



Decoding The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

What you need to know about
the new federal education law.

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About Whiteboard Advisors

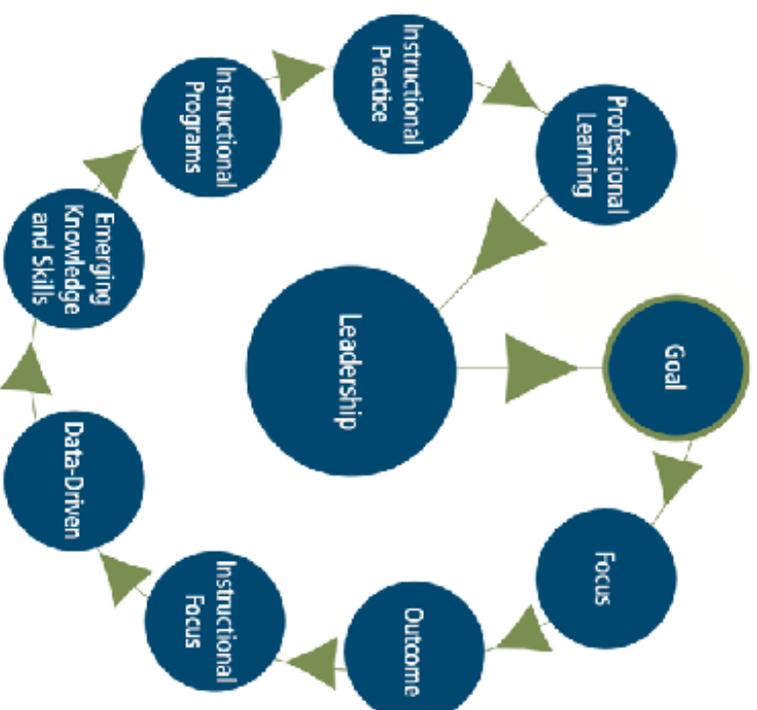


Whiteboard Advisors is a multidisciplinary agency specializing in education regulatory analysis, business development, complex research, and communications for highly regulated markets like education and health and wellness.

Our team of policy wonks, geeks, and storytellers brings an unmatched understanding of the political and policy landscape to bear on organizational strategy.

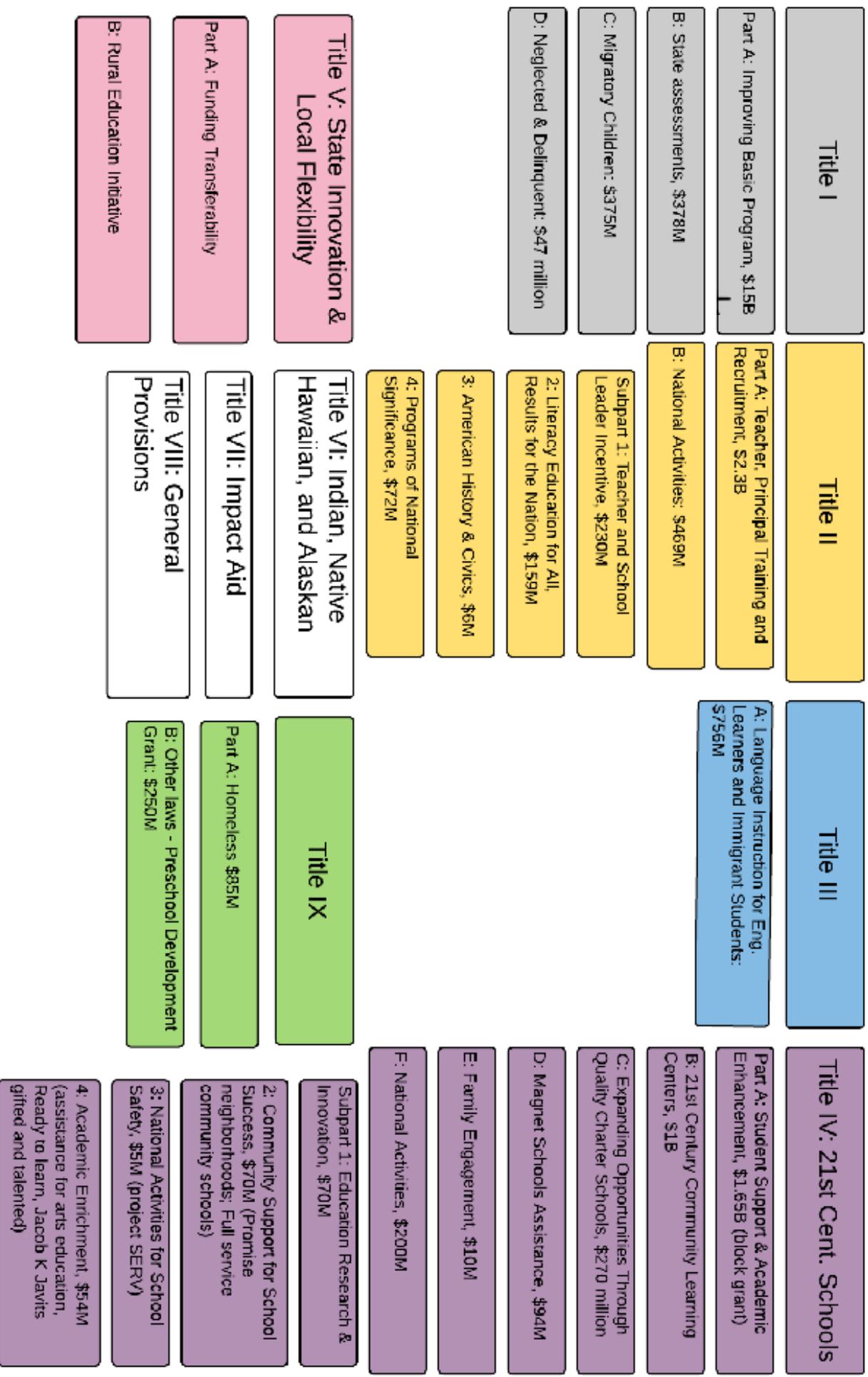
Neurosis is the inability to tolerate ambiguity.

