



A Union of Professionals

Every Student Succeeds Act

A New Day in Public Education

Standards and Assessments

Standards

States will set their own standards in reading and math, as long as they are aligned with state higher education standards. The federal government is prohibited from mandating or incentivizing states to adopt a particular set of standards, including Common Core.

States can adopt alternate academic standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as long as they are aligned with the state's regular standards, promote access to the general education curriculum and are consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

States must adopt English language proficiency standards involving speaking, listening, reading and writing that address different proficiency levels and align with the states' academic standards.

Assessments and Testing

ESSA maintains the requirement that states test students annually in reading or language arts and math in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12, and in science once in each of the following grade spans: 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12.

The bill does include some flexibility to improve testing policies, including:

- States and school districts can use funds to conduct audits of state and local assessment systems to eliminate unnecessary tests and improve assessments.
- ESSA allows for the development and dissemination of high-quality performance-based assessments through a seven-state pilot program. Under this program, states can develop and implement innovative assessments.

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.6 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten
PRESIDENT

Loretta Johnson
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Mary Cathryn Ricker
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO • 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. • Washington, DC 20001 • 202-879-4400 • www.aft.org



- While assessments for elementary schools must be the same for all public school students statewide, states may also choose to offer a nationally recognized local assessment at the high school level (SAT or ACT, for example), as long as assessments are reliable, valid and comparable.
- ESSA allows states to set a target limit on the aggregate amount of time that students spend taking assessments for each grade.

Opt-Out

ESSA allows parents to opt a student out of required assessments for any reason.

Local educational agencies are required to notify parents annually of the ability to receive any testing participation policy of the state or LEA. If requested, school districts must provide parents information regarding student participation in mandated assessments and the parents' right to opt their child out of the tests. While states are required to have 95 percent of students participate in assessments, each state may determine the weight of the participation measure.