

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Eliminates many of the *No Child Left Behind* federal mandates
- Requires states to establish their own seven-year plan for improving student achievement. The state plan must include a statewide accountability system based on challenging academic standards, and states must identify low-performing schools.
- Consolidates approximately 50 programs and provides states with the flexibility to determine how to best use the funds formerly designated for each program.
- Establishes a new program to promote access to quality preschool programs housed in the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Prohibits the federal government from requiring states to adopt the Common Core standards or any other specific set of academic standards.
- Provides funding for professional development for teachers and principals. It eliminates the “highly qualified teacher” standard, allowing states more control over teacher standards. It also allows, but does not require, states to develop and implement teacher evaluation programs.
- Maintains annual testing requirements for reading and math in K-8 plus once in high school and requires states to disaggregate the data so that we can continue to monitor the progress of subgroups. It encourages states to review the patchwork of state and district tests, which are often the cause of concerns about over-testing. It also allows a state or district to offer the federally required test in two parts to be taken at different points of the year to reduce the stress of the exam and allow for results to reach parents and teachers in a timelier manner.