-Sigmund Freud



-Bill Daggett, PhD

The ESSA at a glance



A New ESEA Chapter



The "allowable uses" - are broader.

1

HQ education + gaps.

ESSA ensures that "all children receive a high-quality education and close student achievement gaps."

2

Well rounded.

LEAs to implement a well-rounded program of instruction, identify risk of academic failure, & improving the overall conditions for learning.

3

State & Local Control.

ESSA devolves policy decision making to states and districts. In fact, the Secretary is largely prohibited from influencing this.

4

Fiscal flexibility.

ESSA makes big changes to the "supplement not supplant" rule, in part, because of the opportunities of digital learning.

OPPORTUNITIES

A broader interpretation of "allowable costs" coupled with more fiscal flexibility allows schools to focus on what is best for students.

RISKS

Muddled and multiple interpretations of key terms and allowable expenses across states and districts may cause confusion.

A New ESEA Chapter

More opportunity for innovation - like competency based education and assessment programs.



1

New accountability framework.

New accountability models that reach beyond simple proficiency to growth, and other indicators.

2

Locally developed interventions

Comprehensive support & improvement (CSI) and Targeted SI are coupled with an SEA 7% Title I reservation -- SIG.



3

Rethinking assessments.

ESSA focuses on useful assessments, and assessment innovation at the state and local level.

4

Renewed Focus on evidence.

Using evidence to drive intervention and professional development.

OPPORTUNITIES

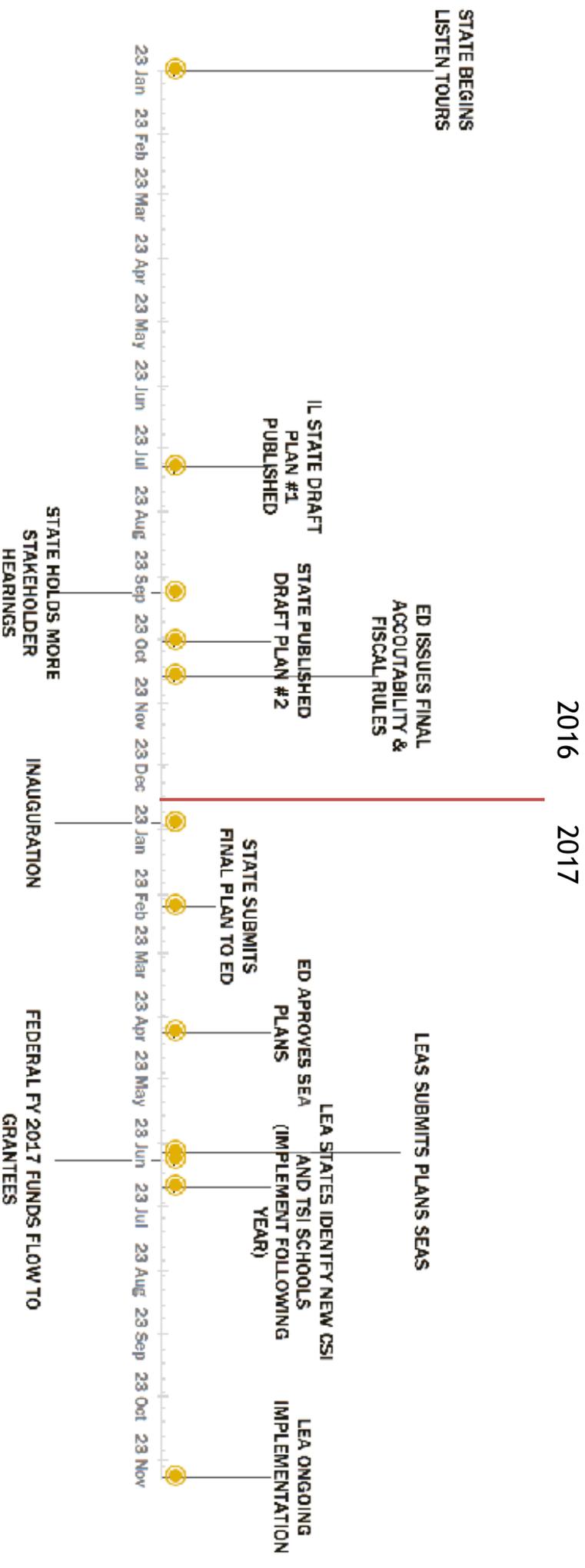
The ESSA allows schools and districts to explore new assessment models and new mastery learning models.

