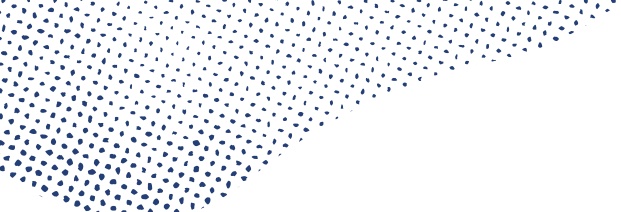


# DRIVING **THE** OPPORTUNITY CHECKLIST

**MUST-HAVE**  
GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS,  
PARENTS, AND  
COMMUNITY LEADERS





The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's 3 million members work at every level of education—from pre-school to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.

## OUR LEADERS

### NEA EXECUTIVE OFFICERS



#### President

**Lily Eskelsen García** is president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest labor union. Lily began her career in education as a school lunch lady and now leads a professional association of three million educators.



#### Vice President

**Becky Pringle**, vice president of the National Education Association, is a middle school science teacher with 31 years of classroom experience, and has distinguished herself as a thoughtful, passionate advocate for educators and students.



#### Secretary-Treasurer

**Princess R. Moss**, an elementary school music teacher from Louisa County, Va., is secretary-treasurer of the National Education Association, the nation's largest professional organization.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**John C. Stocks**, a national leader in the fight to transform America's public schools, is the executive director of the National Education Association.

#### Executive Committee

Eric R. Brown  
Kevin F. Gilbert  
Shelly Moore Krajacic  
Robert Rodriguez  
George Sheridan  
Hanna Vaandering

#### Board Of Directors

Our Board of Directors includes at least one director from each state affiliate, as well as representatives from both the Retired and Student members of our Association.

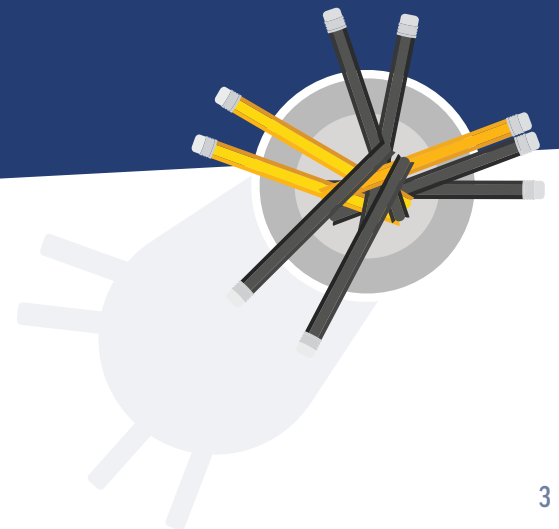
VOLUME ONE

# A resource provided by the NEA Center for Organizing and the Education Policy & Practice Department

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## DRIVING THE OPPORTUNITY CHECKLIST

**MUST-HAVE** GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS





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Dear Educator Leaders,

As educators, we are the experts on what our students and our schools need. That's why we created the **Opportunity Checklist** to ensure that every school in your district looks like the *best* school in your district. The checklist, designed to help you assess what's available to students at your school, is a key component of an effective **10-Minute Meeting** on the opportunities for local collaboration established by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*.



**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, THE  
DECISION-MAKING POWER HAS BEEN PUT  
INTO THE HANDS OF LOCAL EDUCATORS,  
PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY.**

For the first time in years, the decision-making power is in the hands of local educators, parents and the communities. This doesn't just give us an opportunity to *sit* at the table; it gives us the ability to drive what *happens* at the table, using our voices as educators to ensure opportunities

for success for *all* students.

