

Issue Update:

**Elementary & Secondary Education Act →
No Child Left Behind → Every Child Achieves Act?**



Federal categorical funding makes up about 10% of California's total K–12 education funding. Much of it comes from programs created by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which was passed as a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty."

The 2002 ESEA reauthorization is called the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) Act and was named and proposed by President George W. Bush.

The main function of ESEA, and then NCLB, is to provide extra support to schools that serve low-income children. New features added by NCLB made that funding contingent on states adopting content standards, administering standardized tests in English and mathematics, and holding schools and districts accountable for the results of those tests. Under NCLB, the twelve-year goal was for all students to score at a proficient level on the tests by 2013-14.

The act was originally slated to be reauthorized in 2007, but Congress had not acted until this year. In April 2015, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar



Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) announced a bipartisan agreement on "fixing No Child Left Behind." The bill is titled the "Every Child Achieves Act" (ECAA), S.1177.



According to Senator Lamar Alexander's website, this is what the Every Child Achieves Act does:

- **Strengthens state and local control:** The bill recognizes that states, working with school districts, teachers, and others, have the responsibility for creating accountability systems to ensure all students are learning and prepared for success. These accountability systems will be state-designed but must meet minimum federal parameters, including ensuring all students and subgroups of students are included in the accountability system, disaggregating student achievement data, and establishing challenging academic standards for all students. The federal government is prohibited from determining or approving state standards.
- **Maintains important information for parents, teachers, and communities:** The bill maintains the federally required two tests in reading and math per child per year in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, as well as science tests given three times between grades 3 and 12. These important measures of student achievement ensure that parents know how their children are performing and help teachers support students who are struggling to meet state standards. A pilot program will allow states additional flexibility to experiment with innovative assessment systems within states. The bill also maintains

annual reporting of disaggregated data of groups of children, which provides valuable information about whether all students are achieving, including low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English learners.

- **Ends federal test-based accountability:** The bill ends the federal test-based accountability system of No Child Left Behind, restoring to states the responsibility for determining how to use federally required tests for accountability purposes. States must include these tests in their accountability systems, but will be able to determine the weight of those tests in their systems. States will also be required to include graduation rates, a measure of postsecondary and workforce readiness, English proficiency for English learners. States will also be permitted to include other measures of student and school performance in their accountability systems in order to provide teachers, parents, and other stakeholders with a more accurate determination of school performance.



- **Maintains important protections for federal taxpayer dollars:** The bill maintains important fiscal protections of federal dollars, including maintenance of effort requirements, which help ensure that federal dollars supplement state and local education dollars, with additional flexibility for school districts in meeting those requirements.

- **Helps states fix the lowest-performing schools:** The bill includes federal grants to states and school districts to help improve low performing schools that are identified by the state accountability systems. School districts will be responsible for designing evidence-based interventions for low performing schools, with technical assistance from the states, and the federal government is prohibited from mandating, prescribing, or defining the specific steps school districts and states must take to improve those schools.



- **Helps states support teachers:** The bill provides resources to states and school districts to implement activities to support teachers, principals, and other educators, including allowable uses of funds for high quality induction programs for new teachers, ongoing rigorous professional development opportunities for teachers, and programs to recruit new educators to the profession. The bill allows, but does not require, states to develop and implement teacher evaluation systems.

- **Reaffirms the states' role in determining education standards:** The bill affirms that states decide what academic standards they will adopt, without interference from Washington, D.C. The federal government may not mandate or incentivize states to adopt or maintain any particular set of standards, including Common Core. States will be free to decide what academic standards they will maintain in their states.