

EDUCATORS WANT TO KNOW:

Will ESSA impact my students, my classroom, my school, my community?

In December 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law, revising ESEA and replacing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) with ESSA. NCLB represented an era of federal oversight and accountability that has often been referred to as test and punish; we learned that what affects our students affects our communities. ESSA attempts to address problems of NCLB by returning decision making power to states, local districts and mandates input from **educators, paraeducators** and **other stakeholders**. This practice guide is the first in a monthly series of informational flyers intended to help educators understand how ESSA impacts their students, classrooms, schools and communities. The purpose of this first guide is to give a broad overview of the major changes within ESSA. Subsequent guides will dig more deeply into what these changes mean and how to take advantage of what you have worked so hard for—empowering educators and elevating educator voice in decision making.

For more information about ESSA, visit [EdCommunities](#), and join the [ESSA Implementation group](#).

IMPACT ON EDUCATORS AND EDUCATOR VOICE

- ★ Eliminates Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) provision; it is up to states to determine requirements for teacher qualifications.
- ★ Maintains paraeducator qualification requirements.
- ★ States are no longer required to set up teacher evaluation systems based in *significant* part on test scores.
- ★ Requires educator and other stakeholder voice via *meaningful consultation* in state and local planning.

TESTING

- ★ States must adopt **challenging standards**; the federal government cannot require states to adopt specific standards.
- ★ States are still mandated to **test annually** in math and reading grades 3-8 and once in high school with grade span testing for science (once each in grades 3-5, 6-9, 10-12). Test results must be disaggregated and reported on three proficiency levels.
- ★ States have flexibility in the **types of assessments** used and can set target limit of aggregate testing time.



ACCOUNTABILITY

- ✦ Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) has been eliminated; proficiency rates are no longer federally mandated at 100%, it is up to states to define proficiency goals.
- ✦ States are to design their own **accountability systems** which cannot be based solely on test scores.
- ✦ Accountability systems must include *at least one* indicator of schools success or student supports that will help ensure resource and opportunity equity such as those outlined in the NEA **Opportunity Dashboard**.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- ✦ States must identify schools for improvement which include the lowest 5% of schools, schools that fail to graduate 1/3 of students and schools with consistently underperforming subgroups.
- ✦ Opportunities to promote approaches such as community schools.
- ✦ Districts and schools must partner with stakeholders on improvement strategies.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT...

Both NCLB and the ESSA are reauthorizations of ESEA. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was enacted to ensure equitable educational opportunity by providing additional resources to the most vulnerable students. More information on the history of ESEA and reauthorizations can be found [here](#).

RESOURCES

NEA EdCommunities
www.MYNEA360.org

ESSA Implementation Website
<http://getessaright.org>

Teacher Empowerment
NEA.org/ESSATeacherEmpowerment

Para-educator Empowerment
NEA.org/ESSAParaEducatorEmpowerment

Family and Communities
NEA.org/ESSAFamilyCommunity

Less Testing=More Learning /Types of Assessments
NEA.org/ESSATesting

Accountability Systems
NEA.org/ESSAAccountabilitySystems

Opportunity Dashboard
NEA.org/ESSAOpportunityDashboard

COMING NEXT...

Testing, Differences and opportunities under ESSA