ESSA

Every Student Succeeds Act

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OPS Principal Meeting

Mr. Mark A. Evans, Superintendent

Dr. ReNae S. Kehrberg, Assistant Superintendent
What is the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?

- It is the federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) from 1965. It was last reauthorized in 2001 and re-labeled as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

- In December 2015, Congress and President Obama reauthorized the law and designated it as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- It is the new federal law that will govern all states educational programs for public school districts.
When will ESSA take effect?

- This school year (2015-2016) is the last year school districts and schools will submit data as currently required under NCLB.

- In 2016-2017 NDE will have school districts reporting data using the new state accountability framework called AQuESTT and NCLB requirements will be gone.

- 2016-2017 will be used as a transition year with a soft/trail run by states using their own Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) with some adjustments being made for the full implementation year for ESSA in 2017-2018.
Wait - did you say that NCLB requirements are eliminated?

- All NCLB sanctions are eliminated which includes:
  - Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Proficiency Targets
  - Annual progressive school classification labels (e.g. Year 1 Needs Improvement, Year 2 Needs Improvement)
  - School Choice Letters
  - Required Tutoring Programs
  - Required payment of transportation for choice
  - Corrective Action Plans
  - Restructuring Plans which includes school Turnaround Models
Why did Congress eliminate the sanctions?

- NCLB was indicted as flawed for many reasons, such as the requirement that subgroups, such as Special Education students and English Language Learners had to be 100% proficient on state exams.

- Both Republicans and Democrats roundly denounced the absurd AYP targets for proficiency once 100% was required in 2014. This was particularly evident when the impact affected so many school districts throughout the country.

- Nebraska had over 50% of all school districts labeled as “Needs Improvement”.
What are the components of the new Every Student Succeeds Act?

- **Accountability** (5 major components):
  1) Assessment
  2) Identification and Intervention of Schools
  3) Subgroup Performance Targets and Goals
  4) Indicators that are both Academic and Non-Academic
  5) Content Standards

- **Title Funds**

- **Other Funds** (Early Childhood)
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state to have an Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) that has:

1) **Assessment**
   - Every child in grades 3-8 will be tested in math and ELA (reading) each year and once in high school.
   - Three assessments are required in science (one per grade span).
   - Data must be disaggregated by student subgroup (Nebraska will have to eliminate the use of a supergroup which currently exists in AQuESTT).
   - Alternate Assessment will be capped at 1% at the state level with no local cap. States can apply for waivers for this cap.
   - 95% participation is still required.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each states Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

2) Identification and Intervention for Underperforming Schools:

- Identification and intervention in schools that are in the bottom 5% for the state.
- Identification and intervention in high schools that graduate less than 67%.
- Identification must occur every three years and can occur annually.
- Intervention is locally developed and evidenced based; there are no required restructuring plans or models for Turnaround.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each states Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

2) Identification and Intervention for Underperforming Schools continued:

- Intervention in **consistently underperforming schools** is required (Nebraska has labeled these as Priority Schools in AQuESTT).

- Intervention includes a state plan of support (with a NDE team for oversight/support in AQuESTT) but again with no required models such as the Turnaround Model from the federal level.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state’s Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

2) Identification and Intervention for Underperforming Schools continued:

- If identified schools for intervention which are either in the bottom 5% in the state or a high school with a graduation rate below 67% (AQuESTT labels these as Priority Schools) do not improve for four or more years the state is to step in with its own plan.

- The state plan could take over the school, fire the principal, or turn the school into a charter just like states do under NCLB waivers now. But importantly unlike under waivers or NCLB sanctions there are no “musts” just options for states to decide what kind of action to take.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state’s Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

3) **Subgroup Performance Targets and Goals:** (NOT annual measurable objectives or proficiency levels that increase annually) are required but trigger no action if not met.

- **Targets must be both long term and interim.** (AQuESTT currently only has academic long term or Summative NeSA scores).
- **Targets must include graduation rates** (AQuESTT includes graduation rates with capping limits).
- **Targets must include reading and math scores** (AQuESTT includes ELA, Reading, Math and Science).
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state's Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

3) **Subgroup Performance Targets and Goals continued:** (NOT annual measurable objectives or proficiency levels that increase annually) are required but trigger no action if not met.

- **Targets must include subgroups:** Language proficiency for English Language Learners, and Poverty (FRL), Racial Groups and Special Education.
- **Targets are determined by the state** (not Federally mandated as in the past) and are factored into AQuESTT as a part of the formula for classification. The expectation that all students are 100% proficient by a certain year is gone. Clearly a lesson learned from NCLB.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each states Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

3) **Subgroup Performance Targets and Goals** continued: (NOT annual measurable objectives or proficiency levels that increase annually) are required but trigger no action if not met.

- **Goals have to** set an expectation that **all groups** that are furthest behind **close gaps in achievement**.
- **Goals have to** set an expectation that **all groups** that are furthest behind **close gaps in graduation rates**.
- **States, with Districts, have to** identify schools where subgroups are struggling.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

3) Subgroup Performance Targets and Goals (continued) for schools with subgroup students that are struggling:

- These schools must come up with an evidenced based plan to help that subgroup(s) succeed.
- Districts must monitor these schools subgroup(s) plans. If the school does not improve the district must step in with a plan determined by the district. No timeline for this action is in ESSA.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state’s Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

3) Subgroup Performance Targets and Goals (continued) for schools with subgroup students that are struggling:

• These schools must come up with an evidenced-based plan IF schools have subgroup students chronically underperforming over time similar to the bottom 5%.
• Then states and districts have to become more aggressive with a “comprehensive improvement plan”.
• This occurs when despite the above district created evidenced-based plan no increases for subgroups occur over time. No time line is specified in ESSA.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state's Accountability Framework (AQuESTT in Nebraska) to have:

4) **Indicators that are both Academic and Non-Academic:**
   - Academic Factors must make up at least 51% of the indicators. AQuESTT has NeSA exams in math, ELA (includes reading and is new next year) and science.
   - Whole child and other critical non-academic indicators can make up the other 49% of a state's accountability framework. AQuESTT has Evidenced Based Assessments (EBAs) that met this requirement.
What is Accountability in ESSA?

