



Every Student Succeeds Act

Higher Education

The historic passage of ESSA promises to transform k-12 education by doing away with so many federal mandates on everything from assessment, accountability, and interventions that state and local policymakers will be playing a decisive role in determining how the new law is implemented. The legislation will also impact higher education in teacher preparation programs, college readiness standards, and early college programs that allow high school students to take courses receiving college credit, such as dual enrollment. These issues show promise for how states can work with educators and other local stakeholders and institutions to design and implement new standards, and college and university faculty and staff must be included in the decision making.

For elementary and secondary schools, the new law supports empowered teachers and paraeducators by calling for committees of practitioners where educators with recent classroom experience, parents, and community members can work together to improve their local schools. ESSA also requires consultation with organizations representing educators in multiple places, ensuring that *educators* and their local unions have a say in decision-making. The same principle of inclusion of faculty and staff in higher education decision-making bodies must apply in the areas where the statute touches on college and university instruction.

Teacher Preparation

- ▶ Teacher preparation should expand opportunities for teacher candidates to access rigorous, comprehensive teacher preparation programs that include extensive clinical practice as well as theory, an in-depth test of subject and pedagogical knowledge, and a comprehensive pre-service teacher performance assessment.
- ▶ As changes to higher education programs are made to support ESSA implementation and to strengthen teacher preparation programs, faculty and staff must be part of the decision-making process, and when appropriate elementary and secondary teachers as well.

College- and Career-Readiness Standards

- ▶ Each state must have college- and career-ready standards, as well as goals and targets for progress within student subgroups on some measures.
- ▶ College and university faculty and staff must be part of the decision-making process. NEA affiliates should work to ensure that NEA Higher Education members are appointed to decision-making bodies on these issues.

Dual Enrollment and Early College High School

- ▶ ESSA includes grants for state and local districts to fund dual- or concurrent-enrollment programs and early college programs. The programs are defined as follows:

DUAL OR CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT PROGRAM.—The term ‘dual or concurrent enrollment program’ means a program offered by a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and at least one local educational agency through which a secondary school student who has not graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma is able to enroll in one or more postsecondary courses and earn postsecondary credit that—

- (A) is transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership; and
- (B) applies toward completion of a degree or recognized educational credential as described in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.).

EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL.—The term ‘early college high school’ means a partnership between at least one local educational agency and at least one institution of higher education that allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and earn not less than 12 credits that are transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership as part of an organized course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the participant or participant’s family.

- ▶ In support of student access, NEA supports articulation agreements that say students’ work at one institution (secondary or postsecondary) earns college level credits at another institution. NEA’s Legislative Program addresses the issue of articulation agreements, and the exact language is:

NEA supports: the promotion of articulation agreements between secondary and post-secondary institutions (as well as between different post-secondary institutions) when the content of those agreements has been determined by educators from both sectors;

- ▶ College and university faculty and staff from the higher education institution accepting the credit must participate along with k-12 teachers or higher education faculty and staff providing the coursework to determine that the educational content of the courses actually do qualify as college credit work from the lens of the institution accepting the credit.