U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2018-22

The Department pursues its mission by administering programs that provide services throughout an individual's entire lifespan — from early intervention services to employment programs. Many of these programs provide grants to state or local educational agencies and support students and families from vulnerable populations, including children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. These programs also provide grants and loans to postsecondary students and facilitate research that examines ways that schools, districts, states and postsecondary institutions can improve America's education system. In addition, the Department fulfills its mission through the enforcement of civil rights laws that ensure equal access.

In addition to establishing the Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives that will guide the Department's policy, budget and human resource decisions during the next four years, this Strategic Plan aligns with the Agency Reform Plan. Specifically, the implementation strategies that support this Strategic Plan leverage opportunities to manage programs and to deliver services more effectively to the students, parents and communities the Department serves, as well as to create a more productive and rewarding place to work for its employees.
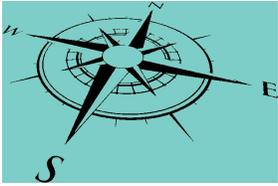
Contents

U.S. Department of Education (ED)

Description:

The U.S. Department of Education (the Department) executes the laws passed by Congress to promote student academic achievement and preparation for global competitiveness. The Department works with parents, students, educational institutions, school districts and states to foster educational excellence and to ensure equal access to education for all students.

Stakeholder(s):

Betsy DeVos :
Secretary of Education

Parents :
The Department works with parents, students, educational institutions, school districts and states to foster educational excellence and to ensure equal access to education for all students.

Students

Educational Institutions

States :
While recognizing the primary role of states and school districts in providing high-quality education, the Department is committed to helping ensure students throughout the nation develop skills to succeed in school, pursue postsecondary opportunities and transition to the workforce. Through its Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2018–22, the Department's vision is to support educational institutions, parents, families and communities in developing their capacity to improve outcomes for all students.

School Districts

Vision

Educational excellence and equal access to education for all students.

Mission

To promote student academic achievement and preparation for global competitiveness.

1. Learning

Support state and local efforts to improve learning outcomes for all P-12 students in every community.

Stakeholder(s)

States :
The hallmark of the ESSA is the flexibility it provides for states. The ESSA maintains important transparency and accountability provisions for all students. Additionally, grants and programs authorized by law help ensure that all students receive a wellrounded education. The ESSA provides the flexibility for states to do what is best for children while preserving important protections for economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English language learners and other vulnerable students. The law requires that states take steps to ensure all students have access to excellent teachers and positive, safe learning environments that equip them for college and career success. The ESSA requires states to develop program plans with ambitious targets to close student achievement and graduation rate gaps among student groups to meet established goals that require progress for all students.

Communities

P-12 Students

Children with Disabilities :
The Department's work on this Strategic Goal and related objectives also supports children with disabilities. Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Department works to ensure that all eligible children with disabilities have a free appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. To meet this responsibility, the Department works to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents, to promote systemic improvement in the delivery of special education services and related services and of supplementary aids and services and to support the development and implementation of personnel preparation. The Department also provides states and localities with the technical assistance and other support necessary to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education :
The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education is a primary contributor to this goal, particularly with its management of Title I, Title IV Part A, and the Weighted Student Funding Formula pilot under ESSA.

OSERS :
OSERS supports the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which includes the parent centers, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Office of Innovation and Improvement :
The Office of Innovation and Improvement implements discretionary grant programs that contribute to this Strategic Objective, including the Charter School Program and the Education and Innovation Research program.

Institute of Education Sciences :
Finally, the Institute of Education Sciences, OCR, the Office of English Language Acquisition and the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education also contribute to this Strategic Goal.

OCR

Office of English Language Acquisition

Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education

Strategic Goal 1 and Strategic Objectives 1.1-1.4 focus on outcomes related to the transition from the No Child Left Behind Act to implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in December 2015... The Department will annually work with states to ensure that all required public data elements related to student and school performance are being reported in the required timeframe. Increased transparency will empower parents and students and will provide an opportunity for states and other education and community stakeholders to identify areas for targeted technical assistance that the Department can support.

1.1. Options

Increase high-quality educational options and empower students and parents to choose an education that meets their needs.

The Department will support greater state and local flexibility in elementary and secondary education and encourage state and local educational agencies to increase the number and quality of educational opportunities to provide for meaningful school choice. This Strategic Objective aims to improve access to high-quality K-12 educational options by supporting school choice and providing families, especially families from historically underserved communities, with the information and tools needed to select the option that best meets their children's needs. Regardless of ZIP code or family income, parents and students should have access to high-quality educational options. Implementation Strategies — To implement this Strategic Objective, the Department will encourage state and local educational agencies to expand school choice by administering programs that increase educational options (e.g., the Charter Schools Program and the Magnet Schools Assistance Program). The Department will also promote the adoption of student-centered funding formulas combined with open enrollment systems. Additionally, the Department will support state and local efforts by providing technical assistance ... Through this Strategic Objective, the Department will seek to create new opportunities to support school choice, including support for new investments in public and private school choice.