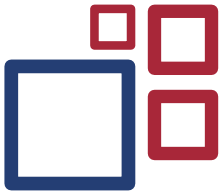
Ten-minute meetings are an ideal way to step up engagement on the Opportunity Checklist and draw members into our campaign to ensure a great public school for every student. This guide includes everything you need to host a 10-minute meeting this week. After your meeting, let's keep the energy and conversation going! Take pictures of your group and tweet to **#myschoolmyvoice** or email us at [essainfo@nea.org](mailto:essainfo@nea.org) to share what went well, what could have gone better, and what else we can do to support your amazing work.

Together, our voices will build great public schools for every student.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca S. Pringle".

Becky Pringle  
Vice President  
National Education Association





# ORGANIZING FOR OPPORTUNITY: *What Educators Need To Know*



## **Why did we launch My School, My Voice?**

Education is our calling, and nobody knows better than us how to meet students' needs. All schools should provide community support services like nutrition, health, and after-school programs for students who need it. As a group, we are helping educators, parents and community members push policymakers to focus on everything a student needs to succeed – not just test scores. Without pressure from us, school districts could privatize or make cuts that negatively affect some of our most vulnerable students.

We launched the **My School, My Voice** campaign to demand transparency and inclusion in the school improvement planning process. While the new law requires states to involve local stakeholders, we wanted to create a place where educators and the community could come together as a team to advance the needs of students and schools.

## **Who should get involved?**

Anyone who cares about quality public education can join our campaign to improve our local schools. As educators, we have a unique role because we have the experience and expertise to make the school and classroom decisions that lead to student success.

## **What are we asking for?**

We are asking local school districts to collaborate with us to create student-centered improvement plans. If we are organized, we can make sure schools develop plans that emphasize providing all students with the learning opportunities and support services—such as before-care and after-care—that they deserve, regardless of where they live.

## **What does participating in this campaign mean?**

Getting active in this campaign is simple. Just talk with your colleagues, parents and community members about building a vision for a better public school. Ask them to start by completing the **Opportunity Checklist**: a short, research- and criteria-based survey to help you identify your school's gaps and needs. Get the checklist here: [myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/your-school-checklist/](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/your-school-checklist/)

## **Interested in learning more?**

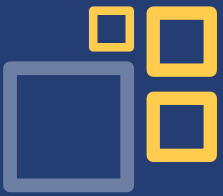
Learn more by visiting our My School, My Voice website at [www.myschoolmyvoice.nea.org](https://www.myschoolmyvoice.nea.org). We are excited to be working together to support our students' public schools and communities!



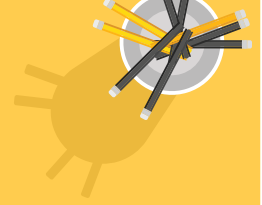
**WE LAUNCHED THE MY SCHOOL, MY VOICE CAMPAIGN TO DEMAND TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSION IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS.**



**OPPORTUNITY & ACTION FOR  
EVERY STUDENT**  
[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org)



# HOST A 10-MINUTE MEETING



1

## DESCRIBE THE OPPORTUNITY

*Time:* 1 minute

*Talking Point:*

For the first time in years, the power to make a real difference for students is in the hands of local educators, parents and communities. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) makes it possible for us to shape education policy at the local level. ESSA doesn't just give us an opportunity to sit at the table; it gives us the opportunity to drive what happens at the table.

2

## MAKE THE CASE FOR GETTING INVOLVED NOW

*Time:* 1 minute

*Talking Point:*

We can't let this chance pass us by. We need to give our input so that our voice is heard during the drafting of the School Improvement Plan that will be finalized near the end of the year. The window for getting involved is now!

Make sure you know the Wi-Fi Password!

3

## HELP MEMBERS COMPLETE THE OPPORTUNITY CHECKLIST ONLINE

*Time:* 5 minutes

*Talking Point:*

Do students and educators at your school have everything they need to succeed? The Opportunity Checklist is a simple assessment tool that helps us collaborate with other local stakeholders to develop and implement a school improvement plan.

