

December 2015



Every Student Succeeds Act



'Tis the season to ... review new legislation? It's official - the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is now law. The ESSA is the most recent reauthorization of the historic Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first passed in 1965, and it replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002. While ESEA has undergone several changes in its 50-year history, the spirit of its original intent remains. In signing ESEA, President Lyndon Johnson identified poverty as the greatest barrier to educational attainment and directed funds to support equitable opportunities for all students.

Fifty years later, the quest to conquer the economic divide in educational opportunities continues. The increased flexibility for states provided in the ESSA reflects a bipartisan national

acknowledgement that states and local educators are better situated than federal officials to determine how to solve this complex issue. So, now it is up to Missourians to lead the way! I look forward to working together with educators across our state on best implementation strategies that support ensuring:

- ALL Missouri students graduate ready for postsecondary success
- ALL Missouri students enter kindergarten ready to learn
- ALL Missouri students have a great teacher

What happens next? There will be a transition period. Waivers are null and void by August 1, 2016. ESSA will be fully in place beginning in the 2017-18 school year. It will take time to fully interpret the 1,061-page law. We will provide you with updates and opportunities for input as soon as they are available.

Here are a few ESSA highlights:

- Maintains annual assessments in grades 3-8 and high school
- Reaffirms that states are in control of their standards and assessments
- Sets parameters for state accountability systems but gives each state the flexibility to design a school accountability system that best meet the needs of students in their state
- Gives states the flexibility to work with local stakeholders to determine how educators should be evaluated and supported each year
- Provides for pilots at the state level so states can research new and improved methods of measuring student progress from year to year