

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) OVERVIEW



Signed into law December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the federal legislation that governs elementary and secondary education in America. ESSA reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The measure passed with broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate and was influenced by a diverse set of lawmakers and stakeholders, who continue to monitor the regulatory process.

ESSA represents a major shift from the increased federal authority of NCLB and state waivers issued by the Department of Education to increased flexibility to states and school districts.

ESSA PRESENTS SEVERAL CHANGES FROM NCLB. ESSA NOW:

- Eliminates Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT)
- Eliminates the requirement for teacher/principal evaluation systems and/or linking results to student test scores
- Eliminates prescribed interventions in identified schools
- Eliminates School Improvement Grant funds and requirements
- Migrates Title III language proficiency accountability requirements to Title I
- Makes funds more flexible (e.g., Title II and Title IV transferable)
- Reduces the authority of the U.S. secretary of education

THERE ARE 9 TITLES IN ESSA:

- TITLE I: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies
- TITLE II: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders
- TITLE III: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
- TITLE IV: 21st-Century Schools
- TITLE V: State Innovation and Local Flexibility
- TITLE VI: Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education
- TITLE VII: Impact Aid
- TITLE VIII: General Provisions
- TITLE IX: Education for the Homeless and Other Laws

ESSA puts states and school districts in charge by creating new opportunities and flexibility while also requiring states to balance many decisions.

STATE LEADERS CAN:

- Design their own school ratings and decide how to determine the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools
- Innovate with assessment options, such as using computer-adaptive assessments and interim assessments that roll up to a single score or performance assessments
- Choose the ACT or SAT instead of a separate state high school assessment
- Decide how to evaluate teachers

STATE LEADERS HAVE TO FOLLOW CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS:

- Report results for more student subgroups
- Continue to have 95 percent state test participation
- Identify the lowest-performing schools, approve locally developed improvement plans, and monitor the schools' progress
- Report data on the distribution of effective teachers
- Consult a prescribed list of stakeholders when developing the state's plans

NEW!

ESSA also requires states to engage with a multitude of stakeholders to inform decision making.

ESSA requires states to engage in and provide evidence of “meaningful consultation” with a variety of stakeholders in virtually every major state-level decision. This includes:

- A variety of local education agencies (LEA)
 - ✓ Geographically diverse—suburban, rural, and urban
 - ✓ Serving a high percentage of schools identified for (and those implementing) Comprehensive Support and Improvement plans
- Principals, teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and other staff
- School leader and teacher professional standards, certification, and licensing organizations
- The governor, members of the state legislature, and state board of education
- Parents and families of students of all ages
- Individuals, organizations, or partners connected to related strategies, programs, and activities being conducted in the state

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

States have just a year to set a strong vision, engage stakeholders, and design ESSA plans for implementation beginning in school year 2017–18.

DECEMBER 2015	AUGUST 2016	FALL 2016	MARCH/JULY 2017	2017–18 SCHOOL YEAR
President Obama signs ESSA into law	ESEA waivers and competitive grant programs expire	Final regulations are published and go into effect	State Title I plans are due to the Education Department; transition year begins	Full implementation; delays are possible*

*ED is under pressure to move the start date from the 2017–18 to the 2018–19 school year.