Strategy 1.1.1. Collaboration

Encourage collaboration with external organizations and subject matter experts.

Stakeholder(s):
Subject Matter Experts

Strategy 1.1.2. Innovative Practices

Support the implementation of innovative practices.

Strategy 1.1.3. Best Practices

Highlight and benchmark best practices.

Strategy 1.1.5. Funding

Ensure federal funding is dispersed to all schools, including charter schools, both equitably and in accordance with the law.

Stakeholder(s):

Schools

Charter Schools

Strategy 1.1.6. Charter Schools

Strengthen chartering and charter school quality.

Stakeholder(s):
Charter Schools

Strategy 1.1.7. School Choice

Empower parents and students by disseminating information about school choice options.

Stakeholder(s):
Parents

Students

Strategy 1.1.8. Rights

Protect the rights of economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English language learners and other vulnerable learners.

Stakeholder(s):
Economically Disadvantaged Students

Children with Disabilities

English Language Learners

Vulnerable Learners

1.2. Access

Provide all P-12 students with equal access to high-quality educational opportunities.

This Strategic Objective considers characteristics that are necessary to ensure both access to opportunities and the quality of such opportunities. The ESSA provides a framework to characterize high-quality educational opportunities, including:

- High academic standards and high-quality assessments.
- A well-rounded education that includes a safe and healthy environment and integrated technology.
- Access to effective teachers and strong systems of collaboration among education stakeholders.
- Proper support and interventions for struggling students and opportunities for enrichment experiences before, after and during the school day. Access to such educational opportunities for all students, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability, is critical for students to have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Implementation Strategies School quality, climate and safety are essential components of a high-quality educational opportunity. The primary implementation strategy for this Strategic Objective is to support educational institutions, parents and

communities in developing their capacity to improve outcomes for all students. In this support role, the Department will:

Stakeholder(s):
P-12 Students

Strategy 1.2.1. ESSA State Plans

Provide technical assistance and tools to support states and increase their capacity to implement their ESSA state plans.

Strategy 1.2.2. School Conditions

Support state and local educational agencies in improving school conditions, thereby increasing access to instructional time and learning.

Stakeholder(s):
State Educational Agencies

Local Educational Agencies

Strategy 1.2.3. Special Education Services & Aids

Ensure students with disabilities have access to special education and related services and supplementary aids and services that meet their unique educational needs, including appropriately ambitious individualized education program goals and the chance to meet challenging objectives.

Stakeholder(s):
Students with Disabilities

Strategy 1.2.4. Accountability

Leverage Department accountability systems, such as the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services' Results Driven Accountability, to support states in improving outcomes for students.

Stakeholder(s):
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

States

Strategy 1.2.5. Technology

Support educational agencies as they improve and increase their technology infrastructure, connectivity and professional development to effectively integrate educational technology.

Stakeholder(s):
Educational Agencies

Strategy 1.2.6. Experiences

Support increased access to transformative learning experiences through the use of high-quality digital resources, including openly-licensed resources, particularly for rural students.

Strategy 1.2.7. Civil Rights

Ensure equal access to education and promote educational excellence across the nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights and the provision of technical assistance to help schools achieve compliance with the civil rights laws enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

Stakeholder(s):
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

Strategy 1.2.8. Goals & Activities

Monitor and share data from ESSA state plans, including data specific to conditions of learning and educator effectiveness, so that the public is aware of state educational agencies' goals and activities.

Stakeholder(s):
Educators

Strategy 1.2.9. English Learners

Support the implementation of evidence-based strategies in instructional language programs for English learners through technical assistance and dissemination of new research and information on English Language Learner pedagogy.

Stakeholder(s):
English Learners

Strategy 1.2.10. IDEA Performance Plans

Monitor and share data and information from IDEA State Performance Plans, including the State Systemic Improvement Plan, so that the public is aware of the extent to which each state is meeting the requirements of IDEA and improving results for children with disabilities.

Stakeholder(s):
Children with Disabilities

Strategy 1.2.11. Children with Disabilities

Support state agencies and local providers in improving results for young children with disabilities by providing technical assistance and support.

Stakeholder(s):
State Agencies

Local Providers

Young Children with Disabilities

Strategy 1.2.12. Preschoolers with Disabilities

Provide evidence-based resources and technical assistance through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and OSEP-funded technical assistance centers to states, schools, early childhood programs and families to support the smooth transitions of preschoolers with disabilities from early intervention to preschool and from preschool to kindergarten.

