

# Four Critical Opportunities for States Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

## A Better Approach to Assessment

States now have the opportunity to develop student-centered assessment systems that have the potential to increase engagement, provide real-time feedback on student learning, and improve equitable outcomes across our education system.

### VALUE GROWTH

**No Child Left Behind**  
States Must: Administer yearly, grade-level assessments for each student. Schools are held accountable for achieving student academic proficiency.

**ESSA General Assessment Provisions**  
States May: Include measures of student academic growth in their assessment systems and use this information to make accountability decisions.

**ESSA Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority**  
States May: Pilot an assessment system that documents student progress toward mastery of key knowledge and skills (competencies) and provides stakeholders with useful, real-time feedback.

### PRIORITIZE READINESS

**No Child Left Behind**  
States Must: Administer math and English language arts assessments yearly in grades 3–8 and once in high school. Science assessments must be administered once in each grade span: 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12.

**ESSA General Assessment Provisions**  
States May: Administer multiple statewide interim assessments throughout the year that combine into an annual, summative score.

**ESSA Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority**  
States May: Pilot an assessment system that enables students to test when ready as long as it produces an annual score and grade-level performance information for each student.

### EMPHASIZE KNOWLEDGE + SKILLS

**No Child Left Behind**  
States Must: Respond to compliance and financial challenges. These issues drove widespread adoption of assessments that rely solely on multiple-choice items which fail to measure the full range of college and career readiness.

**ESSA General Assessment Provisions**  
States May: Incorporate multiple up-to-date measures of student academic achievement which may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects, or extended performance tasks.

**ESSA Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority**  
States May: Pilot an assessment system with assessments that enable competency education or consist of instructionally-embedded or performance-based assessments that combine into an annual score.

### INVOLVE DISTRICT PARTNERS

**No Child Left Behind**  
States Must: Administer the same statewide assessment to all students.

**ESSA General Assessment Provisions**  
States May: Permit districts to use a nationally-recognized high school assessment in place of the statewide assessment. 8th grade students taking advanced math courses can take a test at their proficiency level instead of the statewide assessment.

**ESSA Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority**  
States May: Pilot an assessment system with a group of districts before scaling statewide. The state must collaborate with districts in the development of the assessment system.