Help participants get to the Opportunity Checklist on their device: [myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/your-school-checklist/](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/your-school-checklist/)

Emphasize that getting all the way down to the bottom of the checklist is important because members who complete it will receive future engagement opportunities.

4

## DISTRIBUTE HANDOUTS

*Time:* 1 minute

*Talking Point:*



5

## ENGAGE ON NEXT STEPS

*Time:* 1 minute

*Talking Point:*

Your local Association will come back together to discuss the results of the Opportunity Checklist for either the school or the district. Come on (insert date) to hear the results and learn about next steps.

(Contact your Uniserv Director to set up a meeting to get the information on results.)

Invite potential members to join the association!

6

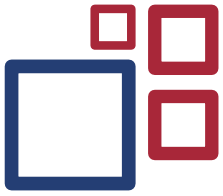
## SHARE YOUR STORY

*Time:* 1 minute

*Talking Point:*

Take a photo of your meeting and email it in to [essainfo@nea.org](mailto:essainfo@nea.org). Tell us what happened, and how great it was!





# OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY STUDENT STARTS WITH US

Join us for a **10-minute** meeting to learn how the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) opens the door for real local collaboration

Education is our calling, and nobody knows better than us how to meet students' needs. That's why educators created the **Opportunity Checklist** to ensure that every school in your district looks like the best school in your district.

ESSA gives us an opportunity to ensure that all our students have the support, tools and time to learn that they need. Without pressure from us, school districts could drastically cut budgets, privatize or make cuts that negatively affect some of our most vulnerable students.

Come to a 10-minute meeting to learn how the Opportunity Checklist is the first step in implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act the right way.

Time:

Date:

Location:

Contact Info:

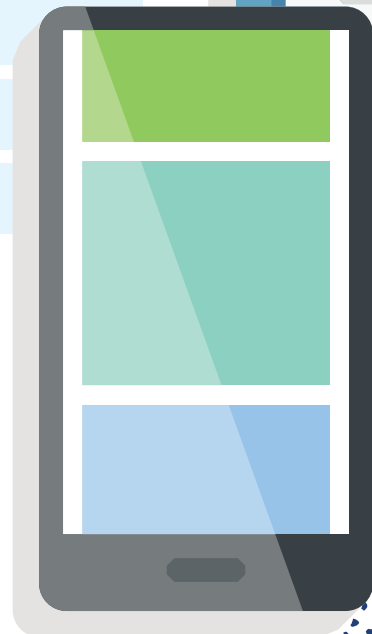


**OPPORTUNITY & ACTION FOR EVERY STUDENT**  
myschoolmyvoice.nea.org

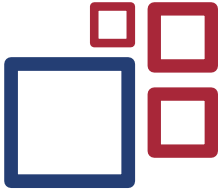


**BYOD:**  
Bring Your Own Device

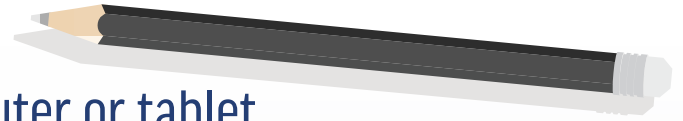
To learn more visit:  
[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org](http://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org)







## HOW TO COMPLETE THE OPPORTUNITY CHECKLIST



**Step 1:** Fire up your cell phone, computer or tablet

**Step 2:** Get on the Internet

**Step 3:** Go to: [myschoolmyvoice.nea.org](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org)

**Step 4:** Select Opportunity Checklist

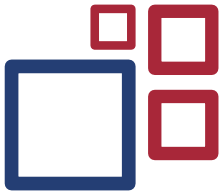
**Step 5:** Evaluate your school on these 5 key areas:

- Community:** Is your school open to the community it serves?
- Healthy Students in Modern Schools:** Is your school a healthy learning environment that is clean and in good working order?
- Well-Rounded Curriculum:** Do students have access to the courses that are right for them and prepare them for life after graduation?
- School Climate:** Do your students feel safe and respected in their classrooms and in their school?
- Quality Educators:** Are all of the educators at your school prepared and excited to help students excel?

