Armed and Dangerous: Strengthening Black Communities

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

It’s Our Responsibility to Ensure All Black Children Succeed!

Access to education is a civil right. But education systems across the country have consistently failed Black children. It’s time our communities demanded more! This law will touch all of our children from preschool to high school.

Opportunity: New Law = New Education Plan

Your state’s education agency must develop a new education plan to comply with the new law. ESSA specifically calls for parents to be involved in developing state and school district education plans.

Challenge to the Community: Get involved in your state’s education plan.

Nominate yourself and others for the committee to write your district’s new education plan. If you’re not on the committee, attend meetings, know the plan and be armed with knowledge to hold your school accountable.

Opportunity: New school ratings and public report cards

Schools will be rated based on how students are performing in reading and math as well as high school graduation rates. Each school will have a report card on their performance.

Challenge to the Community: Check the report card on school performance and help create your school’s report card.

Check your state’s Department of Education website; learn how to get involved in developing your state’s report cards, and review report cards when they are released.

Opportunity: Dedicated funding for family engagement

Your school district is required to reserve at least 1% of its Title I funds (funds for high-poverty schools) to support parent and family engagement activities. Schools are also required to consult parents and caregivers on how to spend these funds.

Challenge to the Community: All families must engage.

Get involved at the schools that children in your family attend. Children perform better when schools work together with families to support learning.
**Opportunity: Improving quality early care and education**

States can use education funds to support professional development for preschool teachers and administrators.

**Challenge to the Community: Advocate for professional development for preschool teachers.**

Advocate for additional funding to support professional development for preschool teachers. Effective teachers and high-quality instruction in early learning are important to children’s achievement.

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**Opportunity: Improving access to college**

Under ESSA, more high schools are required to have strategies to increase the number of students taking college courses during high school.

**Challenge to the Community: Advocate for college courses.**

Get involved to ensure that schools are providing high school students in our communities with many opportunities to enroll in college courses. Research shows that Black students who perform well in advanced placement (AP), college-level classes are more likely to graduate from college. Schools are required to report their dual-enrollment numbers. Dual enrollment means high school students are also enrolled in college courses.

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**Arm Yourself with Knowledge**

*If you don’t know the law, you don’t know your children’s rights!*

To learn more visit National Black Child Development Institute’s website: [http://www.nbcdi.org/resource](http://www.nbcdi.org/resource) and download the ESSA Parent Power BootCamp Toolkit.