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Things every PARENT should know about Alaska's plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)



WHAT IS ESSA?

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was first signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Nearly 40 years later, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law in 2002 which reauthorized the original ESEA. In December 2015 President Obama signed ESSA into law. Under ESSA, each state must outline their plan of how to use federal money to ensure equity in education across public schools in their state.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Alaska's plan supports the state's ongoing commitment to ensuring an excellent education for every student every day no matter who they are, where they live, where they go to school, or where they come from.

WHAT DO PARENTS NEED TO KNOW?

Below are highlights of important elements for parents and families in Alaska's plan. We encourage you to visit the [Alaska Department of Education & Early Development's ESSA website](#) to learn more.

1

Alaska is committed to preparing students to be successful in their education and work, and shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves.

The state has long had standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, and in 2012 adopted [rigorous standards in English language arts and mathematics](#). These standards are designed to meet the challenges of 21st century educational and vocational expectations.



2

Alaska gives statewide assessments as regular system checks.

Alaska administers the [Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools \(PEAKS\) assessment and the Alaska Science Assessment](#) in order to (1) help inform parents, educators, policy makers, the community, and businesses about how our schools and districts are performing, (2) to identify schools in the most need of school improvement efforts, and (3) to ensure there is equity in education.

PEAKS and the Alaska Science Assessment are summative assessments, which are just one piece of a balanced assessment system. Summative assessments are designed to give information on a student's understanding of the state's English language arts, mathematics, and science standards. When administered over multiple years, the assessments are even more meaningful because they inform you on how far your child has progressed in their learning.



3

Alaska is committed to providing an excellent education for every student every day.

Because school success is not based on a singular test, beginning in the fall of 2018, schools will receive an Overall School Index Value. This index value is based on several indicators that are part of the *System for School Success*—the state’s new accountability system. The indicators for different school types are listed below:

For schools serving grade(s) K-6	For schools serving grade(s) 7-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic achievement• Student growth• Chronic absenteeism• Progress for English Language Learners• Grade 3 English language arts proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic achievement• Student growth• Chronic absenteeism• Progress for English Language Learners• Graduation rate

4

Parents and community members play an important role in ESSA.

Alaska relied on parents, community members, and other stakeholders for input in the development of Alaska’s ESSA plan. As we move into the implementation stage of ESSA, we look forward to a continued partnership with various stakeholders across the state.



5

Alaska values quality educators.



Alaska has always valued quality staff in our schools. The ESSA plan allows for greater flexibility in supporting all school staff, including education support professionals.