



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's education law that provides opportunity for all students. The ESSA was developed and passed with bipartisan support. It replaces the No Child Left Behind and Act and shifts some authority back to the state and local levels. The ESSA plan for Arkansas will be the framework that will serve as the guide to enact the goals articulated in Arkansas' Vision for Excellence in Education.

The new framework will go into effect during the 2017-2018 school year. The 2016-2017 year will be a transition year for planning and drafting of the Arkansas Accountability System that aligns with the Vision for Excellence in Education. August 1, 2016 is the expiration of the Flexibility Waiver. However, the United States Department of Education requires Arkansas to continue interventions in priority and focus schools during the 2016-2017 school year.

## Standards

- States must establish “challenging state academic standards” in reading or language arts (ELA), math, and science; and,
- States must also have in place English language proficiency (ELP) standards (derived from the domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing) for English learners.
- Standards must be challenging and aligned with credit bearing course work, college entrance requirements and state CTE standards.

## Assessments

- State testing in reading and math annually in grades 3-8 and once in high school.
- State testing in science annually in at least one grade of each of the grade spans 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.
- Allows states to administer alternate tests for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- 95% test participation requirement of all students and subgroups.
- Allows national assessment such as ACT or SAT for high school testing.
- Allows a variety of new models of testing.

## Accountability

States must “meaningfully differentiate” all public schools on an annual basis.

### *Academic Indicators*

- Achievement Progress on English language proficiency for ELL Students.



## ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Student Growth or other academic indicator (Elementary and Middle Schools only).
- Graduation rate (High Schools only).

### *School Quality or Student Success Indicators*

- At least one non-academic indicator, e.g. student engagement, teacher engagement, access to advanced coursework, school climate or safety.
- States decide how much each individual indicator will count. However, Academic Indicators in the aggregate will be given “much greater weight” than the measures of school quality or student success indicators.
- States decide how the 95% participation rate is factored into the accountability system.
- Maintains requirement for state and local report cards with emphasis on disaggregated data for each subgroup and expanded reporting requirements.

## School Improvement

States will have significant *new flexibility in identifying schools* and in determining what actions to take with regard to these schools.

In place of the School Improvement Grants program and the separate Title I set-aside for school improvement, *states will draw on a single 7 percent set-aside* of their Title I allocations for making sub-grants to LEAs for activities to improve low-performing schools.

### *Comprehensive Support and Improvement*

- At least once every three years, states must identify and intervene in bottom 5% of lowest performing schools, and high schools with grade rate <67%, and schools with underperforming subgroups that do not improve after a state-determined number of years.
- *Districts* will develop their own improvement plan that will be approved by the state.

### *Targeted Support and Improvement*

- Schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups as defined by the state.
- *Schools* will develop their own improvement plan to be approved by the district.

## Teacher and Leader Quality

- Ends the Federal “Highly Qualified Teachers” (HQT) requirement. The Arkansas Qualified Teacher (AQT) requirement applies.
- Requires that teachers meet state licensure and certification requirement.
- Requires districts to report on ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers and principals.
- States must develop and report measures of equitable access. Arkansas’ plan can be found: <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/equitable-access>