



Hello everyone,

I hope you all have had a great holiday and are refreshed and renewed to start the New Year!

I'm starting out this eITK with messages from NEA president Lily Eskelsen Garcia and VEA president Meg Gruber, and a request from Meg about ESSA, the Every Student Succeeds Act. She is asking that, with all waivers to No Child Left Behind expiring on Aug. 1, 2016, **what changes are most needed. Specifically, what needs to be changed or tweaked in the current teacher evaluation system and why?** She wants proposals with rationale as to what needs to be changed in the process.

This is a great opportunity to have meaningful dialogue which could result in some changes. Please reply to me by the end of the week, if possible.

Thank you for all you do for our students and our members to put kids first!

All the best for the coming new year,
Trenace Riggs
VBEA president

Message from NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia on ESSA in testimony at the U.S. Department of Education on Jan. 11, 2016:



Educators are Ready to Lead on ESSA Implementation

Read Lily's testimony at the Department of Education on the implementation of [the Every Student Succeeds Act](#).

¡Buenos días! My name is Lily Eskelsen García and I am proud to be the President of the [National Education Association](#) representing about 3 million educators who are teaching students, serving nutritious meals, and transporting students safely as we speak.

In the months leading up to the enactment of The Every Student Succeeds Act, I heard loud and clear from my members what they wanted to see in a new law:

- Ensure **opportunity really matters** in the accountability system
- **Guarantee educators' expertise** in decision-making
- Reduce the volume and **over-reliance on standardized testing**

The new law delivers on all three, and paves the way for opportunity to become a real part of 'what gets counted' now, an historic development for our education system. The law also returns significant responsibility to states and schools districts to ensure students are learning. This shift offers the U.S. Department of Education the opportunity to focus on its enforcement authority to **ensure students have equitable access to a robust and well-rounded education and to the supports they need to excel.**

Thank you for kicking off the implementation process so soon in the New Year. This kind of monumental transition will require deep collaboration among multiple stakeholders, some of whom are not used to working together, and making sure more voices are at decision-making tables. None of us should be seeking a shortcut in this collaboration—that's the only way the new law will work. There is built-in time for deep engagement of all stakeholders and we urge the U.S. Department of Education to set a good example by not rushing its part of the process for the sake of expediency.

The implementation process will be simultaneously developing at the national level, at the state level, at the district level, and ultimately in schools across this country as policies are updated. We implore the Department to ensure the regulatory process is infused with the **best thinking, ideas, and concepts from across the country this year.** We hope that the two listening sessions are only the beginning of the Department's listening tour.

We want to see more listening, not less.

More engagement, not less.

More stakeholder engagement, not less.

And we practice what we preach! The National Education Association has

embarked [on its own listening tour](#) because we want to hear from teachers, education support professionals, specialized instructional support professionals, librarians, and higher education faculty and staff about how to make sure we don't blow this opportunity to get it right. The Every Student Succeeds Act places **student learning – instead of student testing – at the center of everything educators do.**

We know that there are innovative performance assessment systems out there that were just waiting for the necessary flexibility to flourish. We know that there are educators and principals who have tapped into the best ways to engage students with integrated curriculum and they were just waiting for the necessary flexibility to make it work in their schools.

As educators, we know we are lucky because we have the privilege of inspiring our students' curiosity, imagination, and desire to learn, and the opportunity to provide them with the caring, committed, and qualified educators they deserve.

We are ready to chart new pathways for student success, we are excited for the opportunity for change ahead of us, and we are ready to lead.

On behalf of my members and our students, thank you.



Message from Meg

As we all know, NCLB has been replaced with ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) and was signed into law by President Obama.

While we (as NEA members) did not get everything we wanted, our tremendous advocacy with our Senators and Congressmen ensured that there are no vouchers to Title I portability.

At this time, the US Department of Education is writing the regulations for the law.

ESSA states assessments will only be used for “valid and reliable purposes.” ESSA retains annual testing in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics and once in grades 9-12. Science will be assessed at least once during grade spans 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. ESSA encourages the development of richer, performance-based assessments through the set of multiple measures. ESSA permits states to set targets for total time spent on testing.

AYP is out and will be replaced by state-defined long-term goals that are “ambitious” and include measures of interim progress.

Waivers are terminated on August 1, 2016 and the USED will focus its monitoring and enforcement only on those principles that are part of ESEA and/or ESSA. *ESSA also calls for more input by stakeholders including teachers and paraeducators.*

So, as we still try to figure everything out, what can you begin doing with your members on the local level? NEA has sent to me a list of the Top 10 Decisions (attached) to begin work on but only 4 apply to locals. NEA has an implementation page at www.nea.org/ESSAbegins. Please check it frequently.

LOCAL AFFILIATES Are you?...

Have you identified member-leaders (for example, teachers, paraeducators, specialized instructional support personnel, librarians and media specialists) who can represent the local affiliate in decision-making opportunities?

