

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Background and Key Questions

ESSA Summary

On Dec. 10, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law. ESSA is the most recent version of the federal government's biggest K-12 law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which came into effect in 1965. It governs ~\$25 billion in federal resources that are allocated to states, including approximately **\$58 million to Delaware** in 2012-13.

ESSA contains a number of meaningful requirements that education leaders, parents, and community members should know about and discuss as the state develops its plan to implement the new law. These include:

1. Consistent, [state-adopted standards](#) that prepare all students for college coursework and career demands
2. Statewide [annual assessments](#) aligned to statewide standards
3. Clear requirements for [statewide accountability and school support systems](#)
4. Richer [public reporting](#) on academic outcomes, resources, and a variety of other indicators of equity for all groups of students
5. [Resources to support teachers and leaders](#)
6. [New flexible funding opportunities](#) and continued targeting of [federal funding to the highest poverty schools and districts](#)

The links above include more information on each of these levers, including more detailed information on what ESSA requires and specific questions advocates should be asking.

Key Context & Questions

Delaware has a solid foundation to build on. [Student Success 2025](#), a plan developed with input from over 4,000 Delawareans, is aligned with the ESSA provisions. Developing Delaware's ESSA plan is an opportunity to implement *Student Success 2025* over the next several years.

In addition, millions of dollars in federal resources, including Title I funding for high-needs schools, Title II funding for educators' professional development and support, and several other important funding streams are governed by ESSA, so it is critically important for Delawareans to participate in determining how those resources should be allocated.



This fall is an essential time for Delawareans to provide input on the state's plan. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) published a [webpage](#) containing a timeline, key dates for community conversations, surveys to provide feedback, and nomination forms for discussion groups that will focus on specific elements of the plan. In August, Governor Jack Markell signed [Executive Order 62](#), establishing an ESSA advisory group to provide feedback on the state's plan.

Delaware's plan will be finalized in early 2017, with the goal of submitting to the U.S. Department of Education by **March of 2017**.

Helpful Links

Delaware State Board of Education ESSA Resources:

<https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=190001&MID=785>

Delaware Department of Education ESSA website:

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/425>

Education-First Consulting ESSA Guide:

<http://education-first.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Education-First-Making-the-Most-of-ESSA-May-2016-1.pdf>

Education Trust ESSA resources:

<https://edtrust.org/issue/the-every-student-succeeds-act-of-2015/>

Alliance for Excellent Education Fact Sheets and Resources: <http://all4ed.org/essa/>

National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) Summary of ESSA:

http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/ESSA_summary_NCSL.pdf

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Side-by-Side Comparison of NCLB and ESSA:

<http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2016/ESSA/CCSSOComparisonofSelectElementsofESEA3.31.16.pdf>

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) FAQ on ESSA:

<http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2016/ESSA/CCSSOESSAFAQ.pdf>