Stakeholder(s):

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

States

Schools

Early Childhood Programs

Families

Preschoolers with Disabilities

1.3. Transitions

Prepare all students for successful transitions to college and careers by supporting access to dual enrollment, job skills development and high-quality science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

This Strategic Objective will help the Department support state and local educational agencies in the implementation of well-rounded education programs that prepare students for college and careers. All students, including students with disabilities and educationally disadvantaged students, have the right to reach their full potential. Students should have opportunities that prepare them for the transition to college and meaningful careers. Implementation Strategies Access to accelerated coursework to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and dual or concurrent enrollment programs, is critical for students as they prepare for the transition to college and career. Pursuant to the Student Support and Academic Enrichment program authorized under Title IV, Part A, and the ESSA state report card requirements, the Department will support state and local educational agencies in their plans to provide all students a well-rounded education. The Department's implementation of the Presidential Executive Order on Expanding Apprenticeships in America will also support this Strategic Objective by providing incentives to state and local educational agencies to expand the earn-and-learn models available to secondary students. These models combine a careeroriented academic curriculum, relevant work experience and student financial assistance. Under this Strategic Objective, the Department will encourage grantees to enhance students' access to opportunities that will challenge and prepare them for college and careers. Additionally, the Department will:

Strategy 1.3.1. Vulnerable Populations

Provide technical assistance to state and local educational agencies in supporting vulnerable populations, such as students in rural communities, to transition successfully to college and careers.

Stakeholder(s):

Vulnerable Populations

State Educational Agencies

Local Educational Agencies

Rural Communities

Strategy 1.3.2. STEM Skills & Financial Literacy

Promote the importance of STEM skills (e.g., problem solving, critical thinking) and financial literacy related to career readiness.

Strategy 1.3.3 . Apprenticeships

Provide technical assistance designed to support state vocational rehabilitation agencies and third-party apprenticeship entities, employers and training providers that will focus on strategies and related activities to support the participation of individuals with disabilities in both new and existing apprenticeships.

Stakeholder(s):

Individuals with Disabilities

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

Apprenticeship Entities

Employers

Training Providers

Strategy 1.3.4. Career, Technical & Adult Education

Provide technical assistance to state and local agencies to support career, technical and adult education.

Stakeholder(s):

Adult Learners

State Agencies

Local Agencies

Strategy 1.3.5. Pre-Employment Transition Services

Provide technical assistance to states in implementing pre-employment transition services to youth with disabilities to ensure a smooth and effective transition to post-secondary education and/or employment.

Stakeholder(s):

States

Youth with Disabilities

1.4. Strategies & Practices

Support agencies and institutions in the implementation of evidence-based strategies and practices that build the capacity of school staff and families to support students' academic performance. with equal access to high-quality educational opportunities.

This Strategic Objective focuses on public investments in education that result in positive academic outcomes for students. The Department generates, collects and distributes evidence through valid and reliable data, strong research and rigorous evaluations that can help states and school districts identify what works, for which students and under what conditions. Through this Strategic Objective, the Department is also expanding its work to support states as they implement provisions in the ESSA that require the use of evidence when determining what education interventions to implement. Implementation Strategies — The ESSA recognizes that the primary responsibility for creating, improving and sustaining public education systems lies with state and local

educational agencies. Consequently, the implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on providing resources and support to state and local educational agencies to assist them in identifying, implementing and expanding evidence-based strategies. As such, the Department will provide to grantees existing resources supported by evidence and collaborate with external partners to help disseminate resources supported by evidence to their constituents. To date, the Department has released non-regulatory guidance to serve as a framework for technical assistance related to the implementation of ESSA's evidence provision. The guidance, Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments, recommends a five-step decision-making process to promote continuous improvement and support better outcomes for students. This guidance serves as a framework for the Department's technical assistance related to implementation of ESSA's evidence provisions. The Department will continue its outreach to stakeholders. A key principle across these strategies is sustained technical assistance that continuously builds capacity and targets specific state and local needs. The Department will also continue to support efforts to build evidence on effective strategies to improve teaching and learning and to disseminate the results to states, school districts and the public.

Stakeholder(s):

Parent Training and Information Centers :
The Department's efforts on this Strategic Objective extend to families by bolstering their ability to assist in their children's academic development. For children with disabilities, the Department will continue to support its nationwide network of Parent Training and Information Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers. These centers provide parents with information and training about disabilities, protections under IDEA and rights under other relevant laws and local, state and national resources to support children with disabilities.

Community Parent Resource Centers :
Community Parent Resource Centers focus on reaching isolated and underserved parents of children with disabilities, such as those with low incomes or with limited English proficiency, in a specific community.

2. Postsecondary Education

Expand postsecondary educational opportunities, improve outcomes to foster economic opportunity and promote an informed, thoughtful and productive citizenry.

