

What is the Every Student Succeeds Act?

- The **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** is the United States' national policy for public education from pre-K through grade 12.
- **ESSA provides states with funding** to support students, teachers, and schools — for things like services for low-income students, English learners, and students with disabilities [and/or those with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)].

What's New in ESSA?

- ESSA gives state and local governments more **flexibility** to decide how to measure student performance and school quality. For example, ESSA requires that all states adopt “challenging academic standards,” but allows states to choose what those standards will be.
- In exchange for that flexibility, ESSA requires that state and local government leaders **engage** with their communities to make decisions that best fit their needs.
- ESSA has kept in place many important policies and opportunities that matter to our country as a whole, including tracking how students are doing academically, looking at the gaps in performance among groups of students, and **making sure that those who need support receive it**.

What is a State ESSA Plan?

- The first decisions under ESSA have happened at the state level, where state leaders engaged with the larger state education community to develop state ESSA plans, which outline how states plan to meet the requirements of the law. **These state ESSA plans include:**
 - **Standards** for what children should learn in each grade
 - **Assessments** for finding out if children have met those standards
 - **Long-term goals** for schools and students
 - **A way to measure** if schools are on track to meet those goals
 - **A system of support** for all schools, especially those that are struggling the most



What Does ESSA Mean for My School?

- Every state's ESSA plan is required to support schools and districts as they write their own local plans for **school improvement** and plans for **use of federal funds**. These local ESSA plans will describe how schools will support students and improve over time.
- In some states, only schools that are identified by the state as lowest performing will be required to submit plans for school improvement. **All schools** that receive federal funding must submit applications for those funds.
- Under ESSA, all local ESSA plans **must** be written in consultation with families and communities — called “stakeholder engagement” — and should be designed to support **education equity**.

Brief

A History of the Law

- **ESSA** is the current name for an old law: the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**.
- From 2001 until ESSA became law, that same law was called the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**. Every time the name has changed, edits have been made.
- Congress first passed the **ESEA** in 1965 during the Civil Rights Movement.
- In 1965, this law was the first time the federal government provided **comprehensive education funding** to states — specifically to support students from low-income families.
- With federal funding came **requirements** for how to use it, including how to measure school quality.
- Congress has revised those requirements several times, most recently by passing **ESSA** in December 2015.



Learn more about the new law and your state's ESSA plan at CheckStatePlans.org

