

Dear Friend of Education:

Late yesterday afternoon, I received notice that the U.S. Department of Education had approved [Pennsylvania's ESSA Consolidated State Plan as revised](#). Approval of Pennsylvania's Consolidated State Plan is a significant moment for public education in Pennsylvania. The plan is shaped by the guiding principles of transparency, equity, and innovation, and underscores the commonwealth's commitment to creating more balanced and comprehensive school progress measures, reducing testing time, and supporting Pennsylvania's educators and school leaders.

You can review [USDE's approval letter](#) here. Most of Pennsylvania's revisions to our September 2017 submission were technical in nature, and involved responses to USDE requests for clarification or additional detail on specific proposals. PDE will share specific information on revisions in the final approved plan in the coming days and weeks.

Early wins for Pennsylvania's students include:

- A 20 percent reduction in PSSA testing time to begin this year with the testing window pushed back next year;
- Increased emphasis on growth in identification of schools that need improvement;
- Expansion in the use of valid non-academic measures of school success;
- Use of dashboard format to ensure full, fair and transparent presentation of school success; and
- Troops to Teachers grant awarded to support the transition of veterans into the educator workforce.

The Department is grateful to the thousands of Pennsylvanians who participated in shaping, reviewing and commenting on plan proposals since ESSA was enacted in December 2015. We look forward to implementation of Pennsylvania's approved plan in our schools for the benefit of all of our students in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Pedro Rivera, Secretary of Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
[333 Market Street](#)
[Harrisburg, PA 17126](#)