



Every Student Succeeds Act

Signed into law December 10, 2015

1) Strengthens state and local control: The bill restores responsibility for creating accountability systems to states, working with school districts, teachers, and others, to ensure all students are learning and prepared for success. The accountability systems will be state-designed and meet minimum federal parameters, including ensuring all students and subgroups of students are included in the accountability system, disaggregating student achievement data, and establishing challenging academic standards for all students. The federal government is prohibited from determining or approving state standards.

2) Ends the Common Core mandate: The bill affirms that states decide what academic standards they will adopt, without interference from Washington, D.C. The federal government may not mandate or incentivize states to adopt or maintain any particular set of standards, including Common Core. States will be free to decide what academic standards they will maintain in their states.

3) Ends the Secretary's waivers: The bill prohibits the Secretary from mandating additional requirements for states or school districts seeking waivers from federal law. The bill also limits the Secretary's authority to disapprove a waiver request.

4) Maintains important information for parents, teachers, and communities: The bill maintains the federally required two annual tests in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, as well as science tests given three times between grades 3 and 12. These important measures of student achievement provide parents with information on how their children are performing, and help teachers support students who are struggling to meet state standards. A pilot program will allow states additional flexibility to experiment with innovative assessment systems. The bill maintains annual data reporting, which provides valuable information about whether all students are achieving, including low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English learners.

5) Ends federal test-based accountability: The bill ends the federal test-based accountability system of No Child Left Behind, restoring to states the responsibility for determining how to use federally required tests for accountability purposes. States must include these tests in their accountability systems, but states will determine the weight of those tests. States will also be required to include graduation rates, another measure of academic success for elementary schools, English proficiency for English learners, and one other State-determined measure of school quality or student success. States may also include other measures of student and school performance in their accountability systems in order to provide teachers, parents, and other stakeholders with a more accurate determination of school performance.

6) Strengthens the charter school program: The bill provides grants to state entities and charter management organizations to start new charter schools and to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools, including by developing facilities, preparing and hiring teachers, and providing transportation. It also provides incentives for states to adopt stronger charter school authorizing practices, increases charter school transparency, and improves community engagement in the operation of charter schools.

7) Helps states fix the lowest-performing schools: The bill includes a State set-aside for states to subgrant to school districts to help improve low-performing schools that are identified by the state accountability systems. School districts will be responsible for designing evidence-based interventions for low-performing schools, with technical assistance from the states, and the federal government is prohibited from mandating, prescribing, or defining the specific steps school districts and states must take to improve these schools.

8) Helps states support teachers: The bill provides resources to states and school districts to implement activities to support teachers, principals, other school leaders, and other educators, including through high quality induction programs for new teachers and ongoing rigorous professional development opportunities. The bill allows, but does not require, states to develop and implement teacher evaluation systems.