Will you recommend that your district seek approval to use the SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement assessments, or another nationally recognized assessment to fulfill the high school assessment requirement rather than the assessment currently being given? (In VA these are permissible for verified credit but not for school accreditation at this time. The reported scores come in too late. The VA Board may consider possible changes due to ESSA.)

Based on the indicators chosen for the state's revamped accountability system, do you know how many schools will be identified for improvement in your district? Once identified, affiliates should participate in the design of the improvement plan in order to influence exit criteria, timing, and the consequences for schools not meeting exit requirements.

Are you ready? School districts must now identify, address, and report publicly any disparities that result in students from low-income families and students of color being taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, inexperienced, or out of field teachers.

There is still a tremendous amount of unknown. There are two actions I hope you will take immediately.

1. Begin conversations with your Superintendent and your School Board. Make sure you are all on the same page and are sharing information.

2. Have your School Board adopt the attached resolution and let me know when they do.

Meg Gruber
VEA president

For more on ESSA:

For 14 long years, students and educators have lived under the deeply flawed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) returns decision making for our nation's education back where it belongs - in the hands of local educators, parents and communities - while keeping the focus on students most in need.

Simply stated, the Every Student Succeeds Act will help ensure that all students, regardless of their ZIP code, will have the support, tools, and time to learn that they need to succeed and that educators' voices are part of the decision making process all levels.



Throughout the reauthorization process, NEA's priorities were threefold:

- 1) elevate the voices of educators in the policymaking process,
- 2) decouple standardized testing from high stake decisions, and
- 3) create an "opportunity dashboard" to help close opportunity gaps in needy schools.

Based on these measures, ESSA has the potential to be a game-changer.

What Happens Next

Even after the historic passage of ESSA, the work in many ways is just beginning. Because the new law does away with so many federal mandates on everything from assessment, accountability and evaluation, state legislatures will be playing a decisive role in determining how ESSA is implemented.

It's now up to the states to work with local stakeholders and districts to design, for example, new and better assessments and accountability systems and follow-through on identifying and filling opportunity gaps.

With the bill's passage, the work is just beginning. Below are links to our first set of one-pagers on specific topics in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). More information is being pulled together as the focus shifts to implementation.

Top 10 Decisions to Make Before January 29: [Find out more here](#) (PDF)

Sample School Board Resolution: [Click here](#) (PDF)

- [ESSA: Student Opportunity](#) (PDF, 106 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: Less Testing = More Learning](#) (PDF, 106 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: Teacher Empowerment](#) (PDF, 122 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: Paraeducator Empowerment](#) (PDF, 113 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: State-designed Accountability Systems](#) (PDF, 106 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: Weighted student-funding formulas](#) (PDF, 106 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: School Discipline](#) (PDF, 106 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: Student and School Safety / Bullying Prevention](#) (PDF, 106 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: American Civics and History Education](#) (PDF, 137 KB, 1 pg.)
 - [ESSA: Early Childhood Education](#) (PDF, 502 KB, 1 pg.)
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- [ESSA: Equitable Participation](#) (PDF, 407 KB, 1 pg.)
- [ESSA: Family and Communities](#) (PDF, 313 KB, 1 pg.)
- [ESSA: Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation \(LEARN\)](#) (PDF, 406 KB, 1 pg.)
- [ESSA: Secondary Schools](#) (PDF, 305 KB, 1 pg.)

The Henry Ford's Innovation Nation Teacher Innovator Awards

For the second year in a row, Litton Entertainment and The Henry Ford, a nationally recognized cultural destination in Dearborn, Michigan, are sponsoring **The Henry Ford's Innovation Nation Teacher Innovator Awards**.

We are looking for teachers who demonstrate an original and creative approach to teaching, exhibit resourcefulness, engage students, and are making a positive impact on not only their classroom but their community, colleagues, administrators, school, and/or district. Twenty teachers in total will receive prizes, with the top ten first prize winners receiving a week-long "Innovation Immersion Experience" at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan. Winners will be announced in May.

The awards were created to accompany the national television show, *The Henry Ford's Innovation Nation* which airs on CBS Saturday mornings. The TV show is hosted by CBS News correspondent Mo Rocca and provides a weekly celebration of the inventor's spirit, telling fascinating stories of historic innovators of the past and forward-thinking visionaries of today.

For more info and nomination

form: <http://www.thehenryford.org/teacherinnovator>

Video: <https://vimeo.com/user24471526/review/140475331/8f8054da91>

Blog Post: <http://blog.thehenryford.org/2015/11/teacher-innovator-awards/>

Nominations are due by February 5, 2015

www.thehenryford.org

Pearls of Wisdom Oyster Roast & Barbecue

Sponsored by the Virginia Beach Education Foundation

Date: Saturday, April 16, 2016

Time: 1-5 p.m.

Location: 24th Street & Atlantic Ave. Virginia Beach

Info: Call (757) 263-1337 or go to www.vbef.org SATURDAY Oyster Roast Barbecue

Link: [Pearls of Wisdom Oyster Roast and Barbecue flyer](#)

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Our mailing address is:

Virginia Beach Education Association

445 Kings Grant Road

Virginia Beach, VA 23452