RISKS

Change requires advocacy and it can be difficult to change long standing practices and habits.

ESSA Timelines

Tight Timelines



Next Generation Assessments

ESSA begins to create new summative assessment options

NCLB's basic requirements carry over 

- M+ELA, 3-8, and at least once in grades 9-12.
- Science, not less than one time in each of the three grade spans: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.

At the state's discretion  assessments may be administered in:

- A single summative assessment; or
- multiple state-wide interim assessments during the academic year.
- Districts may use a locally selected, nationally recognized assessment in lieu of the state assessment.

Innovative CBE Pilot.

ESSA allows up to 7 participating states to pilot a three-year assessment and accountability demonstration program.

Next Generation Assessments

The law provides funding for state and districts to conduct assessment audits to review what's going on.

- Each State that receives a grant shall receive an annual grant amount of not less than \$1,500,000
- Each State shall reserve not less than 20 percent of the grant funds awarded to the State under this section to make subgrants to LEAs or consortia of such LEAs to examine:
 - (A) The schedule of assessments
 - (B) For each state assessment:
 - (i) The purpose for which the assessment is used; and
 - (ii) the legal authority for the administration of the assessment;
 - (C) feedback on such system from stakeholders to make sure the exams are understood and useful

Broader Accountability

To what will our educators be held “accountable?”
Very Different than NCLB.

Elementary and Middle Schools 		High Schools
Academic Achievement Indicator (may include student growth)	Academic Achievement Indicator  (may include student growth)	
Academic Progress Indicator (may include student growth)	Graduation Rate Indicator	
Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency		
Indicator(s) of School Quality or Student Success		

Take a closer look at “Indicator(s) of School Quality or Student Success”

ESSA requires that the indicators:



- Measure the performance of all students in all public schools, including public charter schools
- Allow for comparison between subgroups of students
- Demonstrate variation across schools in the state
- Are likely to increase graduation rates or academic achievement school quality or student success.

State working response:

Members of the Accountability Workgroup repeatedly identified the following school quality indicators:

- 8th/9th grade on track (K-12 indicator)
- Chronic absenteeism and/or attendance (k-12 indicator)
- HS curricular measure AP/IB/dual/CTE (9-12 indicator)
- PreK-2 indicator (2 groups) (may not be ready 2017-18)

How will states use all of these data?

ESSA requires:

- The state will use this information to make **meaningful differentiation** amongst schools
- Assign a comprehensive, summative rating for each school. Consistent with the requirement for indicators, each State must have at **least 3 summative ratings**.
- Each State and LEA must report a school's summative rating, as well performance on each indicator.



State working response:

“Illinois needs to develop an approach to meaningfully differentiate schools in order to provide parents and the public a sense of school quality. [...]”

There was no clear agreement or consensus from stakeholders regarding the timeline for achieving interim and long term goals. “

Is there high stakes accountability? No. “Interventions” are far more limited. There are 2 categories:

Comprehensive Support and Improvement

- Once every 3 years beginning in 2017-2018, identify the lowest-performing 5% of all schools, and all public high schools failing to graduate 1/3 or more of students (a graduation rate of 67% or less). 

Targeted Support and Improvement

- Every year, states notify districts of the subgroups that meet the state definition annually beginning in 2018-19.
- The state has a variety of ways to define the groups. It may be, for example, subgroups that are performing as poorly as all the students in the lowest-performing 5% of schools in the State.

The interventions are left to negotiations with the state.

CSI: Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans

State, district and stakeholders will develop a plan that:

- Is informed by all the indicators of the state accountability system;
- Includes evidence-based interventions;
- Is based on a school level needs assessment;
- Identifies resource inequalities, which may include a review of LEA and school level budgeting and program opportunities like AP, ed tech and more.
- Is approved by the school, district, and the state and monitored by the state.

