

Innovations that Nurture Success in Parent Involvement to Reach Excellence

What is an Equitable Education?

An education that prepares the individual for life in a diverse global society.

Learning opportunities exist throughout life and society, but it is the special responsibility of educational institutions to ensure that individuals receive the opportunity to:

- Learn and master the basic cognitive and social skills needed for success in life and the advanced knowledge and skills that will make them competitive with graduates of the best educational institutions in other states and nations;
- Develop an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity
- Instill the social values of integrity, morality, discipline, and civic-mindedness;
- Develop an understanding of the impact of education on their lives and of the educational options available to them; and
- Nurture a love of learning and an enthusiasm for life-long learning.

An equitable education prepares students for work.

The obligation to work must be addressed by most people in their lifetime as the means by which they establish a desired lifestyle and wholesome families. We have a rapidly evolving global economy. Job skills today have a reliance on the ability to use knowledge, solve problems, and think creatively and independently. Various job categories are disappearing and new employment sectors are emerging at an increasingly rapid pace. To ensure that learners are prepared for work, educational institutions play a special role in ensuring that individuals:

- Develop the habits and talents needed to succeed in the workplace;
- Acquire an understanding of life and career options available to them; and
- Learn the life skills needed to be independent and to provide for their family.

An equitable education prepares for life long learning.

California has achieved international recognition for social, economic, and scientific achievement largely as a result of its commitment to learning. It has profited immensely from the diversity of its citizens and the contributions of its college-educated populace. Today, the state's commitment must be expanded beyond traditional college degree programs to meet increasing societal demands for life-long learning. Public educational institutions have a special responsibility to:

- Advance high quality teaching and learning at each educational level and facilitate the successful transition of students from one educational level to the next;
- Advance the frontiers of knowledge;
- Assist in the improvement of elementary and secondary education;
- Apply their combined resources to effectively respond to the challenges of growth; diversity, and change that periodically emerge in the global society.

U.S. Department of Education

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

"With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamentally American ideal—that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make of their lives what they will." — President Barack Obama

A New Education Law

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, and represents good news for our nation's schools. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students.

The new law builds on key areas of progress in recent years, made possible by the efforts of educators, communities, parents, and students across the country.

For example, today, high school graduation rates are at all-time highs. Dropout rates are at historic lows. And more students are going to college than ever before. These achievements provide a firm foundation for further work to expand educational opportunity and improve student outcomes under ESSA.

The previous version of the law, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, was enacted in 2002. NCLB represented a significant step forward for our nation's children in many respects, particularly as it shined a light on where students were making progress and where they needed additional support, regardless of race, income, zip code, disability, home language, or background. The law was scheduled for revision in 2007, and, over time, NCLB's prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators. Recognizing this fact, in 2010, the Obama administration joined a call from educators and families to create a better law that focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers.

Congress has now responded to that call.

The Every Student Succeeds Act reflects many of the priorities of this administration.

ESSA Highlights

President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act into law on December 10, 2015.

ESSA includes provisions that will help to ensure success for students and schools. Below are just a few. The law:

- Advances equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students.
- Requires—for the first time—that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers.
- Ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress toward those high standards.
- Helps to support and grow local innovations—including evidence-based and place-based interventions developed by local leaders and educators—consistent with our [Investing in Innovation](#) and [Promise Neighborhoods](#)
- Sustains and expands this administration's historic investments in increasing access to high-quality [preschool](#).
- Maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in our lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time.

History of ESEA

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who believed that "full educational opportunity" should be "our first national goal." From its inception, ESEA was a civil rights law.

ESEA offered new grants to districts serving low-income students, federal grants for textbooks and library books, funding for special education centers, and scholarships for low-income college students. Additionally, the law provided federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education.

NCLB and Accountability

NCLB put in place measures that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved students and their peers and spurred an important national dialogue on education improvement. This focus on accountability has been critical in ensuring a quality education for all children, yet also revealed challenges in the effective implementation of this goal.

Parents, educators, and elected officials across the country recognized that a strong, updated law was necessary to expand opportunity to all students; support schools, teachers, and principals; and to strengthen our education system and economy.

In 2012, the Obama administration began granting flexibility to states regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students.

What's Next?

Over the next few weeks, the U.S. Department of Education will work with states and districts to begin implementing the new law. Visit this page for updates and [sign up for news about ESSA](#).

Have questions?

- [Sign up for email updates](#) about ESSA.
- Send questions to essa.questions@ed.gov.

ESEA History



1965

- President Johnson signs the ESEA, with Title I funding for poor students as the focal point



1968

- Expansion of ESEA programs, including the Bilingual Education Act.



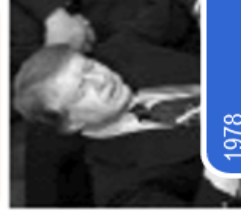
1969

- First National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered.



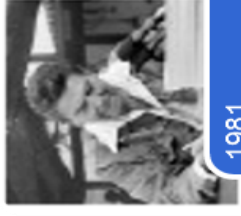
1970

- President Nixon requires that Title I schools receive state and local aid comparable to that of non-Title I schools.



1978

- President Carter signs reauthorization allowing Title I funds to be spent "schoolwide" if more than 75% of students are eligible.



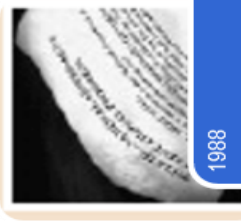
1981

- President Reagan consolidates many programs into a block grant and reduces ESEA funding.



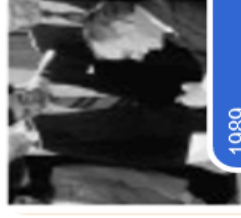
1983

- "A Nation at Risk" report details declining American educational achievement.



1988

- Districts are required to assess Title I schools based on standardized tests; Congress creates the National Assessment Governing Board, to set NAEP policy.



1989

- At Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, President Bush and governors convene to discuss federal role in education.



1994

- President Clinton reauthorizes the ESEA as the Improving America's Schools Act; states required to develop standards and aligned assessments for all students.



2002

- President George W. Bush signs the No Child Left Behind Act; ESEA's testing requirements expanded, along with its accountability measures.



2015

- President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act ESSA reaffirming the ESEA, creating improvements and providing more responsibility to Locals and State.