

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The paragraphs that follow contain verbatim an announcement authored and provided by the New Jersey Department of Education. I am forwarding the message to you as it contains important information regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act.

New Jersey is in the process of creating its state plan that details how it will implement the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Each state must develop a plan that adheres to the requirements of the federal *ESSA* statute and must submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Education for approval. I invite you to review and provide feedback on the proposed [New Jersey ESSA State Plan](#) before it is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

ESSA replaces the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, enacted in 2002, and it reauthorizes the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965*. Under *ESSA*, some federal requirements remain in place. For instance, all states must set challenging academic standards and they must annually assess students' progress towards those statewide standards in math, English language arts, and science.

However, *ESSA* provides flexibility in other areas. The plan that New Jersey will submit to the U.S. Department of Education will describe how the state will improve efforts in areas such as accountability (e.g., factors stakeholders believe should be included in the School Performance Reports); supports for educators; supports for struggling schools; and how federal funds can most effectively help schools achieve academic goals.

Over the last six months, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has heard from thousands of parents, educators, and community members across our state. Today I am inviting all of the parents of the Bernards Township School District to learn more about *ESSA* and provide feedback directly to the NJDOE on the proposed plan. Your feedback will help provide the NJDOE with ideas and suggestions to incorporate in the final New Jersey *ESSA* State Plan. Public comment is being taken on the proposed state plan until March 20, and the NJDOE expects to submit the plan to the U.S. Department of Education by April 3, 2017.

Below are links about New Jersey's proposed *ESSA* State Plan that you can find on NJDOE's [main ESSA webpage](#):

- An [overview](#) of the plan, including videos, a PowerPoint presentation, and the entire state plan.
- Register for live [webinars](#) to learn about the New Jersey *ESSA* State Plan.

You can email the NJDOE with questions or comments at essa@doe.state.nj.us.

Thank you for your interest in helping New Jersey develop its *ESSA* State Plan.

Sincerely,



Nick Markarian