



MESSAGE GUIDANCE ON PASSAGE OF THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Key Messages

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will ensure every student has an opportunity to a high quality education regardless of ZIP Code.

ESSA will usher in a new era in public education for students, parents, and educators that shifts the focus back to closing the opportunity and achievement gaps for all students.

Talking Points

For more than a decade, students and educators across America have lived with the unintended consequences of the failed No Child Left Behind law.

- Students who are high school seniors this year have spent their entire K-12 experience under NCLB.
- It is long past due to turn the page on the controversial and unpopular law.
- It is long past due to end the test-label-punish regime of NCLB and to close the chapter on the one-size-fits all approach ushered under the law.

This is a **historic** moment because after numerous false starts, Congress, in a bipartisan fashion, finally chose to put students ahead of partisan politics and decided to replace the failed No Child Left Behind.

This is a **monumental** moment because for the first time in more than a decade ESSA will ensure every student has an opportunity to a high quality education regardless of ZIP Code.

And this is a **game-changer** because ESSA will usher in a new era in public education for students, parents, and educators.

- ESSA will shift the focus to **close the opportunity gaps** for all students by including an ‘opportunity dashboard’ with – for the first time – indicators of student support or school success.
- And this means that educators – the trained professionals who know the names and the faces of students they educate – **are empowered and trusted** to make educational and instructional decisions to ensure ZIP Code does not determine the quality of education.
- This means more time for **students to learn and teachers** to teach because ESSA reduces the amount of standardized testing in schools, and, most importantly, decouple high-stakes decision-making and statewide standardized tests.

We applaud Congress and President Obama for getting this bipartisan effort that will support students.



About NEA’s unprecedented efforts:

For NEA’s members, the stakes couldn’t have been higher. The extraordinary effort to get Congress to rewrite NCLB, which [NEA launched](#) in earnest in February with its “[Get ESEA Right](#)” national campaign, and peaking this past summer when both legislative chambers passed their respective bills, resulted in a unprecedented [bipartisan and bicameral](#) compromise and eventual bill language in late November. The bill sailed through the U.S. House with a vote of 359 in favor to 64 against. It later passed the Senate 84-12.

Leading up to ESSA’s passage, educators mobilized across the nation, using face-to-face meetings with lawmakers, phone calls, petitions, emails and social media to urge Congress to bring the joy of teaching and learning back to the classroom and help close opportunity and resource gaps so that all students have access to a well-rounded education.

NEA members made nearly half a million individual contacts to members of Congress on behalf of their students, putting huge pressure on Congress to get this done for students.

Key Talking Points

- Educators never halted in their advocacy for students, and now we have succeeded in shifting the focus of education to ensuring all students, regardless of ZIP Code, will have the support and tools to embark on a path toward a successful future.

- We showed through demonstrable actions that we are deeply committed to the success of every student – and ESSA could not have happened without the dedication of our members.