

# RETHINK SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

## EMPOWER FAMILIES

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & THE DATA QUALITY CAMPAIGN  
ESSA REPORT CARD DESIGN CHALLENGE

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### Rethink how parents access information about schools

Join the U.S. Department of Education and the Data Quality Campaign for two days of sketching, prototyping, and building to re-imagine school report cards.

#### WHAT

Two days of designing and testing solutions to help states develop family-friendly approaches to report cards – online data tools where parents can learn about schools - that make school data more transparent and accessible.

#### WHY

The solutions you design will empower families with better information about their school options. **We'll share what you make with states across the country.**

#### WHEN & WHERE

**NOV 8 – NOV 9**

**9:30AM–5PM**

Washington, DC

### How it will work

At the start of the design challenge, you will hear from parents, state and district leaders, and education policy experts about the challenges of designing school report cards. Then, you will create data visualization tools, templates, and other innovative solutions by yourself or with a team. There will be several opportunities during the design challenge to receive feedback on your design. In nutshell:

**1**

Assemble your team, choose your challenge, register for the event by 10/9 (link below) and take a look at our design brief.

**2**

Hear from subject matter experts. Sketch, prototype, and build. Check in with users. Make friends!

**3**

Present what you've made to a panel of judges. Projects will be recognized for a variety of considerations and shared with state and district leaders.

*Please note: We will provide participants with datasets and a detailed design brief to help navigate the requirements. All participants will be required to use their own personal computers and software tools that they feel are best suited to work with on this challenge.*

Register: <https://goo.gl/forms/14iOS8sVM0eZmCKE2>

## The Challenge

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)—the Federal education law reauthorized in 2015—requires states and school districts to make more than 2,000 data points about their public school systems available to families in a concise, understandable and uniform format. This information is a key resource to helping parents and communities understand how their school is doing, evaluate what is working and what needs to change, and drive changes that help kids succeed. In response, states are developing digital report cards to help the public navigate important data about schools, including per-student spending, test results, and more. A key challenge is ensuring these digital report cards are user-friendly, engaging, and incorporate best practices for data visualization and human-centered design – a new approach for many states. Further, the requirements of Federal law, complicate the task, increasing the risk that families end up with static documents filled with technical jargon that confuse rather than drive insight and engagement.

## The Opportunity

The updated report card requirements under ESSA present an opportunity for states to revisit their approach to report cards and consider new ways to empower parents with information that is easier to access and understand. The ESSA Report Card Design Challenge will bring together technical experts (e.g. computer programmers, graphic designers, and data visualization experts), subject matter experts (e.g. state and district leaders, experts from education policy organizations, U.S. Department of Education staff), and parents and other stakeholders to design tools, templates, and other innovative solutions that will support states in tackling the ESSA data reporting requirements.

## Challenge Points

Though there are a number of ways to address the challenge at hand, during this design challenge teams will be asked to focus on one of the following challenge points:

- 1) **Landing page:** Given the number of data elements required for inclusion in the report cards, many states are considering the development of landing or “at-a-glance” pages to communicate key metrics of interest. The goal of this challenge point would be to develop designs that are visually appealing, easy to interpret and navigate, and that encourage deeper exploration of the data.
- 2) **Per Pupil Expenditure:** Many states are struggling with a new requirement to include per-pupil expenditure data on report cards in a way that is understandable and useful. This is especially difficult given the amount of contextual information that will be necessary to include in order for stakeholders to understand and make meaning from the data. The goal of this challenge point would be to create solutions for visualizing expenditure data in a way that is straightforward and easy to understand, while also incorporating important context and data limitations.