



Update on the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”)

What is ESSA?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) is the most recent version of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, previously known as “No Child Left Behind.” The law sets up expectations and requirements for schools receiving federal education funding in areas such as math and language arts testing, special education and English Language Learner (“ELL”) programs. The intention of ESSA was to give states more flexibility in setting standards, measuring school performance and making sure that all students have an opportunity to succeed.

What is happening in Oregon?

The Oregon Department of Education has held meetings throughout the state with administrators, teachers, parents and community organizations to talk about how Oregon can pursue its core educational values under the new ESSA rules. The goal is to use the new flexibility to move toward an educational system that is more equitable, with broad-based measurements of school performance and effective support systems for continuous improvement in schools throughout the state.

What is PTA’s role?

Oregon PTA has sent representatives to the work groups and advisory committees helping to implement the law. Oregon PTA President Collin Robinson, President-Elect Scott Overton, Vice President for Legislation Kevin McHargue and Legislative Director Otto Schell have attended those meetings in order to advocate for greater family engagement in our schools. For example, ESSA permits states to develop additional “indicators” of school performance, in addition to test scores. The Oregon PTA, in conjunction with many committee members representing teachers and community organizations, has advocated the creation of a “school climate” measurement, where feedback from parents and students would be collected and included in the school ratings. Oregon PTA has also supported creating more comprehensive school rating “report card” to give parents meaningful information that goes beyond test scores. Oregon PTA has also worked with National PTA to comment on the federal ESSA regulations, in order to make family engagement a priority. These meetings and discussions will continue through the fall, so feedback from parents is still vital.