Overview of the Every Student Succeeds Act for Parents and Community Members

September 2016
Reauthorization of ESEA

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), 1965
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB), 2002
- ESEA Flexibility Waiver, 2012
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015
Highlights of ESSA

- Maintains annual assessments for grades 3-8 and high school
- Increases state flexibility to design accountability systems, interventions and student supports
- Gives states flexibility to work with local stakeholders to develop educator evaluation and support systems
- Increases state and local flexibility in the use of federal funds
Standards

• ESSA reinforces state authority over standards, accountability, and other key education policies.

• States are required to adopt challenging academic standards.

• The U.S. Secretary of Education is prohibited from forcing or encouraging states to pick a particular set of standards.
Assessments

• Each state is required to have in place a set of high-quality student academic assessments in math, reading or language arts, and science.

• States will break out the test data for whole schools, plus different “subgroups” of students (e.g., English learners, students in special education, racial minorities, those in poverty).

• ESSA maintains the federal requirement for 95% participation in tests.
Accountability for Elementary and Middle School

• States need to incorporate at least four indicators into their accountability systems.

• States must include three academic indicators:
  ▪ academic proficiency on state assessments;
  ▪ English language proficiency; and
  ▪ growth or another statewide academic indicator for K-8 schools.
Accountability for Elementary and Middle School

- States are required to add at least one non-academic indicator of school quality or student success.

Possibilities include:

- Student engagement
- Educator engagement
- Access to and completion of advanced coursework
- Postsecondary readiness
- School climate/safety
Accountability for High Schools

- High schools will be evaluated by mostly the same set of indicators as elementary/middle schools, except that graduation rates will have to be included.
School Improvement

Every 3 years, states must use the data from their accountability systems to identify those schools “in need of improvement.” These schools are:

- the lowest-performing 5% of all schools in the state;
- schools where one or more subgroups are underperforming; or
- high schools with graduation rates of less than 67%.
For schools that are at the bottom 5% and for high schools with high dropout rates:

- Districts will work with teachers and school staff to develop an evidence-based improvement plan.
- States will monitor the turnaround effort.
- If schools continue to struggle, after no more than 4 years, the state will be required to step in with its own plan.
School Improvement

For schools where subgroups are struggling:

• Schools will need to develop an evidence-based plan to help the particular group of students that are falling behind.

• Districts must monitor these plans. If the school continues to struggle with the subgroups the district would step in.
Teacher and Leader Quality

- ESSA does not require teacher evaluation systems to be based in significant part on students’ test scores.
- States receive funds to attract, prepare, support and retain effective teachers and leaders to serve high-poverty, minority students.
Transition Timeline

Now
- Familiarize stakeholders with the new law

August 2016
- ESEA Flexibility Waiver expires

School Year 2016-17
- Transition period to work with stakeholders and develop state plans

School Year 2017-18
- New state plans in compliance with ESSA will go into effect
ESSA Explained:
Inside the New Federal K-12 Law
Where Can I Learn More?

• Read the Every Student Succeeds Act

• Connecticut’s ESSA webpage

• U.S. Department of Education’s ESSA webpage
  http://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn