

# LEADING THE CHARGE **ON ESSA** **IMPLEMENTATION**



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## +++++++ INTRODUCTION +++++++

Teach Plus engaged 3,563 teachers in the rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—a civil rights law that is at its core focused on the students who fill the classrooms of Teach Plus teachers: Low-income students and students of color. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a common-sense approach to assessment and strong provisions to build and promote teacher leadership opportunities, two sets of recommendations that came from Teach Plus teachers.

Teach Plus teachers across our regions are continuing to lead the charge on the law's implementation, providing feedback to inform their states' ESSA plans and ensuring that teachers' voices are being heard. Teachers are conducting grassroots advocacy; testifying before and serving on state ESSA committees, publishing policy briefs and op-eds; and sharing their stories in the media.

**Since the law went into effect in December 2015, we have had 2,254 educator advocacy actions on ESSA, including flash polls and letter signing campaigns.**

## +++++++ GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY +++++++

Starting in the fall of 2016, many states have begun organizing listening tours and public meetings to engage stakeholders in the development of their ESSA plans. Teach Plus teachers have been actively involved in the process, and have engaged other teachers in their school, district, and state through events, meetings, and other forms of grassroots advocacy.

+ In **Illinois**, Teach Plus teachers held a series of ESSA Feedback Dinners and focus groups, engaging 347 teachers in the process. The teachers focused on the indicators of school quality and college and career readiness as part of the state's accountability system, and on strategies to ensure teacher quality in the state. The findings were shared with the Illinois State Board of Education to inform the state's ESSA plan and published

as a policy brief, ["Expediting ESSA: Recommendations for Accountability and Supporting Effective Teaching."](#) The most recent draft of the State Board's ESSA plan incorporates four of these six indicators of school quality identified in the brief.

+ In **Texas**, 19 teachers are gearing up to lead focus groups on ESSA, followed by a report to the Texas Education Agency.

## +++++++ STATE ESSA IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEES ++++++

In March 2016, Massachusetts Policy Fellowship alumna Audrey Jackson became one of only two teachers in the country (and one of the 23 national education experts) to [serve as a voting member of the ESSA](#) Negotiated Rulemaking Committee. Audrey worked on developing regulations for ESSA assessment provisions.

Teachers across our regions are serving on stakeholder committees:

- + In **Indiana**, five Teach Plus teachers are members of the Supporting Excellent Educators group that is part of state's ESSA strategy.
- + In **Colorado**, Teach Plus Policy Fellow served on the Colorado Spoke Committee focusing on state standards.
- + In **Maryland**, Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alum was appointed by the Maryland State Superintendent Karen B. Salmon to the ESSA stakeholder subcommittee on teacher quality.

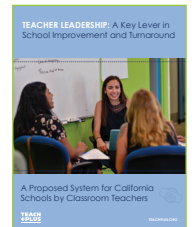
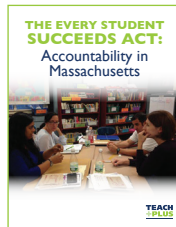
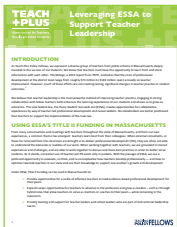
## +++++++ TESTIMONY, EVENTS, AND PUBLIC COMMENT ++++++

Teach Plus teachers and staff have testified before the U.S. Department of Education and the state boards of education on ESSA implementation:

- + In **California**, two Policy Fellowship alumni and Executive Director Mike Stryer testified on ESSA's [teacher leadership](#) and [accountability](#) provisions. Teach Plus teachers shared their policy brief, "[Teacher Leadership: A Key Lever in School Improvement and Turnaround](#)," with members of the California State Board of Education, with two teachers in the ESSA stakeholder meeting and three teachers sharing public comments at the Board of Education's meeting.
- + In **Illinois**, 13 teachers testified at state hearings on ESSA, four teachers met with the Deputy Superintendent for Education, and these same four teachers were invited to join the State Board's ESSA working groups. The most recent draft of the State Board's ESSA plan incorporates five of the six recommendations made in the policy brief, "[A Seat at the Table: Teachers' Guiding Principles for Accountability under ESSA](#)."
- + In **Massachusetts**, more than 45 Teach Plus teachers provided feedback on ESSA during a daylong event with Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell D. Chester.
- + In **New Mexico**, 14 teachers presented ESSA recommendations to Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera, and 14 teachers participated in statewide ESSA stakeholder meetings.

## +++++ POLICY BRIEFS +++++

Teach Plus teachers across our regions published **six policy briefs** that provide smart, sensible recommendations to lawmakers on a range of key ESSA issues such as accountability, teacher leadership, school improvement and turnaround, and supporting effective teaching.



## +++++ TEACHER VOICE: OP-EDS +++++

Teach Plus teachers from every region are using their voice to enrich the public dialogue on ESSA: during ESEA reauthorization, they published **22 op-eds** on assessment, equity, and other related topics. To-date, our teachers and staff have published **12 op-eds** specifically addressing the key provisions of the law and its implementation, with many more in development.

Highlights:

- + **Casie Jones**, Tennessee Policy Fellowship alumna: ["A Critical Silent Win of the Every Student Succeeds Act"](#) (Huffington Post, 2/4/2016)
- + **Alice Johnson Cain**, Teach Plus EVP of Policy, ["Four Ways to Protect Vulnerable Students Under ESSA"](#) (Education Week, 7/15/2016)
- + **Jes Ellis**, Maryland Policy Fellowship alumna: ["Why Federal Education Funds Must Supplement, Not Supplant, State and Local Investments in Schools"](#) (Huffington Post, 10/20/2016)
- + **Kevin Cormier**, Commonwealth Policy Fellow: ["3 Ways Teachers Can Lead Beyond the Classroom This Year"](#) (Education Post, 1/6/2017)



## +++++ MEDIA OUTREACH AND COVERAGE +++++

In January 2016, a Teach Plus teacher team was named finalist in the **Thomas B. Fordham Institute ESSA Accountability Design Competition** to build the best new accountability plan under the new law. The teachers' win generated several [mentions and stories](#). During the subsequent speaking tour, Maryland Policy Fellowship alumna **Rachel Man** and Los Angeles Policy Fellowship alum **Chris Hofmann** shared their ideas with the National Association of State Boards of Education, the Hunt Institute,

and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Teach Plus has consistently reached out to the media through press releases, policy statements, and pitch letters to shine a spotlight on our teachers' ESSA-related work. We have garnered coverage in such top-tier publications as **Politico** and **The Washington Post**, and in key local media outlets such as the **LA School Report**.

### Highlights:

- + Hundreds of Title I educators urge @JohnKingatED to stand firm on supplement, not supplant (PoliticoPro, 5/20/2016)
- + [Education officials say they're trying to protect poor children. A senator says they're trying to break the law.](#) (The Washington Post, 5/12/2016)
- + [Indy teacher travels to Washington, D.C. to discuss assessment testing](#) (Fox 59 News Indianapolis, 7/6/2016)
- + [LA parents head to Sacramento for this week's vote to plead for an overall rating to assess schools](#) (LA School Report, 9/6/2016)