TSI: Targeted Support and Improvement Plans

District, school, and stakeholders will develop a plan that:

- (Same points as above);
- Is approved and monitored by the district ;
- Results in additional action after a number of years as determined by LEA and aligned with statewide exit criteria. May get “promoted” to CSI.

Better Interventions?

The term “evidence-based” appears 58 times throughout ESSA. This term is used to govern the use of funds and selection of activities and interventions throughout nearly all major programs of the law.

There are 4 tiers to the “evidence based” requirement:

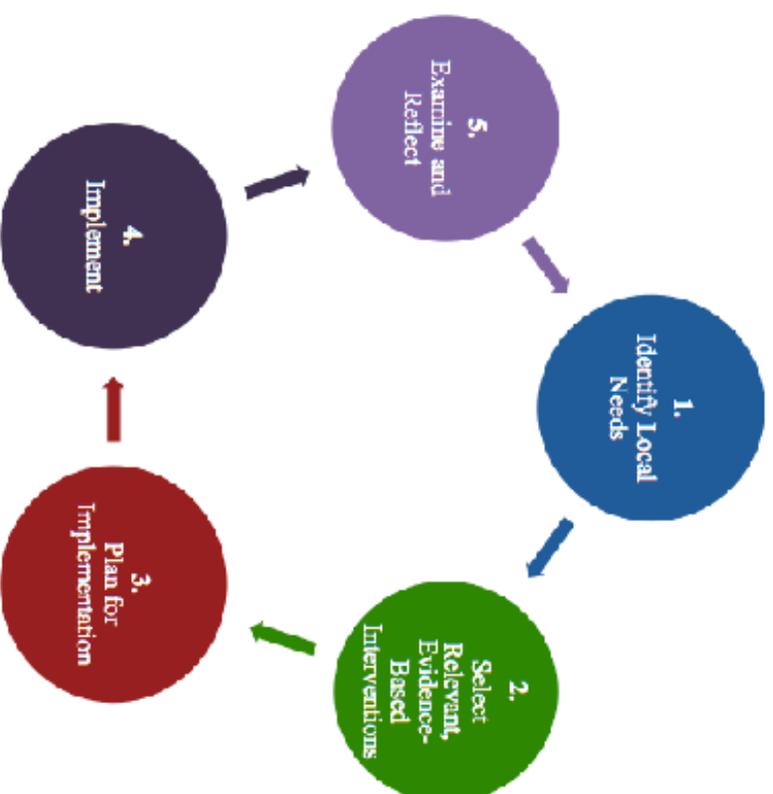
- (I) strong evidence from at least 1 well designed and well-implemented experimental study;
- (II) moderate evidence from at least 1 well designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or
- (III) promising evidence from at least 1 well designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- (IV) demonstrates a rationale based on high quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes;

When used with respect to interventions or improvement activities or strategies funded by the State 7% set aside for CSI and TSI schools, the term ‘evidence-based’ has to meet the requirements of (I), (II), or (III). Otherwise it the “rationale based.”

Better Interventions?

ED provides explicit guidance on the way the agency interprets “evidence based” interventions and practices.

	Strong Evidence	Moderate Evidence	Promising Evidence	Demonstrates a Rationale
Study Design	Experimental study	Quasi-experimental study	Correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias	Provides a well-specified logic model informed by research or evaluation
WWC Standard	Meets WWC Evidence Standards without reservations (or is the equivalent quality)	Meets WWC Evidence Standards with or without reservations (or is the equivalent quality)	N/A	N/A
Favorable Effects	Shows a statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect of the intervention on a student outcome or other relevant outcome	Shows a statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect of the intervention on a student outcome or other relevant outcome	Shows a statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect of the intervention on a student outcome or other relevant outcome	Relevant research or an evaluation that suggests that the intervention is likely to improve a student outcome or other relevant outcome
Other Effects	Is not overridden by statistically significant and negative (i.e., unfavorable) evidence from other findings in studies that meet WWC Evidence Standards with or without reservations (or are the equivalent quality)	Is not overridden by statistically significant and negative (i.e., unfavorable) evidence from other findings in studies that meet WWC Evidence Standards with or without reservations (or are the equivalent quality)	Is not overridden by statistically significant and negative (i.e., unfavorable) evidence from other findings in studies that meet WWC Evidence Standards with or without reservations (or are the equivalent quality)	An effort to study the effects of the intervention, ideally producing promising evidence or higher, will happen as part of the intervention or is underway elsewhere
Sample Size and Overlap	Includes a large multi-site sample, overlapping with populations and settings proposed to receive the intervention	Includes a large sample and a multi-site sample, overlapping with populations or settings proposed to receive the intervention	N/A	N/A