Stakeholder(s)

Postsecondary Education Internal Stakeholders :
This Strategic Goal involves both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the:

Office of the Under Secretary

Office of Postsecondary Education

Office of Federal Student Aid

Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

National Center for Educational Statistics

Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development

Office for Civil Rights

Postsecondary Education External Stakeholders :
Some of the external education stakeholders include:

College Associations

Apprenticeship Associations

University Systems

Trade Associations

Student Organizations

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

State Higher Education Executive Organizations

Outcomes Strategic Goal 2 and Strategic Objectives 2.1–2.5 focus on expanding the Department's efforts to support innovative, accessible and affordable paths to postsecondary credentials and job-ready skills. In addition to supporting expanded postsecondary opportunities, the Department has a number of initiatives focused on affordability. These initiatives ensure borrowers have the best information available to make postsecondary program selection and associated borrowing decisions. The Department also continues to help students understand their financial aid options and repayment obligations. It is important that the Department expand its outreach efforts and support states and institutions in developing alternative pathways to postsecondary credentials that lead to employment, particularly for populations with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the Department will:

- Support innovative and affordable paths to postsecondary credentials for all segments of the population, including vulnerable populations by: - Fostering higher completion rate programs. - Working in conjunction with employers and industries. - Minimizing barriers to access.
- Expand the Department's outreach efforts, including: - Improving affordability for all families and students by improving public understanding of the federal financial aid process. - Communicating with education providers about funding options and providers' responsibilities. - Streamlining internal efficiencies to provide the appropriate materials to facilitate student loan repayment.

- Encourage positive and safe environments by: - Providing school personnel with effective strategies. - Promoting best practices that prevent bullying, violence and disruptive actions in schools. - Develop tools and resources within the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) designed to enhance customer service by: - Identifying new mechanisms to provide customer service. - Providing superior customer service within the Federal Student Aid Feedback System by delivering more timely and accurate responses.

2.1. Access & Completion

Support educational institutions, students, parents and communities to increase access and completion of college, lifelong learning and career, technical and adult education.

This Strategic Objective will support students' ability to access a range of postsecondary opportunities as well as improve the students' ability to complete the postsecondary option of their choosing. The Department recognizes there are multiple, diverse routes to postsecondary education and employment and, under this Strategic Objective, seeks to support access to these educational opportunities and their completion for students at all stages of life. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on providing support to education stakeholders in their efforts to increase access to and completion of postsecondary educational opportunities. Some key strategies include:

Strategy 2.1.1. Costs & Outcomes

Provide information, both digitally and in print, to parents and students about the potential costs and outcomes of the variety of postsecondary opportunities available to them.

Strategy 2.1.2. Post-High School Success

Strengthen grant programs to enhance opportunities for success past high school.

Strategy 2.1.3. Barriers

Remove undue barriers to accessing innovative educational pathways to success past high school.

Strategy 2.1.4. Regulations

Complete, with the help of diverse negotiators, quality regulation packages reflective of administration priorities.

Strategy 2.1.5. Relationships

Enhance stakeholder relationships ...

Strategy 2.1.5.1. Partners

Identify and engage national, regional and local partners who have access and the ability to influence students, parents or borrowers.

Stakeholder(s):

Students

Parents

Borrowers

Strategy 2.1.5.2. Information Dissemination

Leverage opportunities to enhance the dissemination of critical program information to partners through various communication channels, including in-person and digital.

Strategy 2.1.5.3. Capability & Oversight

Identify opportunities through focus groups and training to work collaboratively with partners to improve institutional oversight and the capability to process federal financial aid.

Strategy 2.1.5.4. Web-Based Technology

Implement a plan that allows partners to collectively contribute to the advancement of web-based technology.

Strategy 2.1.5.5. Events

Hold quarterly events that encourage partners' participation in focus groups to collaboratively share best practices across the federal financial aid community.

Strategy 2.1.5.6. Awareness

Develop a creative and engaging national awareness campaign -- in conjunction with partners -- aimed at students, parents and borrowers to enable them to be better informed about the financial aid process and, as a result, make better borrowing decisions.

Stakeholder(s):

Students

Parents

Borrowers

Strategy 2.1.5.7. Safety

Support the cultivation of safe environments conducive to lifelong learning by conducting outreach, ensuring Title IX protections and investigating civil rights and Clery Act violations.

Strategy 2.1.5.8. Civil Rights Laws

Provide technical assistance to help institutions achieve compliance with the civil rights laws that OCR enforces.

Stakeholder(s):
OCR

2.2. Career Preparation

Support agencies and educational institutions in identifying and using evidence-based strategies or other promising practices to improve educational opportunities and successfully prepare individuals to compete in the global economy.

This Strategic Objective aims to improve educational opportunities for the existing and future workforce. It is essential for educational institutions to work with a variety of industries to ensure postsecondary education adequately prepares students to be successful in the job market. It is also essential that the Department fulfills its commitment to individuals with disabilities by working with state and local agencies to provide job-driven training and support services, consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on improving educational opportunities, training and support services for the workforce. Some key strategies include:

Strategy 2.2.1. Pathways, Planning & Guidance

Provide grant funding and technical assistance to states and local education and vocational rehabilitation service providers to expand and strengthen career pathways programs (including STEM programs), transition planning, career guidance and other supportive services.

Stakeholder(s):
States

Local Education Providers

Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

Strategy 2.2.2. Education Strategies

Build and disseminate evidence on effective career and technical education and postsecondary education strategies.

