Every Student Succeeds Act Primer: Teachers and School Leaders

ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, states and districts are responsible for improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders in increasing student academic achievement.

Eliminates "Highly Qualified Teacher" Requirement

ESSA eliminates the highly qualified teacher (HQT) provision that existed under the No Child Left Behind Act requiring that students from low-income families and students of color not be taught by ineffective, inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than their peers. The bill does not set a minimum bar of entry into the teaching profession.

Student Access to Effective Teaching

ESSA replaces the HQT provision with the following requirements:

- School districts must describe how they will identify and address any disparities that result in students from low-income families and students of color being taught by ineffective, inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other students.*

- States must collect and publicly report data on these disparities.*

- State plans must describe how students from low-income families and students of color will not be served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.*

- School districts must have mechanisms to notify parents regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher.

- States may use federal professional development funds to increase access to effective teachers for students from low-income families and students of color.

Does not apply to students with disabilities and English language learners.

Professional Development

ESSA slightly decreases federal funding for professional development activities. For Fiscal Year 2015, the U.S. Congress appropriated $2.35 billion for these activities, while ESSA sets the authorization level at $2.30 billion. ESSA authorizes federal funding for states and school districts to provide professional development activities that support improving teacher and school leader effectiveness. These activities include reforming teacher/leader certification requirements (including ensuring that teachers have the necessary subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills and may include a teacher performance assessment); induction, residency, and mentoring programs; and efforts to increase recruitment and retention, such as career ladders. States may use professional development funding for leaders to develop the instructional leadership skills necessary for teachers to teach to

the state standards and help students meet those standards. This may include supporting teachers in using data and assessments to improve classroom practice; developing and implementing instructional practices that support dual or concurrent enrollment programs; and integrating rigorous academics, career and technical education, and work-based learning, such as using common planning time to help prepare students for postsecondary education and the workforce.

Teacher and Leader Evaluations

States may use federal professional development funds to implement teacher and leader evaluation systems based on student achievement, growth, and multiple measures of performance and to inform professional development; however, states are not required to implement such systems.

Policy	No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waivers	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Requires equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers	Yes	Yes	No
Requires teacher and leader evaluation systems	No	Yes	No

For additional fact sheets and videos about ESSA, visit www.all4ed.org/essa/.

ALLIANCE FOR
EXCELLENT EDUCATION