New Plans, New Opportunities

Districts will have to merge their own new accountability plans into the state framework

Each district, as a condition of receiving Title I, provide a plan to ensure that all children receive high quality education and to close the achievement gap(s). Key parts of the plan include: 

- Developing and implementing a **well rounded** program of instruction to meet the academic needs of all children.
- **Identifying students who may be at risk for academic failure.**
- Providing **additional assistance** to individual students the LEA or school determines need help in meeting the challenging academic standards.
- Identifying and implementing instructional strategies intended to **strengthen academic programs and improve school conditions for learning.**

New Plans, New Opportunities

Broader
Allowable
Uses

Focusing beyond on reading and math

Well rounded	Academic Failure	Instructional strategies intended to strengthen academic programs
<p>The purpose of a well-rounded education is to provide an enriched curriculum and education experiences to all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics• Music and arts• Foreign language instruction• Accelerated learning programs• High school redesign with dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high schools• Civics instruction• College and career counseling• Social emotional learning (SEL)	<p>This is a boarder term that not meeting AYP, as was the focus under NCLB. In fact, the change is to identifying students who may be at risk of academic failure. This opens the work up to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early warning interventions• Preventative actions• Wrap around social emotional services; and more	<p>Once the needs have been identified, stakeholders should select relevant evidence-based activities, when evidence is available, that will have the likelihood of working in the local context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This begs questions about evidence and context. Is there adequate capacity to implement, political buy-in, training and professional development?

The **Expectation for PD is higher**

ESSA provides a new definition of professional development.

“Professional Development” includes activities that are:

“(A) an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators ... with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and

“(B) are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), **intensive, collaborative, job-embedded**, data-driven, and classroom-focused.

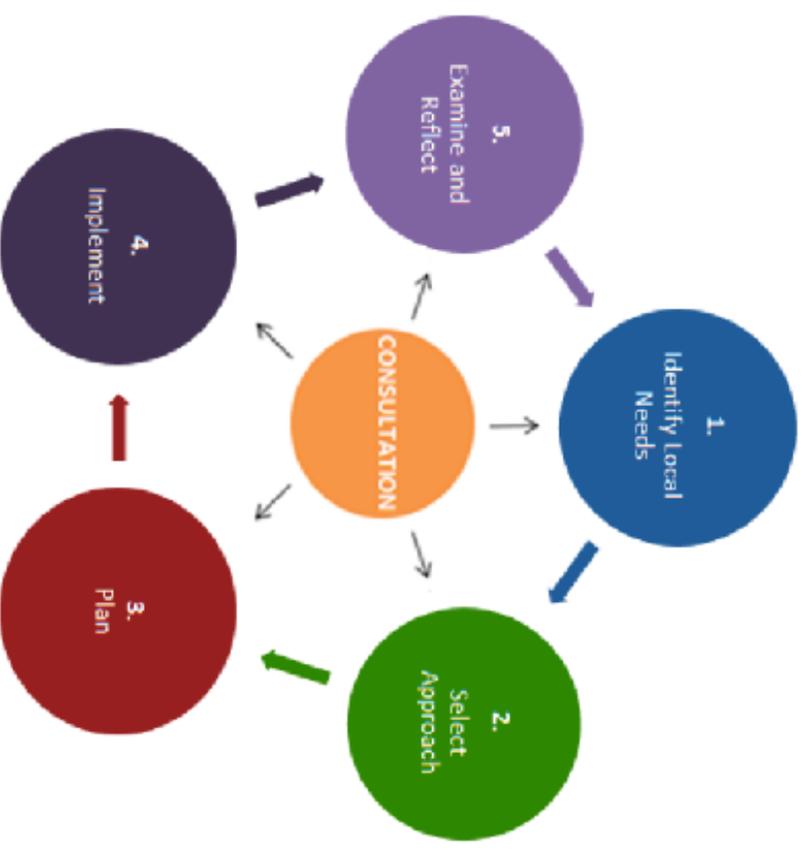
NOTE: ESSA eliminates NCLB’s definition of “core academic subjects,” expanding the allowable use of Title II funds for professional development to **include teachers of every subject as well as all other school staff, from principals to librarians to paraprofessionals.**