The Federal law requires each state's Accountability Framework (AQuESST in Nebraska) to have:

5) **Content Standards** that are decided by the state (Common Core is not required but may be used or a state can create their own). Nebraska will continue with their own College and Career Ready Standards which include:

Are Accountability indicators different for elementary and secondary schools?

- Yes.

- Elementary and Middle Schools (as mentioned earlier) are required to have three academic indicators: 1) proficiency on state tests for both the all group and subgroups, 2) English-language proficiency and 3) plus some other academic factor for both the all group and subgroups, which in Nebraska is growth and improvement (as outlined in AQuESTT).
Are Accountability indicators different for elementary and secondary schools?

- Yes.
- High Schools must also use graduation rates as an indicator in addition to the other indicators. AQuESTT limits or caps the classification of a school’s performance level based on graduation rates:
  - Excellent - Must have a graduation rate of 90% or greater
  - Great - Must have a graduation rate of 80-90%
  - Good – Must have a graduation rate of 70-80%
  - Needs Improvement – Graduation rate is below 70%
What has not changed in Title I?

- **The Title I funding formula remains unchanged.** This means the same allocation that Nebraska has received in the past will continue which should hold our allocation at the same amount as last year.

- **Previous Requirements** such as: poverty levels for participation, maintenance of effort, support for homeless and neglected and delinquent youth, comparability, annual audits and the requirement for creating school wide or targeted plans remain in place.
Has anything else changed beside Title I in ESSA?

- The ESSA framework allows for the use of nationally recognized tests at the high school level.
- So a district could, in theory, use the SAT or ACT as its high school test, instead of the state exam.
- OPS and MOEC is gathering more information on this from NDE to explore this option within the requirements of state statute Rule 10 for accreditation.
How long is this new reauthorization for ESSA?

- It is a four year reauthorization.
- NCLB was over seven years past its due date for reauthorization when ESSA was passed. ESSA will remain in effect until reauthorized even if it extends beyond four years.
- Although the bill includes funding caps there would be room for small increases in the years of authorization.
Are there other funds (beside Title funds) in ESSA?

- Yes, a new Federal Block Grant of previous programs.
- Approximately 50 previous programs are consolidated into a Federal 1.6 billion dollar block grant. Including physical education, Advanced Placement, school counseling, education technology to cite a few. (Some of these programs have not received funding in years).
- Districts that receive more than $30,000.00 of this block grant will have to spend it as follows:
  - 20% required on activities that support students in becoming more well rounded.
  - 20% required on activities that support students in staying safe and healthy.
  - An option of up to 15% can be spent on technology.
Are there other funds (beside Title funds) in ESSA?

- Yes, new funds are available for early childhood to support program coordination, quality and assess.
- Pre-school Development Grants are a new part of ESSA. The increase nationally in early childhood funds is 250 million. Nebraska would receive a portion of these new funds through this grant process.
- This does not reduce or impact existing Head Start grants.
- Health and Human Services would be the fiscal agent and they are required to co-administer these early childhood grants with Education Departments to provide oversight and management support.
Are there other funds (beside Title funds) in ESSA?

- Innovation Grants can be applied for by districts. These funds are research and innovation funds for districts. OPS will get more information to determine next steps.
What programs survived all the changes in ESSA and will continue?

- **21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLCs)** are unchanged and will be funded. OPS through Collective For Youth (CFY) has CLC programs that will continue.

- **Promise Neighborhood Grants** are still available and can be applied for by organizations in the community.

- **Teacher Incentive Fund** continues and is now called the **Teacher and School Leader Innovation Fund**. This fund provides grants to districts that want to try out teacher quality improvement measures that includes teacher performance pay. And there are resources to train teachers on literacy and STEM.
What was debated but **NOT** included in ESSA?

- **Teacher Evaluation** is not included in ESSA. Which is very different from the NCLB waivers that required student achievement to be tied to teacher evaluation.

- **Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements** from NCLB are not included in ESSA.

- **Portability of Title Funds** is not included in ESSA. Some members of Congress wanted Title dollars to follow Title students if they enroll in a different district. This did not happen.

- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** is not in ESSA. There was some chatter that the bill would incorporate some FERPA changes. This did not happen.

- **Common Core Standards** (as noted earlier) are not included in ESSA.
What was the most surprising thing added to ESSA?

- **A pardon for Jack Johnson**, the legendary African American heavyweight boxer. In 1913, Johnson was convicted of violating the Mann Act, which deals with prostitution and other crimes related to sexual activities. Johnson’s conviction has come to be widely seen as a racially motivated move by federal authorities at the time that was unfounded.

- This was included as a posthumous “sense of the senate” and was strongly supported by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat from Nevada and Republican Arizona Senator, John McCain, McCain and Reid have pushed for Johnson to be pardoned in the past and were successful this time with the bi-partisan bill that is now ESSA.
In summary, what are the key points in ESSA?

- Title I Funds will remain intact.
- NCLB sanctions are gone starting next year in 2016-2017.
- No longer are there AYP targets that increase or grow to become 100% proficiency expectations.
- AQuESTT becomes our federal and state reporting accountability framework.
- AQuESTT still requires:
  - Annual NeSA testing
  - Subgroup data collection required and monitored
  - Identification of Priority Schools for support