Strategy 2.2.3. Employment Pathways

Partner with other federal agencies, states, employers and non-governmental organizations to support strategies that blend education, job skills development and supportive services to provide seamless pathways to competitive integrated employment in high-demand industries, including STEM fields.

Strategy 2.2.4. Individuals with Disabilities

Provide technical assistance to employers in efforts to employ individuals with disabilities in competitive integrated employment.

Stakeholder(s):

Individuals with Disabilities

Employers

Strategy 2.2.5. Collaboration

Encourage more collaboration among employers, state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education to expand and improve the quality of and access to work-based learning opportunities, including apprenticeships.

Stakeholder(s):

Employers

State Educational Agencies

Local Educational Agencies

Institutions of Higher Education

Strategy 2.2.6. Delivery Models

Support the development, evaluation and replication of cost-effective delivery models that improve postsecondary and employment outcomes, including the use of Pay for Success and collective impact models.

Strategy 2.2.7. Partnerships

Encourage public and private partnerships where appropriate.

2.3. Credentials & Skills

Support agencies and educational institutions as they create or expand innovative and affordable paths to relevant careers by providing postsecondary credentials or job-ready skills.

This Strategic Objective focuses on education paths that are innovative and affordable and lead to educated citizens with quality careers. It is vital for students to collaborate with agencies and educational institutions to improve students' ability to compete in the continually changing modern global economy by creating new programs or expanding existing ones that provide postsecondary credentials or mastery of job-ready skills. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on partnering with education stakeholders to create or expand innovative and affordable paths that will lead to quality careers. Some key strategies include:

Strategy 2.3.1. Practices & Programs

Provide grant funding and technical assistance resources to develop, evaluate and replicate practices and programs that expand access to viable educational and career pathways.

Strategy 2.3.2. Career, Technical & Adult Education

Provide technical assistance through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to support career, technical and adult education.

Strategy 2.3.3. Policies & Programs

Promote policies and programs that reduce cost and accelerate the time it takes to earn quality credentials and develop marketable skills (e.g., career and academic guidance, competency-based education, dual enrollment, statewide and institutional transfer agreements, work-based learning, apprenticeship and remediation reform).

This may be achieved by:

Strategy 2.3.3.1. Planning & Dual Enrollment

Encourage state and local educational agencies to promote better postsecondary planning and supporting the expansion of quality dual enrollment options to reduce costs and accelerate completion of a credential.

Stakeholder(s):
State Educational Agencies

Local Educational Agencies

Strategy 2.3.3.2. Communications

Utilize the Department's communications outlets to showcase promising practices at the district, state and institution levels for all pertinent audiences in the publishing formats they need.

Strategy 2.3.3.4. Regulatory Barriers

Exploring methods for removing regulatory barriers through the negotiated rulemaking process laid out in the Higher Education Act (HEA) and Administrative Procedures Act.

Strategy 2.3.3.5. Skills & Credentials

Partner with other federal agencies, employers and non-governmental organizations to increase access to, and participation in, education and job skills development that lead to marketable skills and quality postsecondary credentials.

Stakeholder(s):
Federal Agencies

Employers

Non-Governmental Organizations

Strategy 2.3.3.6. Experimental Sites

Exploring new or existing experimental sites.

Strategy 2.3.3.6.1. Flexibility

Use the current Experimental Sites Initiative authority to evaluate the effectiveness of statutory and regulatory flexibility for participating institutions disbursing Title IV student aid.

Strategy 2.3.3.6.2. Changes

Evaluate the results of current experiments -- such as Dual Enrollment, Prior Learning Assessment, Competency-Based Education, Limited Direct Assessment and Educational Quality through Innovative Partnerships -- to explore changes to regulations and statutes that have the potential to benefit all postsecondary institutions and the students they serve.

Stakeholder(s):

Postsecondary Institutions

Postsecondary Students

2.4. Student Aid

Improve quality of service for customers across the entire student aid life cycle.

This Strategic Objective focuses on the customer service provided by the Department to students, parents, borrowers and institutions. To improve the way the Department serves its customers, the Department will modernize the loan-servicing environment by taking the best ideas and capabilities available and putting them to work for Americans with federal student loans. The focus will be on improving customer service, such as access and speed, through modern technology and communication channels. The Department will deliver a best-in-class processing and servicing environment capable of sustaining the management of the growing federal student loan portfolio. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on improving overall awareness of FSA programs and helping aid recipients understand their obligations. Some key strategies include:

Strategy 2.4.1. Responsibilities & Requirements

Enhance outreach, training and tools to help postsecondary institutions better understand responsibilities and requirements under the HEA.

Stakeholder(s):
Postsecondary Institutions

Strategy 2.4.2. Outreach

Conduct targeted outreach campaigns aimed at increasing access to minority serving institutions and at underrepresented students to increase their awareness of the federal aid programs.

