

# EDUCATORS WANT TO KNOW:

## Will accountability be different under ESSA?

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 accountability. ESSA mandates that statewide accountability systems can no longer be based solely on test scores. How ESSA will impact state and local accountability depends on the actions of educators. ESSA offers opportunities for educators to speak up and collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that **accountability systems** do not become barriers to student success. The purpose of this guide is to provide information of changes within ESSA with regard to accountability systems 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, accountability is no longer based solely on test scores; instead accountability must be comprised of multiple measures, which include both academic measures and opportunity indicators. These include:

### ACADEMIC MEASURES

- ✓ Math & Reading assessments.
- ✓ High school graduation rates.
- ✓ A statewide indicator for middle and elementary schools.
- ✓ English Language Proficiency.

### OPPORTUNITY INDICATORS\*

- ✓ *At least one indicator which includes measures of student success, educator quality, or school quality. Examples of these indicators include student success in advanced coursework, student access to qualified paraeducators, and student access to high-quality early education programs. These opportunity indicators are outlined in the [Opportunity Dashboard](#).*

*\*The academic measures must carry more weight than the opportunity measures.*



- ★ States determine how much tests should count and which school or student supports should be included in the **accountability system**.
- ★ Each state must adopt challenging academic standards that prepare students for credit-bearing college and/or career coursework. States must also implement high-quality assessments that are aligned to the academic standards.

## OPPORTUNITY

- ★ Under ESSA, for students with the most significant disabilities, each state must adopt a set of **alternate achievement standards** that promote access to the general education curriculum.
- ★ Each state must widely disseminate an annual state report card which includes a description of the state's accountability system and long-term goals. The report card must:
  - ✓ Name public schools identified for school improvement.
  - ✓ Describe the state system for differentiating all public schools.
  - ✓ Report on each of the state's accountability indicators disaggregated by student subgroup.
  - ✓ Include information on **opportunity dashboard indicators** such as actual per pupil expenditures, measures of **school climate and safety**,

**exclusionary discipline practices**, suspension rates, violent incidents and referrals to law enforcement.

- ✓ Include information on resource equity indicators such as access to **pre-school** and advanced coursework, teachers' professional qualifications, the percentage of teachers with emergency or provisional credentials and/or those teaching a subject for which they are not certified.
- ★ Local school districts must annually disseminate a report card that mirrors the state report card. Local report cards may contain additional indicators of school quality or student success in order to provide a means to identify inequities in resource inputs.

## QUALITY

- ★ Under ESSA, state waivers have been eliminated.
  - ✓ Each state must involve a Committee of Practitioners in the development and implementation of the state accountability plan. The Committee of Practitioners must be comprised primarily of educators, including paraeducators, teachers and School Instructional Support Professionals (SISP) as well as other stakeholders.
  - ✓ Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) has been eliminated; instead states are responsible for setting their own accountability goals.

## SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT...

What are the **opportunity indicators** that would be important to include in your school accountability system?

Which additional indicators would be helpful to include in your district report card that could highlight where inequities may exist?

Join the **ESSA Implementation Group** in **EdCommunities** and start a conversation!

## RESOURCES

**NEA EdCommunities**  
[www.MYNEA360.org](http://www.MYNEA360.org)

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

## COMING NEXT...

More about Opportunity Indicators and the Opportunity Dashboard