**Step 6:** Click submit!



OPPORTUNITY & ACTION FOR  
**EVERY STUDENT**  
[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org)



# RESOURCES

ESSA is an important law that could be a game changer; this toolkit is just the beginning of all there is to know about it. Visit the resources below to learn more about ESSA, how it can impact your community and how to use it to help make public education work for everyone.

## ***My School, My Voice Resources***

NEA's ESSA 101

[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/essa-101/](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/essa-101/)

NEA's Practice Guides

[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/practice-guides/](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/practice-guides/)

The guides are intended to provide substantive information that can be shared with educators, parents, and other stakeholders to raise awareness on how ESSA may impact their students, classrooms, and communities.

NEA's EdCommunities

[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/nea-edcommunities/](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/nea-edcommunities/)

Joining NEA edCommunities means sharing your commitment and dedication through an open exchange of strengths and resources with thousands of other education professionals. Free and open to all, NEA edCommunities is driven by you to foster student success.

NEA's ESSA Conversations Starters

[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/educators/essa-issue-cards-conversation-starters/](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org/educators/essa-issue-cards-conversation-starters/)

Created by educators for educators, the ESSA issue cards are intended for use by members to engage others in conversation or use when speaking in a public forum such as a school board meeting, parent or community meeting, or local union meeting.

## ***More Resources:***

Council of Chief State School Officers

- *CCSSO Stakeholder Engagement Guidance*

The Education Justice Network

- *ESSA Organizing & Policy Toolkit*

Learning Policy Institute

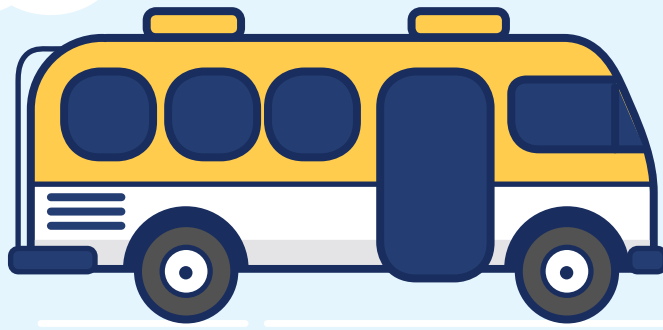
Dignity In Schools

Women's Law Center

- *ESSA Webinar: Protecting an Opportunity to Learn*
- *Through ESSA State Accountability Plan*



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EVERY STUDENT**  
[myschoolmyvoice.nea.org](https://myschoolmyvoice.nea.org)



## NEA PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT YOUR CAREER

Are you a new or early career educator? Get life hacks, tips and advice for educators by educators. Check out podcasts, videos, blogs and more.

[nea.org/schoolme](https://nea.org/schoolme)



## SupportEd

**SupportEd** is a leading voice for educators, providing the essential tools, resources and support to help you as an educator. It delivers the best professional support and development opportunities, articles, events and communities from across the universe of NEA online properties.

[supported.nea.org/](https://supported.nea.org/)



## edCOMMUNITIES™ Where Great Minds Are Inspired

**EdCommunities** is a place to connect, collaborate, engage, and share with other educators. Joining NEA edCommunities means sharing your commitment and dedication through an open exchange of strengths and resources with thousands of other education professionals. Free and open to all, NEA edCommunities requires visitors to register.

[mynea360.org/login](https://mynea360.org/login)



## edjustice [www.neaedjustice.org](http://www.neaedjustice.org)

**EdJustice** engages and mobilizes activists in the fight for racial, social and economic justice in public education. Readers will find timely coverage of social justice issues in education and ways they can advocate for our students, our schools and our communities.

[educationvotes.nea.org/neaedjustice/](https://educationvotes.nea.org/neaedjustice/)