Stakeholder(s):
Minority Serving Institutions

Underrepresented Students

Strategy 2.4.3. Website

Enhance and refine FSA's messaging to customers by making improvements to our public-facing, flagship website, StudentAid.gov, that are informed and guided by both customer analytics and stakeholder input.

Stakeholder(s):

FSA

Strategy 2.4.4. Information & Tools

Partner with FSA stakeholders, including but not limited to high school guidance counselors, community groups, states, governmental entities and non-profit groups, to improve the conception, design and delivery of FSA information and tools.

Stakeholder(s):

High School Guidance Counselors

Community Groups

States

Governmental Entities

Non-Profit Groups

2.5. Student Loans

Enhance students' and parents' ability to repay their federal student loans by providing accurate and timely information, relevant tools and manageable repayment options.

This Strategic Objective seeks to improve how the Department interacts with stakeholders through FSA. The Department will develop materials that clearly communicate students' and parents' options to repay federal student loans before and during the course of pursuing a postsecondary credential. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on providing the tools and information necessary to enhance the students' and parents' ability to repay their federal student loans. Some key strategies include:

Strategy 2.5.1. Default Prevention

Develop a comprehensive framework for default prevention that allows students to understand and access information about potential college options and associated costs and outcomes, loan counseling and guidance, support for retention, loan repayment options and borrower benefits.

Strategy 2.5.2. Policies

Support policies to increase access to postsecondary education and promote responsible borrowing.

Strategy 2.5.3. Servicing

Develop a robust modern and mobile-first servicing environment that enables customers to access accurate and timely information on Free Application for Federal Student Aid completion, loan servicing and multiple customer service options.

Strategy 2.5.4. Communications & Outreach

Implement a low-cost methodology for both broad communications and targeted outreach in order to expand FSA's reach and improve penetration of messaging to students and customers.

Stakeholder(s):

Students

3. Data

Strengthen the quality, accessibility and use of education data through better management, increased privacy protections and transparency.

Outcomes: Strategic Goal 3 and Strategic Objectives 3.1-3.3 focus on strengthening data-driven decision-making in education by focusing on the ways we manage and make available education data, while protecting student privacy. The Department is committed to improving how staff and stakeholders access, use and share meaningful data on education while protecting privacy. These improvements enable the Department and other stakeholders in the education community to better provide the public with the information necessary to make informed decisions on behalf of their communities, states and local districts. Strengthening the Department's data life cycle management, governance and quality framework will help ensure data being used within the Department for decision-making are accurate and reliable.

3.1. Governance, Management & Support

Improve the Department's data governance, data life cycle management and the capacity to support education data.

This Strategic Objective focuses on data the Department collects and builds, the data management framework and internal capacity. Data management is the development, execution and supervision of plans, policies, programs and practices that control and enhance the value of data and information assets within the enterprise. The main goal of improving data management is to clarify the roles and procedures used to optimize data integrity and quality. The strategies behind this objective guide the Department's activities to develop and support the highly skilled workforce capacity necessary to execute these improvements. As a result, parents, communities and the Department's state and local partners will be more inclined to use data to make more informed decisions on behalf of their children and communities. Implementation Strategies — The implementation strategies to support improving the Department's data management, quality and governance to support education data include the following with associated short-term and long-term milestones:

Strategy 3.1.1. Workforce

Build a highly skilled workforce of data professionals throughout the Department to facilitate the accurate and appropriate use of data.

Stakeholder(s):
Data Professionals

Strategy 3.1.1.1. Training

Develop role-based training curricula for data professionals.

Strategy 3.1.1.2. Trainees

Increase the percentage of the Department's program offices consistently participating in the new curricula.

Strategy 3.1.2. Life Cycle Management

Improve the Department's data life cycle management by evaluating its quality, timeliness, objectivity, utility and integrity.

Strategy 3.1.2.1. Organizational Structure

Explore improvements in the Department's organizational structure that would facilitate better data practices, including potential benefits from more centralized data management functions.

Strategy 3.1.2.2. Messaging & Guidance

Improve internal messaging and guidance on Data Management at the Department from the Data Strategy Team.

Stakeholder(s):
ED Data Strategy Team

Strategy 3.1.2.3. Data Releases

Leverage data management best practices and resources to strengthen the Department's data releases.

Strategy 3.1.2.4. Feedback

Create feedback loops and tools to better understand education data quality issues and document, track and help mitigate identified issues.

Strategy 3.1.2.5. Best Practices

Increase the number of program office releases that use recognized best practices for data management.

3.2. Transparency & Protection

Improve privacy protections for, and transparency of, education data both at the Department and in the education community.

This Strategic Objective focuses on ensuring that increased use of data for program evaluation and policymaking is accompanied by improved privacy protections and better transparency of data both within the Department and throughout the education community. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies in support of improving the privacy protections for, and transparency of, education data include the following associated short-term and long-term milestones:

Strategy 3.2.1. External Partners

Support external partners in improving the privacy and security of education data and the transparency of data practices.

