

Fact Sheet

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law on Dec. 10, 2015, and is the latest version of the 50-year-old federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ESSA replaces the 2001 reauthorization known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

What is ESSA?

ESSA is the nation's latest K-12 education law, which replaces the more prescriptive No Child Left Behind. ESSA gives states and schools more latitude to innovate, while at the same time maintaining a focus on accountability and an emphasis on state and local systems of improvement.

ESSA limits the authority of the U.S. Secretary of Education; provides for more state and local control; and is less prescriptive, while not allowing the state to back off on accountability. Through waivers from the federal government, Colorado already has flexibility to develop its own assessment and accountability systems.

What we know now about timeline and ESSA

- Programs as authorized under NCLB will remain in effect for the 2016-17 school year.
- 2016-17 funding will be allocated under NCLB rules.
- The provisions of ESSA take effect for the 2017-18 school year.
- The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) is currently soliciting public comment on the regulatory process. **Completed regulations are expected by October of 2016.** [View updates from USDE.](#)

What does ESSA mean for Colorado?

The Colorado Department of Education is crafting the state's ESSA strategy to take advantage of the federal law's increased options for assessments, accountability and supports based on community and educator input. In many areas, Colorado already passed laws and created systems around these key areas. But ESSA gives us a chance to continue to build on the success.

CDE is committed to maintaining an education system that works to close the achievement and opportunity gaps, improves teaching and learning, boosts the graduation rate, improves and transforms underperforming schools and ensures high-quality educational leadership. Opportunities in ESSA and state law will guide CDE's focus on these important goals.

ESSA Timeline for Colorado

- April-May: ESSA statewide listening tour visits seven cities.
- June: Additional listening events throughout state while CDE continues to engage community and stakeholder groups to gather feedback.
- July-September: Committees convene to make recommendations on focus areas; drafting begins based on committee recommendations; initial draft is completed.
- October-December: ESSA strategy vetted with stakeholders and committees; revised plan is presented to Colorado Education Commissioner and State Board of Education.
- January-April 2017: Final plan approved by Commissioner, Colorado's Governor and State Board of Education and submitted to U.S. Department of Education.



What has Colorado done on education policy in recent past?

In 2012 Colorado sought and obtained a waiver from many of the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Colorado's waiver was based on the work of the Colorado legislature, which had focused on addressing standards, accountability and instruction since 2008. Specifically, the legislature passed the following significant reform efforts to improve education in Colorado:

- **2008 - CAP4K** -- Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids. Senate Bill 08-212 created a seamless system of public education standards, expectations and assessments from preschool through postsecondary education designed to prepare high school students for college or careers. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/cas-historyanddevelopment>.
- **2009 - Education Accountability Act of 2009** – Senate Bill 09-163 holds the state, districts and individual public schools accountable for performance on the same set of indicators and related measures statewide. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountabilityregulations>.
- **2010 - Educator Effectiveness Law** – Senate Bill 10-191 changed the way principals and teachers are supported and evaluated with the goal of ensuring college and career readiness. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/sb191factsheet>.
- **2012 - Colorado READ Act** – House Bill 12-1238 focuses on kindergarten through third grade (K- 3) literacy development, literacy assessment and individual READ plans for students identified with a Significant Reading Deficiency. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/2014readfactsheet>.
- **2015 - Changes to Assessments in Public School** – House Bill 15-1323 addressed concerns over the state assessment system by reducing the required high school assessments, pausing school and district accountability during the assessment transition and requiring district policies for parents to excuse students from state assessments. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/2015legislativechangestoassessment>.

How can the community get involved in ESSA development?

The May listening tour is just the first step in a year-long process to develop our ESSA strategy.

There will be plenty of other chances to participate in the process. A webinar is set for June 1 and additional ESSA listening events will be held throughout the year. To register for ESSA events, go to

www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/ESSA.



Where can I learn more?

- ESSA Blog: www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/ESSABlog
- ESSA Mailbox to ask questions: essaquestions@cde.state.co.us
- A brief overview of the new law: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/ESSABlogPosts/overviewofessa>
- For all other ESSA materials, visit www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa