

## What Does This New Law Mean for my Child?

Now that ESSA has been signed into law, the focus for advocacy turns to effective implementation of the law to ensure every child has the ability to reach their full potential. While this new law provides a great opportunity for states to tailor their education systems to the needs of their students—including the needs of students with disabilities—this new level of authority also requires an increased amount of responsibility for states to ensure they close achievement gaps and meet the needs of all students. National PTA, our constituent associations and advocates across the country will seek to support and empower families to be active participants in the state and local implementation of ESSA to ensure equity and opportunity for all students.



### How can I be involved in the implementation process? What can I do?

The U.S. Department of Education is currently in the implementation phase of ESSA. The Department will provide guidance and clarification to states on how best to carry out the new law. You can receive regular updates and information via **email** from the U.S. Department of Education on the **ESSA implementation process**.

You are encouraged to reach out to your local school district and state department of education to proactively provide input on implementation efforts. You can also stay up to date with the latest on ESSA at the federal level by **signing up for the PTA Takes Action Network** to receive email updates and action alerts on ESSA implementation and other federal legislation and policy. National PTA is a part of the **State and Local ESSA Implementation Network** that seeks to promote state, local and school decision-making during implementation and collaborate with education stakeholders to provide guidance to the federal government on key implementation issues. We encourage state and local PTA members to establish a similar network of stakeholders to inform implementation at the state and local levels.

### Will this new law impact my child this school year?

Portions of the ESSA will begin to be implemented in schools in fall 2016. However, new state accountability systems will need to be created by states over the next year and will therefore not go into effect until the 2017–2018 school year.



### How does the new law encourage increased family engagement in education?

ESSA requires school districts to have a written parent and family engagement policy that welcomes all families and seeks to strengthen the partnership between families, the school and the community to improve student outcomes. Each school must also hold an annual meeting with parents and families to explain the curriculum, types of academic assessments used to measure student progress, the state's academic standards and the skills students are expected to obtain and demonstrate.

The law also includes the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) competitive grant program. SFECs will help to provide states and districts with the capacity to support effective implementation and enhancement of family engagement policies and initiatives in schools. SFECs must be funded by Congress each year. A key priority for PTA is securing federal investment in the SFEC grant program to make sure states and districts have the resources to increase family engagement in education that support student success.



### What does ESSA mean for the classroom instruction my child receives?

The ESSA reduces the high-stakes testing associated with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and requires students to have access to and receive a well-rounded education, which includes access to core content areas—math, reading and history—in addition to arts and music, foreign languages, technology, engineering, health and physical education.

### Does the law require states to adopt certain academic standards, accountability or teacher evaluation systems?

States determine their own academic standards for students, accountability and teacher evaluation systems. The new law specifically expresses that states cannot be required to adopt specific standards—such as the Common Core State Standards—or particular assessments accountability systems or teacher evaluation models.

# The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



## What are the testing requirements in ESSA?

Each state must administer annual assessments in mathematics and reading/language arts in grades 3–8 and once in grades 9–12. States must also administer a science assessment once in grades 3–5, 6–9 and 10–12. The law also requires that no less than 95% of all students—or of any group of students—participate in the state assessment.



## Will my child's teachers be evaluated based on test scores?

The new law does not require states to establish teacher-evaluation systems, nor that a teacher evaluation system include student test scores. States have the flexibility to create teacher evaluation systems—if they choose—that meet the needs of educators and students in their states.

## Does ESSA address an over emphasis on testing?

The law provides resources for the review of state and local assessments to eliminate redundant tests and make needed improvements to accurately measure student growth and achievement and provide valuable information to teachers and parents. States also have the option to set a target limit on the total amount of time students spend taking tests in each grade.

## How will I know if my child's school is being held accountable for their growth and achievement?

States have more authority over their accountability systems and school improvement methods in ESSA. States are required to develop plans that feature multiple measures of student growth and

achievement, including performance on required state assessments, school quality and access to opportunities that promote college- and career-readiness. States will have to identify and provide support to schools that are not meeting the state-determined goals for student and school performance.

States must include stakeholders, including parents, in the development of their plans to monitor student and school performance. Over the next several months, your state department of education will be moving forward to engage parents and families in the development of state assessment and accountability systems.

## Does the new law provide additional educational opportunities and supports for my child?

The new law helps states, school districts and schools increase their capacity to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning and use technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. School districts will have access to resources and the flexibility to use them to address the most pressing needs in their schools, such as bullying prevention, increased access to personalized learning activities, technology or music and arts programs.



## Does the new law allow public funds to be used for private school vouchers?

The law does not include any private school voucher provisions that would divert public funding from public schools.



**National Office of Government Affairs**  
1250 N. Pitt St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Toll-Free: (800) 307-4PTA (4782)  
Fax: (703) 836-0942  
govtaffairs@pta.org  
PTA.org