Supporting Teachers and Leaders

What to Learn from Your State's ESSA Plan

Broadly, ESSA brings more focus to educator equity and improving teaching practice while providing greater flexibility to how LEAs apply Title funding. LEAs also have more flexibility with Title II-A funds. While the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era requirement of "highly qualified teachers" no longer applies,[15] Educator Equity data — the distribution of ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools versus low-poverty schools and low-minority schools — must still be tracked and reported. Many states and LEAs have identified strategies, resources and implementation timelines to address these educator equitable access challenges. Learn more about Educator Equity and statewide programs under Title II in your ESSA state plan.

Guidance for School Improvement

ESSA addresses many of the resource and access disparities some districts face by providing funding under Titles I and II. Using these levers, LEAs will be positioned to strengthen culturally appropriate professional development opportunities; improve attraction, development and retention programs; strengthen, develop, and/or implement stronger evidence-based teacher and principal evaluation systems; and provide providing high-quality, personalized professional development to educators to meets the needs of early childhood and children affected by trauma or other barriers to student learning. ESSA also supports district partnerships with nonprofit organizations and educator/leader preparation programs. Such partnerships can support culturally relevant and site-specific professional development.

Find Support for this Strategy in ESSA

TITLE I, PART A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
TITLE II PART A: Supporting Effective Instruction
TITLE V, PART B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program

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15   Under NCLB, a highly qualified teacher meant having: "1) a bachelor's degree, 2) full state certification or licensure, and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach." Beyond that, NCLB did not define its terminology, and left requirements around demonstration of competency and teacher quality goals up to states.

Essential Stakeholders

✓ Teachers across subject and grade level, including retired teachers and teachers of student subgroups with particular needs, such as students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students in foster care or who are impacted by homelessness, system-involved youth, student parents, and others.

✓ Local union representatives (NEA, AFT, or other), and other teacher groups (e.g. TFA, Educators for Excellence)

✓ Childcare providers and early learning practitioners and leaders

✓ Students and families, including parent-teacher groups (PTA and others), and student organizations

✓ Charter teacher alliances and substitute teachers

✓ Teacher preparation program leadership and others involved in educator evaluation

✓ School personnel, including social/emotional support staff

✓ Principal teams and associations (e.g. the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, the Association of School Administrators, State Indian Education Associations)

Ask the Experts

✓ Teacher Assessment and Evaluation: The National Education Association's Framework for Transforming Education Systems to Support Effective Teaching and Improve Student Learning (National Education Association)

✓ Teacher Professional Learning Diagnostic Assessment: Does your school system have the conditions and practices in place to support Connected Professional Learning? (Education Resource Strategies)

✓ Leveraging ESSA to Build Professional Learning Systems (EducationCounsel, LLC, Learning Forward)

Highlighted Resources
What Is a Professional Learning Community?

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development explores the value and core standards of an effective professional learning community, rooting professional learning in student outcomes and a culture of collaboration in service of student learning.

Learn more at ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/What-Is-a-Professional-Learning-Community%C2%A2.aspx

What are states doing to improve professional development?

Interactive State Map: Examples of Initiatives Elevating the Teaching Profession (Center for American Progress)