

# EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

## Title I—Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies



**WHY TITLE I MATTERS.** The purpose of ESSA is to “provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.” For principals, Title I funding brings both needed resources and new requirements to provide the personnel, instruction, and interventions to help close achievement gaps. This fact sheet provides basic information about the funding and major provisions of Title I. It also highlights opportunities for you to engage with your district and state in ensuring that the state’s Title I plan includes the priorities you deem critical to providing a quality education in your school. NASSP also provides a comprehensive summary of ESSA at [https://www.nassp.org/advocacy/learn-the-issues/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-\(esea\)-reauthorization/summary-of-the-every-student-succeeds-act](https://www.nassp.org/advocacy/learn-the-issues/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-(esea)-reauthorization/summary-of-the-every-student-succeeds-act).

**IMPORTANT.** Your state is currently developing its new Title I plan—including the specifics of a new accountability system—and discussing new public report card requirements. By law, states must include principals in the planning process with stakeholders. To get involved, visit your state department of education website at [www.nassp.org/essa-states](http://www.nassp.org/essa-states). In addition, NASSP has worked closely with both the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as well as the Learning First Alliance to develop principles and guidelines to help principals and other stakeholders proactively engage in the Title I planning process. These resources can be found at <http://www.learningfirst.org/lfa-drafts-guidelines-stakeholder-engagement-essa>.

### FUNDING. Title I: Part A

Grants to districts are authorized in the following amounts:

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ■ FY 2017 — \$15,012,317,605 | ■ FY 2019 — \$15,897,371,442 |
| ■ FY 2018 — \$15,457,459,042 | ■ FY 2020 — \$16,182,344,591 |

### NEW!

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.** The School Improvement Grant program, known as SIG, has been eliminated from ESSA and consolidated into Title I. In addition, no prescribed specific school improvement strategies are included in the law. This means that it is left up to a state’s discretion to identify turnaround strategies for schools identified for intervention.

States must now set aside 7 percent of their Title I funds for school improvement interventions and technical assistance. Similar to language in No Child Left Behind, states have the choice to send these funds by formula to all districts or can turn them into competitive grants. Also, states may set aside an optional 3 percent for “direct student services” such as academic/career and technical education (CTE) coursework, credit recovery, AP/IB test fees, and transportation for districts implementing school choice.

### NEW!

**SCHOOLWIDE TITLE I:** Normally, only schools comprised of at least 40 percent low-income students can use Title I for schoolwide purposes. This new provision allows states to grant waivers from this requirement.

### NEW!

**SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT:** States must use a methodology to allocate state/local funds to Title I schools that ensures they receive the funds it would otherwise receive.

**MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT:** Current requirement still applies.

It is important to understand that authorization levels provide a recommended funding level for operating a program and provide guidance to the Appropriations Committees as to an appropriate level of funding for the program. However, it is only the Appropriations Committees that have the authority to decide specific discretionary spending levels for programs on an annual basis. Often programs are funded at levels much lower than authorized.

**MAJOR PROVISIONS. Standards : Assessments : Accountability : Intervention**

States must:

- Set challenging academic standards
- Set language proficiency standards aligned with academic standards
- Assess 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of each subgroup in grades 3–8 in math and reading once in high school
- Assess students in science (once per three grade bands)
- Develop an accountability system and make determinations
- Ensure districts and schools intervene in the lowest-performing schools
- Report data by schools and districts

States have been given a great deal of flexibility to define the term “challenging” as it relates to their state-defined standards. In fact, the Department of Education cannot “require” states to use certain standards. However, a state can choose to use standards that meet federal requirements and have been adopted previously, such as Common Core.

- STATES MUST:**
- Cap use of alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities at 1 percent of all students, by subject. No cap on district.
  - Identify and develop assessments in languages for ELs.
  - Report on gender, homeless children, children in foster care, and children with active parents in the armed forces.
  - Use Universal Design.

- STATES MAY:**
- Exempt advanced grade 8 students from math test to take state-determined high school assessment.
  - Develop computer adaptive tests.
  - Allow districts to use a nationally recognized high school assessment in lieu of a state test.
  - Apply to allow districts to use the Innovative Assessment Pilot program (seven-state limit).

**NEW!**

**ASSESSMENTS.** While the annual reading, math, and science assessment requirements haven’t changed under ESSA, there are new requirements and flexibilities that may impact your district and school.

**ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM.** States define one single system that includes:

- Long-term goals, measuring interim progress of student subgroups on:
  - ✓ Improved academic achievement on state assessments
  - ✓ Graduation rates
  - ✓ Progress in achieving English language proficiency
- Annual, meaningful differentiation of schools
- Statewide indicators, which must include:
  1. Annual assessment
  2. Graduation rate for high schools
  3. A measure of student growth or other academic indicator (K–8)—**NEW!**
  4. English language proficiency—**NEW!**
  5. At least one additional measure of school quality/ student success that could include student engagement, educator engagement, student access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, or school climate and safety, among other measures—**NEW!**

**Notes:** Indicators must be valid, comparable, reliable, statewide, and meaningfully differentiate schools. The school rating must be based on all indicators for each subgroup. Indicators one through four must have a much greater weight than number five—the “additional indicator(s).”

## INTERVENTION. States Identify schools for Improvement and Support

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (every three years):

- ✓ Schools in the bottom 5 percent according to the state's performance metric
- ✓ High schools graduating fewer than 67 percent of students
- ✓ Schools consistently underperforming for any subgroup after a state-defined number of years

**Note:** States determine number of years for intervention, districts determine intervention, and states determine exit criteria.

States must identify schools for Targeted Support and Improvement: Schools that are low performing for one or more subgroups (performing as low as the bottom 5 percent).

**Note:** Districts determine timing and type of intervention, unless the school is then defined as a school for comprehensive support and improvement.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVOCATE.

- **Engage now in state accountability system decision making and Title I plan development.** Your state is required to include school principals in developing the state standards, assessments, and accountability system—including the new school quality indicator(s)—and the full Title I plan. Visit your state department of education's website to learn about their process and/or to review draft plans. Every state is managing this process differently and needs your input now.
- **Meet with your district to discuss how to support and influence the state planning** for the new requirements and flexibility in statewide assessments. Your school teams, parent communities, and others will be relying on you to convey any changes coming in 2017 and beyond.
- **For priority and focus schools,** discuss with your district and state contacts the process to continue support if you are a priority or focus school previously identified under your state's ESEA waiver. ESSA requires this support to continue until ESSA is fully implemented or until your school exits priority or focus status.
- **Work with a coalition.** The commonly known saying "strength in numbers" is true for successful advocacy. Working with allied groups that include parents, teachers, school board members, and other local/district education professionals can certainly improve the impact of your recommendations.
- **Make the case for increased Title I funding.** Members of the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate must hear from principals why increased Title I funds are critical to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. Make the case for why more resources are needed to improve the academic success of your students. Use the Principal's Legislative Action Center to send a message to your Congressional leader at [www.nassp.org/plac](http://www.nassp.org/plac).
- **Share any good news with your local media.** If you have good news to tell or believe your community, city, or state media can highlight the work and success of your teachers and students, visit [www.nassp.org/essa-communicationkit](http://www.nassp.org/essa-communicationkit) for tips, tools, and resources on how to raise the visibility of your school via social media as well as traditional outlets.