



## PTA and ESSA

National PTA advocated for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – created in 1965 as part of President Johnson’s anti-poverty program – and for it to be changed from the version in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The result was the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

ESSA requires parental engagement in the development and implementation of state and district plans – to take effect this school year (2017-2018), after the state plan is approved by the U.S. Department of Education. A few parents were involved in the development of Colorado’s plan (it has not been approved yet.)

Like NCLB, ESSA still requires testing in English Language Arts, Math, and Science. It also requires that no less than 95% of all students—or of any group of students—participate in the state assessment. This conflicts with Colorado’s law allowing parents to opt their students out.

- Students attending schools that embed family engagement as an essential component for improvement have seen greater results in math and reading.

ESSA allows states to use their own accountability systems (no more Adequate Yearly Progress requirements). Colorado’s system uses the District/School Performance Framework based mainly on students showing “growth” from year to year on test scores.

ESSA supports family engagement by requiring school districts to use at least 1% of their Title I funds for family engagement activities. The funds can be used to support professional development for educators on family engagement, home visiting programs, and other activities to support family engagement that are consistent with a school district’s family engagement policy.

- Schools would need to increase spending by more than \$1,000 per pupil to gain the same results as effective family engagement.
- Teachers are more likely to remain in schools where families are involved and where they are able to develop trusting relationships with families.

What can you do to support family engagement at the local level?

- Join and volunteer with your local PTA to increase family engagement opportunities at your school.
- Volunteer to serve on your child’s school improvement plan team (school accountability committee).
- Visit the school district website to see how you can become involved in the district’s parental involvement and family engagement initiatives.
- Reach out to school district leaders and engage with local education stakeholder groups to inform implementation of ESSA.
- Nominate yourself to serve on the committee that drafts the school district education plan required under ESSA.