

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT, ESSA

Information from the NAGC Web Page, www.nagc.org

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the name of the 2015 federal legislation that revised and reauthorized the federal K-12 education law known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, ESEA, (previously No Child Left Behind). ESSA/ESEA is the source of most federal K-12 education initiatives, such as Title I schools, accountability for student achievement, programs for English language learners, math-science partnerships, and Title II professional development. Approximately \$21 billion in federal funds under ESEA is distributed to the states and school districts each year through complex formulas based on student population and poverty and through individual grant programs. **And for the first time**, ESSA/ESEA also includes several provisions that support gifted and talented (GT) students and will require districts and states to make changes.

TITLE I – Improving Academic Achievement of Disadvantaged Students

- (1) Funds may be used to identify and serve low-income gifted and talented students.
- (2) Disaggregation of student achievement data at the advanced level is required on state and local report cards.
- (3) States may develop computer adaptive assessments for accountability purposes.

Title I accountability provisions (including new report card format) go into effect in 2017-2018 school year.

Title II – Professional Development

- (1) State plans must address gifted students.
- (2) Districts receiving Title II funds must provide training to address the learning of gifted and talented students.
- (3) Districts may provide training to support the identification of GT students, including high-ability students who have not been formally identified as GT [includes examples of strategies that may be taught].

Most Title II provisions go into effect in 2016-2017 school year.

Title IV: 21st Century Schools

Reauthorization of the Javits Gifted & Talented Students Education Act

- (1) Focuses on underrepresented GT student populations
- (2) Develops best practice through system of applied research grants

KY currently has a Javits Grant that involves a partnership with the KY Department of Education, Jefferson County Public Schools, The Center for Gifted Studies at WKU, and the University of Louisville. The Reaching Academic Potential (RAP) Project focuses on developing the potential of primary children in the Jefferson County Public Schools as well as on the dissemination of information about the Excellence Gap to administrators across the Commonwealth.

What can advocates do to ensure that the provisions are in place for gifted learners?

- (1) Advocate for Effective Professional Development with local school officials. Discuss how ESSA intends for teachers and others in the schools to be able to identify and serve gifted and talented students and how that is so important to providing continuous progress for the students.
- (2) Talk with Title I officials about the new provisions that allow districts to focus on identifying and supporting high potential students from low socio-economic backgrounds who may not have been considered for assessment and gifted services.
- (3) Use the new data on advanced achievement that will become available to see who is and who is not achieving at top levels as an opportunity to propose ways to discuss concerns related to the data and to develop recommendations for instructional changes.

The 2016-2017 school year is a big transition year. Applications for Title I and other formula grants will begin July 1, 2016; other federal grant programs will go into effect in October 2016. State accountability plans will go into effect in the 2017-2018 school year. The time is now to advocate for inclusion of gifted and talented children in local and state ESSA plans. For more information on ESSA, visit the Every Student Succeeds Act page on the NAGC website, www.nagc.org.