

EDUCATORS WANT TO KNOW:

Will ESSA impact student testing?

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**. Educators have long advocated for their voices to be heard on matters of student learning; ESSA has brought about this opportunity. How ESSA will impact student testing depends on the actions of educators and other stakeholders. Educators cannot assume the changes they would like to see on their students' behalf will be made without input. If educators do not take the opportunity to give input, changes will come about under ESSA, perhaps not changes that are best for all students. ESSA maintains the current schedule of standards-aligned federally required statewide assessments with opportunities for improvement. If changes are to benefit all students, educators must speak up. The purpose of this guide is to provide information about testing within ESSA and provide an opportunity to engage others in "Something to Talk About."

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



STUDENT SUCCESS

- ✦ Under ESSA, tests must include **multiple measures** of achievement and may be partially delivered via portfolios, projects or performance tasks and may include student growth measures.
- ✦ Computer adaptive testing is permitted, enabling assessment of content above grade level.
- ✦ **Testing accommodations** for students with disabilities (SWD) continue.
- ✦ There is a 1% cap for the total number of students within the state that can be assessed using **alternative assessments**. There is not a district-level cap; however, districts that contribute to the state 1% cap must provide information to the state to help justify the need to exceed the cap.

QUALITY

- ✦ Under ESSA, grant funding is available to states to conduct **assessment system audits** to help identify and eliminate unnecessary and duplicative assessments.

- ★ Grant funding is available for a pilot program to develop **innovative assessment systems**.
- ★ States may set target limits on the **time spent testing** allowing more time for student learning.

OPPORTUNITY

- ★ Under ESSA, states can determine if tests are administered as a single assessment or through multiple assessments resulting in a summative score.
- ★ ESSA acknowledges the right of parents and guardians to opt students out of statewide academic assessments where state and/or local policies allow

them to do so. States are still responsible for testing 95% of all students and student subgroups.

- ★ States may approve the use of locally-selected, nationally recognized high school assessments (such as ACT or SAT) in lieu of required statewide assessments covering the same subject areas.
- ★ To avoid duplicative testing, under certain conditions, states are permitted to **exempt 8th grade students** enrolled in advanced mathematics from the statewide exam.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT...

How can I work with educators and other stakeholders to help eliminate duplicative or unnecessary tests?

What are the opportunities within ESSA to give students more time to learn by advocating for less testing?

RESOURCES

NEA EdCommunities
www.MYNEA360.org

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

COMING NEXT...

More than just test scores, new accountability systems under ESSA