The Expectation for PD is higher

ED provides a suggested PD framework

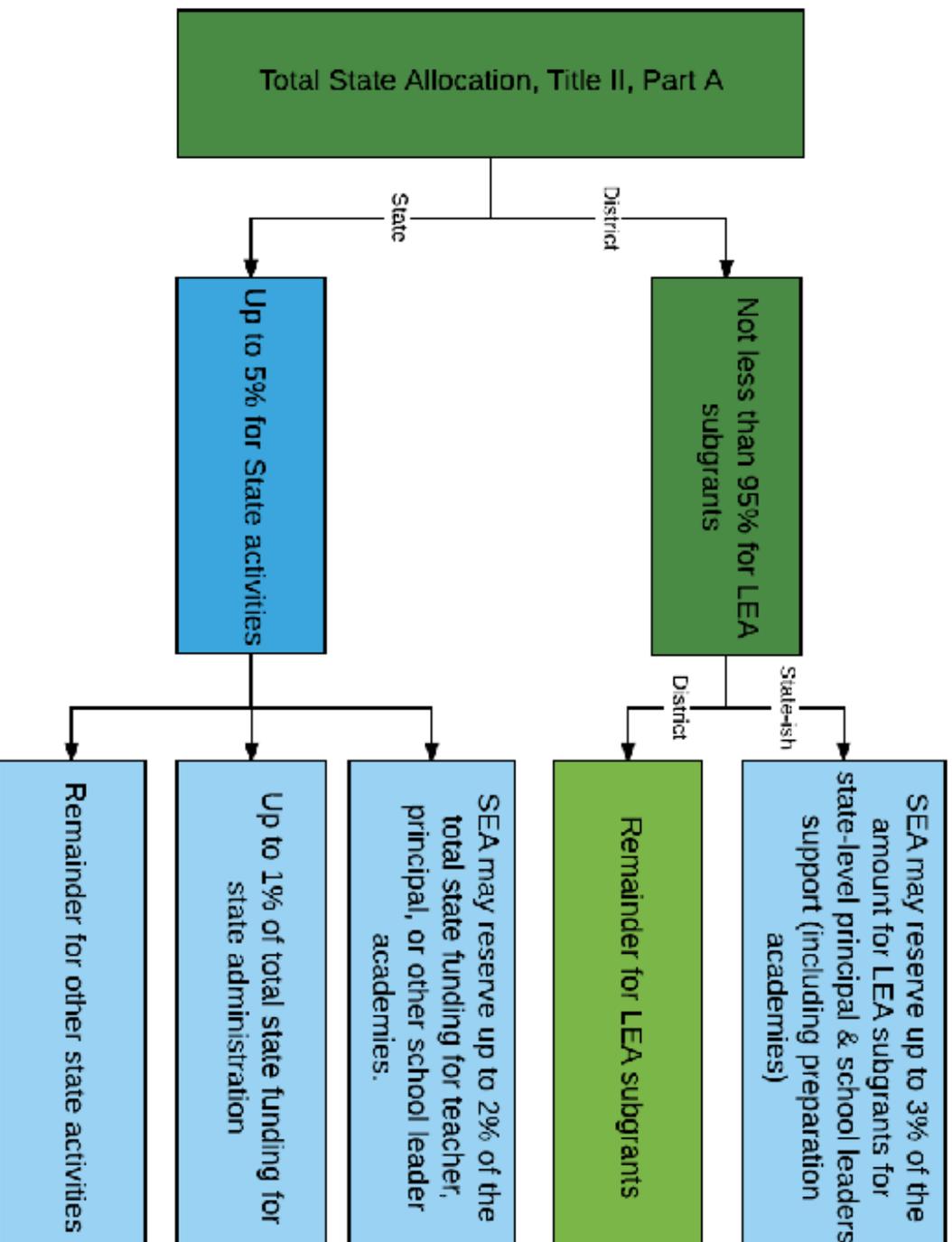
Title II, Part A interventions are more likely to result in sustained, improved outcomes for students if:

1. Chosen interventions align with **identified local needs**
2. The **evidence base** and the **local capacity** are considered when **selecting a strategy**;
3. There is a **robust implementation plan**;
4. Adequate resources are provided so the **implementation** is well-supported;
5. Information is gathered regularly to **examine** the strategy and to **reflect** on and **inform** next steps.



The Expectation for PD is higher

Title II funding structure sends most of the funds to districts



Title I fiscal rules, SNS and Schoolwide in particular, are different

New SNS: Districts will now have to demonstrate that “the methodology used to allocate state and local funds to each school ... ensures that [the] school receives all of the state and local funds it would otherwise receive if it were not receiving assistance under this part.” In other words, the method of distributing state and local funds must ensure that schools get their due of state and local funding. ”



Schoolwide is easier to do. At least 40% of the children need to come from low-income families, unless the state waives. The district must also develop a “schoolwide plan” over a 1-year period, unless the state waives that requirement.

Broader Spending Discretion, but...

