

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT – A SNAPSHOT

April 11, 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed ESEA into law as part of his war on poverty. Focused primarily on delivering federal aid to help level the educational playing field for poor and minority children

REAUTHORIZATIONS

- 1968** Congress expands ESEA with new programs for migrant, neglected or delinquent children and the Bilingual Education Act is added.
- 1969** President Nixon demands that the federal aid “supplement not supplant” money spent by states and districts.
- 1978** President Carter signs reauthorization permitting Title I money “schoolwide” if at least 75% of children are eligible for the aid.
- 1981** President Reagan pushes hard for rewrite of ESEA consolidating many programs into a block grant but maintains Title 1 (Chapter 1) as separate program. This is the start of a period of depressed spending under federal law.
- 1985** Supreme Court (5-4) vote rules that practice of sending public school teachers into religious schools violates First Amendment ban on government establishment of religion, consequently students from religious schools must travel to mobile vans, public schools, or other neutral sites to receive Title I services.
- 1988** Law takes important steps toward the kind of student testing and accountability later expanded by NCLB. Districts must annually assess effectiveness of Chapter I programs in schools. Program Improvement Action Plans (PIAP) required for each school that does not make substantial progress toward raising student achievement.
- 1994** President Bill Clinton signs “Improving America’s Schools Act” requiring states to develop standards and aligned assessments for all students. Districts must identify schools not making “adequate yearly progress” and take steps to improve them. This reauthorization also introduce the voluntary Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration project.
- 1997** The Supreme Court (5-4 vote) overturns its 1985 ruling.
- 2002** President Bush signs the ESEA – expanding testing requirements and introducing an aggressive federal role in holding states and school districts accountable for showing improved student performance.

December 10, 2015 President Barak Obama signs the *Every Child Succeeds Act*.

Understanding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Title I: Improving basic programs operated by state and local educational agencies

- Ends the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) mandates under NCLB, which require that all students in all states make “adequate” annual progress toward universal proficiency in math and reading or have the state risk federal sanctions
- Retains the annual testing requirement that students be tested every year in grades three through eight and again in high school
- Includes requirements for the new “state-based” accountability plans
- Specifics about the types and the proportion of accountability options that must be included. Within a state’s accountability plan, “substantial weight” would have to be given to quantitative measures, such as graduation rates and performance on state tests, with much less weight allotted to subjective measures, such as school climate and educator engagement. Under the new proposal, states would also be required to intervene in the lowest performing 5 percent of schools, have school-level interventions in schools in which subgroups of students perform poorly, and intervene in schools in which fewer than two-thirds of students graduate.

Title II: Preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers and principals

National activities include, among other programs, teacher and principal programs, literacy initiatives, civics and history programs (a new initiative under the ESSA), and a new program known as the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Master Teacher Corps.

Title III: Language instruction for English Language Learners

Title IV: 21st Century Schools

- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment program

Title V: State Innovation and Local Flexibility

Under the new Title V, the ESSA enables some funding transferability, a pilot program for weighted student funding, and nearly \$170 million for rural education programs from 2015 through 2020.

Title VI: Programs for American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native students

Title VII: Impact Aid (formerly Title VIII of NCLB)

Title VIII: General provisions section

- definitions of terms
- outlining the use of administrative funding
- detailing waivers

As with NCLB, a state may request a waiver from the Secretary of Education for specific statutory or regulatory provisions under the ESSA. However, the ESSA would specifically prohibit the Secretary from requiring states or schools to adopt specific standards or assessments, such as the Common Core State Standards, or require adoption of specific state accountability systems or teacher evaluation models to qualify for a waiver.

Title IX: Programs for homeless children and youths.

New federal preschool program: The new preschool program would be housed at HHS, and jointly administered with the Department of Education. The funding would be available to states to help coordinate existing government preschool programs, such as those operated by the states and Head Start, and to establish new preschool programs