

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

Supporting Continued Education Innovation in Illinois

With the enactment of this new law, the Governor and the State Board of Education recognize the enormous responsibility and trust placed in the State to ensure access to a high-quality education for each of our diverse students. The Every Student Succeeds Act presents the State and school districts with a significant opportunity to better serve all students, especially our most vulnerable. Highlights of the law include:

Funding:

- **Maintains support for Illinois at-risk students:** Title I-A funding is maintained, ensuring that Illinois's at-risk schools and students will continue receiving needed federal support. In FY16, Illinois will receive \$662,713,846 to support low-income students and schools.
- **Provides flexibility with federal funding:** School districts will see more flexibility to utilize Title I funds and will be given additional latitude in meeting maintenance of effort and supplement, not supplant, requirements.
- **Grants for new and historic priorities:** The bill provides new, flexible federal grants to support well-rounded students, while preserving and improving 21st Century Community Learning Centers. This program currently provides approximately \$25 million to support 87 after school and extended day academic enrichment projects across the State.

Accountability, Standards, Assessments:

- **States assume responsibility for accountability:** The new law supports many of the major elements of the State of Illinois's newly redesigned accountability system, signed into law by Governor Rauner in July of 2015. The new state law utilizes multiple measures to monitor student growth and achievement.
- **Standards and Improvement:** Illinois will have more flexibility to identify schools that have not met state-determined standards—and can access more resources to assist and support those schools through comprehensive, locally-driven transformation.
- **Assessments:** The State will have access to resources to continue investing in improvements in its statewide assessment with the goal of having high-quality assessments that students, parents, and teachers trust. The law also promotes greater access to college entrance exams.
- **Teacher effectiveness:** The State can support teachers to be more effective instructors, and focus on student access to effective teachers. Illinois can also support multiple pathways into teaching and professional development.

Early Learning:

- **Additional infusion of preschool supports:** Illinois will be able to continue work with its school districts to: strengthen and align early learning and K-12 programs; support early childhood professional development; and better evaluate local needs to expand opportunities for early learning.

- **Continues ongoing investments in Illinois preschool:** ESSA continues the Preschool Development Program, a grant opportunity that supports Illinois in its efforts to expand pre-school to vulnerable students who lack access to other programs.

Supporting Vulnerable Students:

- **Stronger focus on homeless students:** An emphasis is placed on continuing to remove barriers homeless students face in our schools. In particular, the law supports Illinois's ongoing work to ensure that very young homeless children have adequate access to public preschool programs.
- **English language learners:** The law equips Illinois to help English language learners develop English language proficiency and meet academic standards, and ensures that schools have latitude to measure English language learners in their native languages to appropriately gauge growth and achievement.
- **Subgroup performance:** The law ensures that Illinois must measure the performance of low-income, minority, and English language learning students. Illinois's modern report cards will continue to provide communities this important information to drive improvement.

Implementation:

- The new law takes effect in phases over the next two school years.
 - 2016/17 school year: ESEA waivers expire; new state plan, many grant program changes will go into effect
 - 2017/18 school year: Formula grant changes, new state accountability systems, state school improvement and intervention policies will go into effect
 - Staff members for the Governor and the State Board of Education continue to carefully review the text of the law to determine the full impact to the state's education system and any necessary changes to state law.
 - The State will actively participate in the federal regulatory process, the next most important step in implementing the law.
 - Throughout the process, the State will work with stakeholders to collect input.
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