Strategy 3.2.1.1. IHEs

Improve student privacy and data security at IHEs through ramped up outreach and compliance efforts.

Stakeholder(s):
IHEs

Strategy 3.2.1.2. LEA Websites

Review a representative sample of Local Educational Agency websites for the transparency of their data practices and compliance with federal privacy laws when contracting with third party vendors.

Stakeholder(s):
Local Educational Agencies

Strategy 3.2.2. Privacy

Improve the efficiency of the Department's administration, enforcement and technical assistance relating to student privacy.

Strategy 3.2.2.1. Enforcement

Ensure timeliness of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) enforcement.

Strategy 3.2.2.2. Policy Determinations

Ensure timeliness of FERPA policy determinations.

Strategy 3.2.2.3. Technical Assistance

Ensure timeliness of student privacy technical assistance.

3.3. Access & Use

Increase access to, and use of, education data to make informed decisions both at the Department and in the education community.

This Strategic Objective focuses on increasing access to education data at all levels and improving the methods and access to tools necessary to support the appropriate use of education data for decisionmaking by the Department and education stakeholders. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies in support of maximizing access to, and the appropriate use of, education data with associated short-term and long-term milestones include the following:

Stakeholder(s):
Education Community

Strategy 3.3.2. Best Practices

Establish best practices for the Department's data releases to make data and documentation accessible in user-friendly, audience appropriate and 508 compliant formats while reducing burden, to include:

Strategy 3.3.2.1. Communication

Refine the Department's two-way communication with the public to streamline discussions of data access and usability.

Strategy 3.3.2.2. Technical Assistance

Improve technical assistance to increase the accessibility of education data for external partners.

Strategy 3.3.2.3. Open Data

Identify open data opportunities to increase data accessibility to a wider audience.

Strategy 3.3.2.4. Data Hosting

Establish requirements for and deploy a centralized data-hosting environment.

Strategy 3.3.3. Accessibility, Quality & Use

Support external partners in increasing the accessibility, quality and use of education data.

Strategy 3.3.3.1. Support

Support external stakeholders in using the Department's data.

Strategy 3.3.3.2. Sessions & Information

Identify and offer the sessions and information external stakeholders need to use education data to increase data-driven decision-making.

4. Effectiveness, Efficiency & Accountability

Reform the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the Department.

Outcomes: The Department's organizational capacity relies not only on our human capital but also on other resources, including physical, material, financial and informational resources. Strategic Goal 4 and Strategic Objectives 4.1-4.4 focus on improving the Department's processes, such as reviewing regulations, and where appropriate, on repealing, replacing or modifying regulations. Achievement of this goal will eliminate outdated, unnecessary or ineffective regulations; will repeal, replace or modify those regulations that eliminate jobs or inhibit job creation, impose costs that exceed benefits, or otherwise impose undue burdens on regulated parties; and will establish a high-functioning Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) process while also improving Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey scores.

4.1. Regulatory Relief

Provide regulatory relief to educational institutions and reduce burden by identifying time-consuming regulations, processes and policies and working to improve or eliminate them, while continuing to protect taxpayers from waste and abuse.

This Strategic Objective will help the Department better serve the public by providing regulatory relief and improving its decision-making processes, including those that impact grant and contract awards and the reporting burden on recipients. This burden reduction and relief effort will both streamline and improve internal processes for a more efficient workplace, which will allow the Department to better serve the public. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies that focus on streamlining and processes that reduce the reporting burden of recipients include:

Strategy 4.1.1. Transactions

Reduce internal transaction costs by reviewing internal processes and identifying opportunities to increase efficiency.

Strategy 4.1.2. Common Processes

Identify opportunities to collaborate with other federal agencies to improve common processes, such as the federal hiring process.

Stakeholder(s):
Federal Agencies

Strategy 4.1.3. Regulations

Use the Regulatory Reform Task Force to identify and, as appropriate, repeal, replace or modify outdated, inconsistent, unnecessary or ineffective regulations that (i) eliminate jobs or inhibit job creation, (ii) impose costs that exceed benefits, or otherwise impose undue burdens on regulated parties, or (iii) continue to rely on executive orders or other Presidential Directives that have been rescinded or substantially modified or are no longer in effect.

Stakeholder(s):
Regulatory Reform Task Force

4.2. Risks

Identify, assess, monitor and manage enterprise risks.

This Strategic Objective focuses on the Department functioning more effectively by establishing strong ERM practices. The Department will strengthen its implementation of ERM by integrating existing risk management processes and including risk as a central element in all critical day-to-day and strategic decision-making activities. The Department will also develop a more risk-aware culture that facilitates increased focus on the range of risks the Department faces and fosters open discussions about how those risks might impact the accomplishment of the Department's mission and whether resources are aligned to mitigate risks to an acceptable level. Implementation Strategies — Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on implementing strong ERM practices across the Department. Short-term and long-term milestones follow:

Strategy 4.2.1. ERM Framework

Implement a suitable ERM framework within the Department that leverages existing risk management activities, processes and governance bodies.

