution of funding across districts within a state.

SOURCE: Education Week Research Center, 2017