There is a subtle but important move toward fiscal transparency

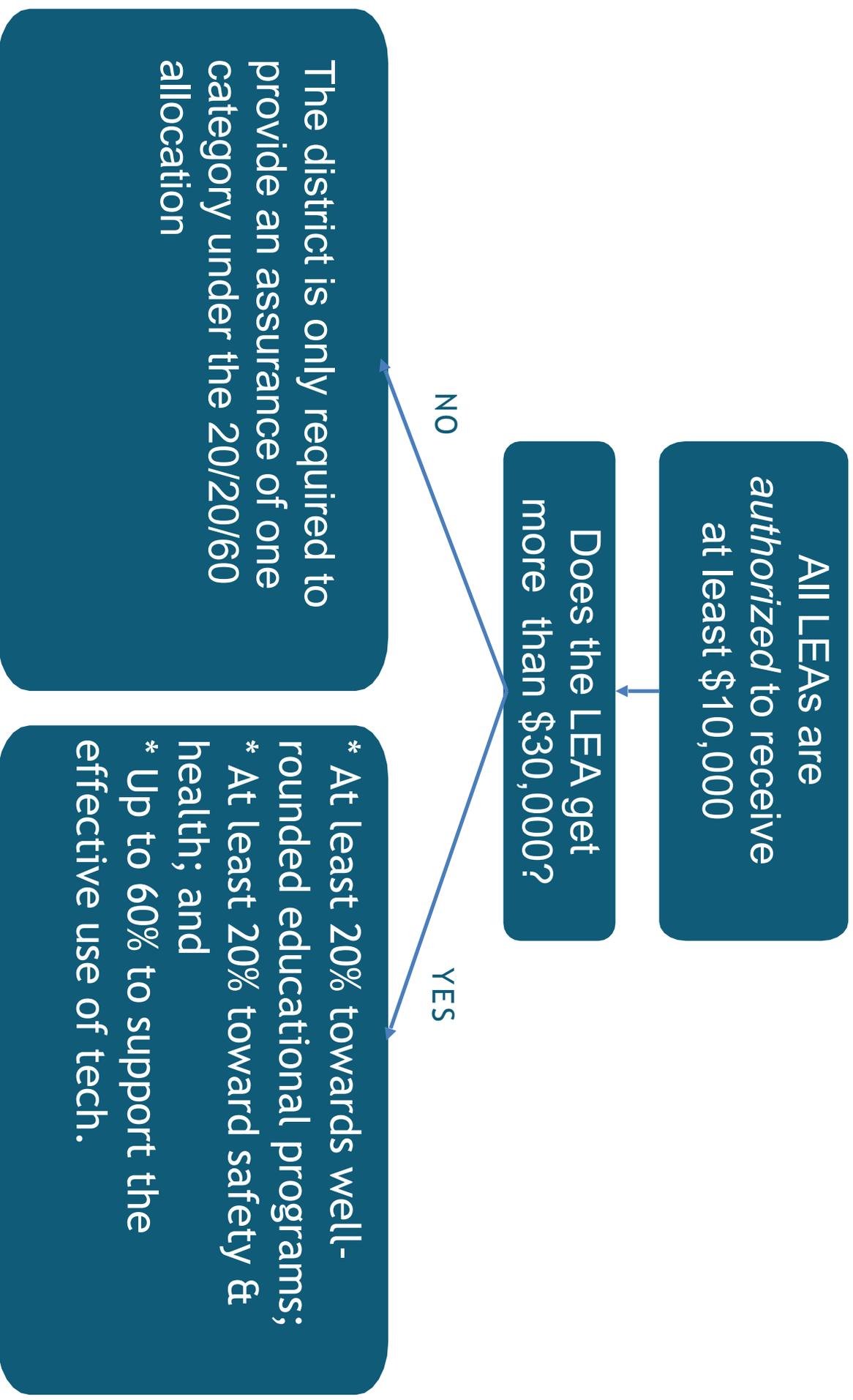
State and district report card minimum requirements includes:

Includes the per pupil expenditures of Federal State, and local funds, including the actual personnel expenditures and actual non personnel expenditures of Federal, State and local funds disaggregated by source of funds for leach LEA and each school in the state for the preceding fiscal year.

Comprehensive Support and Improvement:

CSI schools must identify resource inequalities, which may include a review of LEA and school level budgeting.

