

Frequently Asked Questions – ESSA

Please note that these FAQs represent the most current information we have. Information is subject to change, in part due to the changeover in administration.

[Implementation Timeline](#)

Funds

Title I

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Title III

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What is the department's timeline for implementation?

The United States Department of Education (ED) released guidance on November 28, 2016. That guidance specified two submission dates. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will be submitting our plan during the second window on September 18, 2017. DPI plans to release a draft plan by May for public feedback.

When will school districts know the allocations they will receive under ESSA in the upcoming federal fiscal year?

It may be a while. Congress passed a continuing resolution that takes us through April 28, 2017. At that point, there are only five more months left in the federal fiscal year, so it remains to be seen if Congress passes another continuing resolution or a full federal budget for a year that is halfway over.

When will schools be identified under the new law?

Regarding future identification of comprehensive and targeted support schools, ED released guidance on November 28, 2016 clarifying that states do not need to identify schools until the 2018-19 school year. There are no plans to identify schools at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. This will give us more time to plan and prepare. Additionally, we need to know if the regulations proposed by the Obama administration will be altered by the Trump administration.

Do school districts need to have a local plan done to receive their federal funds?

ED has supplied all states with an assurances template document that is due in early April. By signing off on these assurances, it appears that money will be released to states.

When do school districts need to start writing their local plans?

School districts need to have the state plan approved in order to write their own local plans. The department has released some preliminary information related to consultations required under the law, but we will not be submitting our state plan until the September submission date. Local school districts can start planning once a draft of the state plan is available, but until a state plan is approved by ED, local district plan templates are not considered approved.

Will DPI be changing the state assessments?

The Forward Exam, ACT suite, and DLM assessments will be administered during Spring 2017. ACCESS for ELLs will be administered this year as well. At this time there are no plans to change our state assessment system given the need for consistency after three test changes in three years.

Is it true that only one percent of students can participate in the alternate assessment?

Beginning in fall 2017 the Every Student Succeeds Act, limits the number of students who may take an alternate assessment to no more than one percent of the total number of all students in the State who are assessed in a given subject (i.e., reading/language arts, mathematics, and science) in an assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards. While these changes are specific at the state level, it requires the State to monitor district participation so as to not exceed the one percent cap. All eligible students should participate in the DLM. Eligibility is determined by the IEP team using the Participation Guidelines for Alternate Assessment. Districts may be required to provide documentation if they exceed the one percent cap, DPI will contact the district to determine if circumstances warrant a district response.

What if a small district has enough students taking the alternate assessment that more than one percent of the students could count as proficient for the one percent proficiency cap?

DPI may request that the district complete a justification with appropriate assurances and documentation if the number of students exceeds the one percent cap. DPI will contact the district to determine if circumstances warrant a district waiver. The decision to participate in the DLM is made using the Participation Guidelines for Alternate Assessment rather than the student's impact on district accountability calculations.

Will Title III funds be available next year when ESSA is implemented?

Although accountability requirements for English learners (formerly known as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students has moved from Title III district level to Title I school level; school districts will continue to be eligible for a Title III funding allocation based on the number of students tested on the English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs. Title III allows for supplemental funds to schools for English learners.

Under ESSA, monitoring of English learners has changed. Will school districts be required to monitor ELs for four years?

States have the option of including former ELs in the EL subgroup in accountability on academic content tests for up to four years, up from the previous two-years permitted under NCLB. ESSA does not provide guidance on monitoring of former ELs. The state must adopt common entry and exit procedures for EL status under ESSA. State criteria for how to support, observe, monitor or reclassify students is still to be determined.