

BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS  
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

**DATE:** DECEMBER 21, 2015

**TO:** BOARD OF EDUCATION

**FROM:** KATHY PALM, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM & ADMIN. SERVICES

**SUBJECT:** OVERVIEW OF EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

**COMMENTS:**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was scheduled to be revised in 2007. Recently, the House and Senate passed the new bill, and on December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the new bill known as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Below is a short summary of the changes this means for school districts:

1. ESSA shifts key decisions about accountability, educator evaluations, and school improvement to state and district authorities. We will know better what this new law means to Minnesota districts based on what Minnesota Department of Education and the State Legislature decide.
2. State assessments will continue at the same grade levels, and all schools will be held accountable for achievement, English Language Learners, four-year graduation rates, and other indicators such as growth, school quality, student or educator engagement, and safety. A 95% test participation rate is still required, and districts and states still need to desegregate the data by subgroup.
3. ESSA requires states to identify and provide interventions for the lowest 5% of schools for student achievement and 67% and lower graduation rates. The language includes identifying ALL low performing schools, not just Title I schools like NCLB did.
4. ESSA requires states to submit an annual plan to the federal government, and districts are required to submit annual reports to the state, such as Minnesota's World's Best Workforce Report.
5. ESSA does NOT include language about 100% proficiency by 2014, highly qualified teachers, teacher evaluation, college and career ready, or student data privacy.
6. ESSA calls for more flexibility with Title I funding for innovative initiatives. The State must withhold 7% of Title I funds at the state level to support schools improvement. States can also set aside an additional 3% of Title I funds for Direct Student Services, which could have a variety of innovative educational uses. This could also mean fewer Title I dollars coming to districts.

7. ESSA includes a new Literacy Education for All program which provides funding birth to grade 12 to support “evidence-based” comprehensive literacy instruction. (Similar to MN’s Reading Well by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)
8. ESSA authorizes preschool development grants through the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services jointly with the U. S. Department of Education.
9. ESSA repeals 49 programs to create a \$1.7 billion dollar Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant. However, ESSA maintains the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers funding for after-school and summer programming.
10. ESSA requires states to establish challenging academic standards. The federal government is prohibited from providing incentives for a specific set of standards such as the Common Core.
11. NCLB and state waivers will end August 1, 2016; 2016-2017 will be a transition year; and the new ESSA will take effect the 2017-2018 school year.