Strategy 4.2.1.1. Risk Profile

Regularly update the risk profile.

Strategy 4.2.1.2. Owners

Assign risk owners.

Stakeholder(s):
Risk Owners

Strategy 4.2.1.3. Mitigation Plans

Develop risk-mitigation plans.

Strategy 4.2.2. Culture

Create a risk-aware culture where risks and risk responses are openly discussed.

Strategy 4.2.2.1. Communication Strategies

Develop communication strategies (topdown/bottom-up).

Strategy 4.2.2.2. Internal Controls

Integrate ERM with the Department's Internal Control Program.

Strategy 4.2.3. Coordination & Integration

Manage enterprise risks in a coordinated and integrated manner aligned with the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

Strategy 4.2.3.1. Management Challenges

Integrate actions to address key management challenges (including those identified by the Office of Inspector General) with risk-mitigation plans.

Stakeholder(s):
Office of Inspector General

Strategy 4.2.3.2. Resource Allocations

Consider enterprise risks in resource allocation decisions.

Strategy 4.2.3.3. Implementation Strategies

Establish clear links between the risks associated with Strategic Goals 1-4 and the implementation strategies aligned with the core functions performed by the Department.

4.3. Cybersecurity

Strengthen the Department's cybersecurity by enhancing protections for its information technology infrastructure, systems and data.

This Strategic Objective focuses on strengthening protections for the Department's information technology infrastructure, systems and data to enhance the ability of employees to perform their duties. Improved cybersecurity will be a key contributor in ensuring the Department's systems and data are protected, which will help build a strong foundation for the Department's information technology infrastructure. Implementation Strategies — The implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on strengthening the Department's cybersecurity, information technology infrastructure and data life cycle management. Associated short-term and long-term milestones follow:

Strategy 4.3.1. Services

Implement proactive cybersecurity services to enhance the ability to securely deliver educational opportunities to our customers on the platforms and experience that they expect.

Strategy 4.3.2. Capability

Provide a fully-functional and highly-resilient cybersecurity capability with continuous monitoring capability to manage risk and to protect systems and information.

Strategy 4.3.3. Outreach

Unify and expand outreach programs to improve the cybersecurity posture and delivery of Departmental services.

Strategy 4.3.4. Workforce

Address shortfalls in the cybersecurity workforce through an improved workforce program to acquire, retain, develop and enhance critical skills and expertise.

Strategy 4.3.5. Cloud & Shared Services

Integrate and optimize opportunities to incorporate and consolidate shared services and cloud capabilities.

Strategy 4.3.6. Intelligence

Enhance cyber threat intelligence capabilities to ensure that Department systems can more effectively protect and rapidly identify, detect, respond and recover from complex cyber-attacks.

Strategy 4.3.7. Education

Educate Department employees on their roles in promoting cybersecurity and keeping the Department more secure.

Stakeholder(s):
ED Employees

4.4. Professional Development & Accountability

Improve the engagement and preparation of the Department's workforce using professional development and accountability measures.

This Strategic Objective focuses on maximizing employee effectiveness, thus improving workforce engagement and performance. The Department will provide employees with growth opportunities and will implement accountability measures to assist employees in being engaged members of the workforce. Implementation

Strategies Implementation strategies for this Strategic Objective focus on developing a more engaged and accountable workforce. Short-term and long-term milestones follow:

Stakeholder(s):
ED Workforce

Strategy 4.4.1. Communications Strategy

Develop an internal communication strategy to integrate employee engagement into day-to-day operations and reform activities.

Strategy 4.4.2. Professional Development

Provide professional development opportunities to build a highly engaged and prepared workforce with the skills necessary to enhance mission achievement.

Strategy 4.4.3. Succession Planning

Enhance succession planning, including implementation of a phased Voluntary Early Retirement Authority/ Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments offering to restructure positions to fit the needed skill sets.

Strategy 4.4.4. IDPs

Ensure supervisors and managers have active Individual Development Plans.

Stakeholder(s):
ED Supervisors

ED Managers

Strategy 4.4.5. Performance Plans

Ensure supervisor and manager performance plans include a measurable critical element related to employee engagement action planning and results to improve employee engagement.

Stakeholder(s):
ED Supervisors

ED Managers

Strategy 4.4.6. Skills

Create a targeted strategy to retain and leverage critical employee skill sets.

Strategy 4.4.6.1. Cross-Training & Reassignment

Develop cross-training and reassignment strategies in conjunction with the federal workforce reduction effort.

Strategy 4.4.6.2. Training Needs

Conduct training needs assessments for all mission-critical and remaining job occupational series.

Strategy 4.4.7. Dashboard

Develop and implement an organizational health dashboard.

Administrative Information

Start Date: 2018-10-01
End Date: 2022-09-30

Publication Date: 2018-03-06
Source: https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/strat/plan2018-22/strategic-plan.pdf

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