



## Ensuring Effective Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act Guidance for State Associations

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) offers significant opportunity to advance NASP Key Initiatives and advance the comprehensive role of the school psychologist. With effective and coordinated efforts, state associations can help influence the implementation of ESSA at the state and local level and empower their members to do the same. Extensive detail about The Every Student Succeeds Act is available at [www.nasponline.org/ESSA](http://www.nasponline.org/ESSA). This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about how state associations can effectively influence ESSA implementation, highlights key actions for state associations, and includes various resources to guide and support your efforts.

### **What do school psychologists need to know about ESSA?**

ESSA presents an excellent opportunity to advance the comprehensive role of the school psychologist, increase access to comprehensive school psychological services, and advance implementation of the NASP Practice Model. If you have not already, it is important that you develop a plan to help your members understand the key elements of ESSA and how they are relevant to school psychology, school psychologists, the priorities of your state association, and most importantly, improved outcomes for kids.

#### *Relevant Resources*

[NASP Fact Sheets for School Psychologists](#) These fact sheets contain key information that school psychologists need to know about specific elements of ESSA.

[Webinar: School Psychologists and ESSA](#). This webinar provides a brief overview of ESSA and the key opportunities for school psychology and school psychologists.

### **What do decision makers need to know about the value of school psychologists and ESSA?**

School psychologists have specific expertise to facilitate the development, implementation, and evaluation of various efforts to improve school and student outcomes prioritized by state and local decision makers and authorized by ESSA such as: multi-tiered systems of support; efforts to improve school climate and safety; positive behavior interventions and supports; early intervening services; and comprehensive mental and behavioral health services.

#### *Relevant Resources*

[NASP ESSA Fact Sheets for Decision Makers](#). These Fact Sheets outline how school psychologists can support effective development, implementation, and evaluation of various school improvement efforts prioritized in ESSA. These facts sheets contain valuable information for legislators, state education officials, superintendents, principals, and other key stakeholder groups.

[ESSA/MTSS/Practice Model Crosswalk](#). This crosswalk outlines how ESSA connects with MTSS, essential school practices, and the broad role of school psychologists working within the scope of services described in the NASP Practice Model.

### **How do I know if my state has started developing plans for ESSA implementation?**

States are in various stages of planning for ESSA implementation, with most states still in the processing of gathering comments from interested stakeholders. It will be critical to stay informed of the processes and timelines for providing input to state and local ESSA plans to ensure that your state association is prepared. Most states have a website dedicated to keeping the public informed about ESSA implementation efforts. A spreadsheet containing information about the status of each state (as of June 30, 2016) is available at [www.nasponline.org/ESSA](http://www.nasponline.org/ESSA) (See “State ESSA Information” under Advocacy Tools & Resources).

### **Who are the key decision-makers and stakeholders?**

Many states have formed, or plan to form, various working groups or task forces to help inform the development of state and local ESSA implementation plans\*. It is crucial to advocate that state association leaders and/or members with specific expertise be included as members of these working groups. At a minimum, it will be incredibly important to identify and engage with members of these groups to share your ideas about appropriate policy and practice needed to meet the needs of students in your state. \*Information about ESSA, including members of various working groups or task forces should be publically available on state education department websites.

Further, each state has its own unique structure for creating, funding, and enforcing education policies. It is important that you understand and connect with those who have the authority and responsibility for ESSA implementation and other relevant education initiatives. The National Association of State Boards of Education has two resources regarding the [education governance models](#) used in [each state](#).

#### *Relevant Resources*

**[Key Stakeholder Information](#)**. Numerous stakeholders representing diverse perspectives and priorities are working to influence ESSA implementation. This document contains details about these stakeholder groups and contact information for state affiliates and leaders.

### **What actions can I take to advocate for our state association’s ESSA priorities?**

- Create talking points that reflect the priorities of your state association and demonstrate the value of school psychologists. Share these with all relevant stakeholders. (Note: The ESSA Fact Sheets include key messages that can be adapted to create talking points.)
- Share NASP ESSA Fact Sheets and other resources.
- Regularly update members about opportunities to participate in public hearings and other opportunities to influence ESSA implementation.
- Submit comments regarding ESSA implementation. Many states have several options for providing general comments and feedback regarding specific proposals listed on their website.
- Participate in public hearings, town halls, and other efforts to provide feedback on ESSA. To the extent possible, your state association should be represented by several members at each public event.
- Maintain regular contact with your Federal Elected Officials. Congress has an unprecedented level of involvement in the implementation of this law. They are committed to ensuring it is implemented as intended and they want to know what is and what isn’t working in their states and districts.

- Continue to build relationships with superintendents, principals and other key decision-makers. Provide resources to your members to help them do so as well. It is equally important that we work to influence the school improvement plans of states/districts/schools, but we also need to be sure that those ‘on the ground’ understand the value of utilizing their school psychologists to improve student outcomes.
- Consider forming informal coalitions with allies around shared issues in your state/district.
- Monitor state legislation and regulation that has the potential to impact school psychologists and/or the priorities of your state association.
- Engage your state’s NASP Delegate.

### *Relevant Resources*

**Communication Planning Resources** These tools can help you refine your key messages and map out an effective communication plan.

**NASP Statements and Formal ESSA Comments** NASP was actively engaged in the development and passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act and continues to be engaged in the development of regulations, guidance, and technical assistance. These documents contain policy and practice recommendations that you can adapt to include in the development of your state association’s messaging regarding ESSA.

### **What tools are available to help track and respond to state legislation and regulations?**

NASP uses legislation and regulation tracking software to monitor federal and state issues. Designated state leaders receive alerts from NASP when a bill or regulation has been introduced in your state. It is the responsibility of the state association to respond to these alerts and it is critically important for you to acknowledge you receive these alerts and let NASP know if you want to track the bill.

If your state does want to track the bill, we alert the system and you will get updates regarding the progress of the bill, information regarding hearings and mark-ups, and other important information to guide your efforts.

State associations can also use the NASP advocacy action center to engage with your state and local officials and create action alerts regarding state legislation that is aligned with NASP policy positions. If you would like to set up a state level action alert, contact Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach ([kvaillancourt@naspweb.org](mailto:kvaillancourt@naspweb.org)).

### **How can I stay informed about ESSA and access new and updated resources?**

All ESSA information, including new resources, will be shared via NASP InBrief, the Communities, and posted online at [www.nasponline.org/ESSA](http://www.nasponline.org/ESSA).

### **Who can I contact if I have specific questions or need support?**

NASP staff and leaders are available to answer specific questions and provide consultation and support to facilitate your advocacy efforts. Over the next several months there will be numerous opportunities to connect with other states to share examples, challenges, and learn from each other. Specific details will be available soon. Please contact Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach ([kvaillancourt@naspweb.org](mailto:kvaillancourt@naspweb.org)) NASP Director of Government Relations or Katie Eklund ([eklundk@missouri.edu](mailto:eklundk@missouri.edu)) Chair, NASP Government and Professional Relations Committee, we are happy to support you in any way.