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Every Student Succeeds Act

Summary: 2/25/16

Standards and Assessment

- The new law maintains the requirement for states to have challenging academic standards in reading or English language arts, mathematics and science. It prohibits the U.S. Secretary of Education from requiring states to adopt specific standards.
 - NOTE: South Dakota remains committed to high quality standards. Regular revision of ELA and math standards to begin summer 2016.
- ESSA maintains the assessment requirements of No Child Left Behind:
 - High quality assessments in reading or English language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school; and in science at least once in grades 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12
 - Alternate assessments for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities
 - English language proficiency assessment for students needing it
 - 95% participation rate still required, but nothing in federal law intended to limit state law related to parent refusals
- ESSA indicates that states may set limits on required testing time.
- ESSA allows for districts to request to use a nationally recognized high school academic assessment in lieu of a state assessment, as long as it is aligned to state standards and meets other requirements.

Accountability

- The new law calls for state-defined accountability systems with certain federally required components – much like South Dakota’s current system.
 - Elementary & Middle Schools
 - Three required academic indicators: Student achievement, student growth, English language proficiency
 - One additional indicator

- High Schools
 - Three required academic indicators: Student achievement, graduation rate, English language proficiency
 - One additional indicator
- Each state accountability system must meaningfully differentiate schools.
 - Schools identified for comprehensive support
 - Lowest performing 5% of Title I schools based on state index
 - High schools with graduation rate less than 67%
 - Schools with chronically underperforming subgroups
 - Schools identified for targeted support
 - Schools with consistently underperforming subgroups

School Improvement

- States can choose to retain existing classifications during the transition year (SY 2016-17) or to identify new schools for school improvement.
 - NOTE: South Dakota plans to retain existing school classifications during the transition year. There will be no School Performance Index scores run during the summer of 2016, and no new schools identified for improvement for the 2016-17 school year. Report Cards will still be published, but no SPI points will be reported.
- States must use evidence-based interventions. Specific school improvement models are no longer required.

Report Cards

- The requirement to produce an annual Report Card remains, with additional items to be reported, including: English language proficiency; new subgroups (homeless, foster and active duty military children); postsecondary enrollment rates; certain teacher qualifications; and more.

Educator Effectiveness

- The new law does not require, but allows for, educator evaluation systems.
 - NOTE: South Dakota's requirements for teacher/principal evaluation are codified in state law, and districts may use state-developed models to meet these requirements.
- Under ESSA, the federal requirements for "Highly Qualified Teachers" have been discontinued. After this current school year, teachers must only meet state certification requirements.