Title IV Block Grant

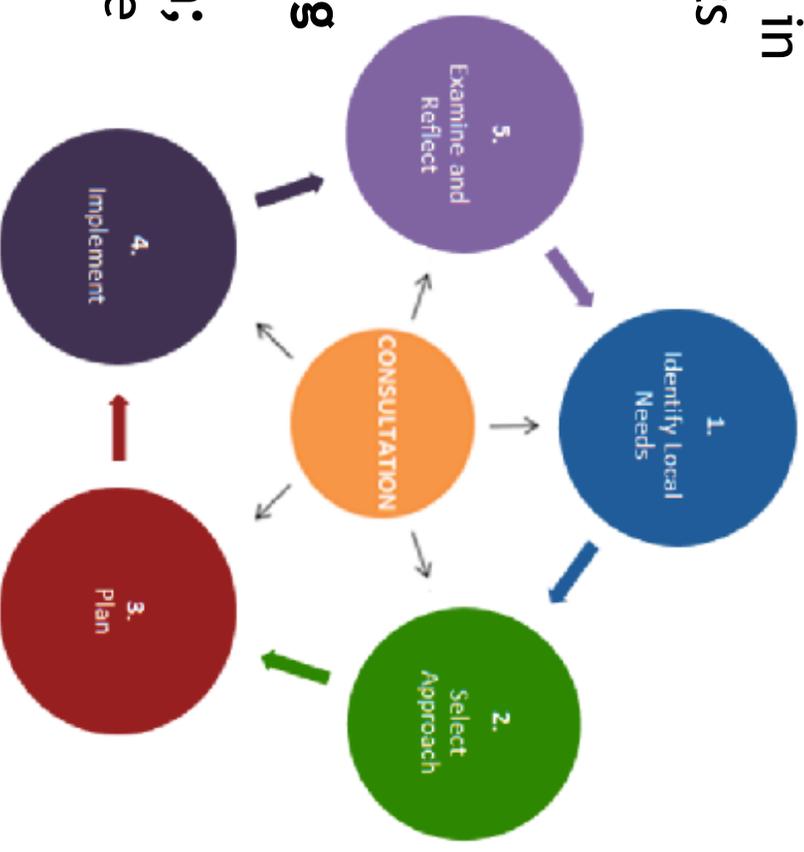


Title IV Block Grant

ED's Title IV framework provides a recommended approach

Title IV activities are more likely to result in sustained, improved outcomes for students if:

1. Chosen interventions align with **identified local needs**
2. The **evidence base** and the **local capacity** are considered when **selecting a strategy**;
3. There is a **robust implementation plan**;
4. Adequate resources are provided so the **implementation** is well-supported;
5. Information is gathered regularly to **examine** the strategy and to **reflect** on and **inform** next steps.



Equity Awakens

What will be the key enforcement lever going forward? Equity

ED is not just relying on ESSA compliance. The stakes are higher.

Whether a school and district is faithfully carrying out the law will be a civil rights matter. ED has even made this point directly in the proposed rules for the law's funding requirements. "The ESEA was first passed in 1965 to address enormous inequities in educational opportunities provided to low income students and children of color," the Secretary King writes. "It became law around the same time as the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, and was intended to reduce and ultimately eliminate, disparities in educational quality."

Opportunity to focus on reading

LEARN & “Comprehensive Literacy Instruction”

LEARN invests in improving state literacy instruction plans and distributes funding across the learning spectrum for students in LEAs in high needs schools.

The state has to provide not less than 15% for birth-Kindergarten grants, not less than 40% for K-5 grants, and not less than 40% for grades 6-12 grants.

It does not prescribe what has to happen, but only that the programs must be

- “evidence-based” and ensure
- high-quality “comprehensive literacy instruction,” which the law defines.

Please note: This is NOT Reading First (2006). Remember this OIG report?

I suspect that [the Baltimore City Public Schools official’s] assumption is that USDE must be warned that there may be DI infiltrators and that somehow USDE knows how dangerous that can be. You may remember that [the Baltimore City Public Schools official] is a whole language (now called Balanced Literacy) proponent.

The subsequent e-mail response from the Reading First Director suggests his intention to ensure a DI presence on the expert review panel: “Funny that [the Baltimore City Public Schools official] calls ‘me’ to inform that there may be some pro-DI folks on ‘my’ panel!!! Too rich!” The panelist then asked, “Does he know who you are? Past and present?” The Reading First Director replied, “That’s the funniest part – yes! You know the line from Casablanca, ‘I am SHOCKED that there is gambling going on in this establishment!’ Well, ‘I am SHOCKED that there are pro-DI people on this panel!’”

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/aireports/i13f0017.pdf>

Opportunity to invest in Early Learning

Small Investment and lots of encouragement

- **Preschool Development Grant, \$250M.** This is about planning and coordination of services.
- **Explicit references to the inclusion of early learning and the use of title funding for early learning programs.**
 - **Report Cards** must include: “the number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs;”
 - **LEA plan** shall describe, if applicable, how the local educational agency will support, coordinate, and integrate services provided under this part with early childhood education programs.
 - If an LEA uses Title I, it must ensure that such services comply with the **performance standards** established under section 641A(a) of 5 the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9836a(a)).”
- May use Title II funds to help teachers and principals to meet the needs of preschool students as they transition to elementary.

New Era in School Management

Focus on a well rounded education.

Fiscal Flexibility +
Transparency

Localized control for interventions and improvement that are evidence based

Data, information management, evidence based

W/A

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