



AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION

How Enterprise-Level Learning Management Systems (LMS) Can Support ESSA Focus Areas

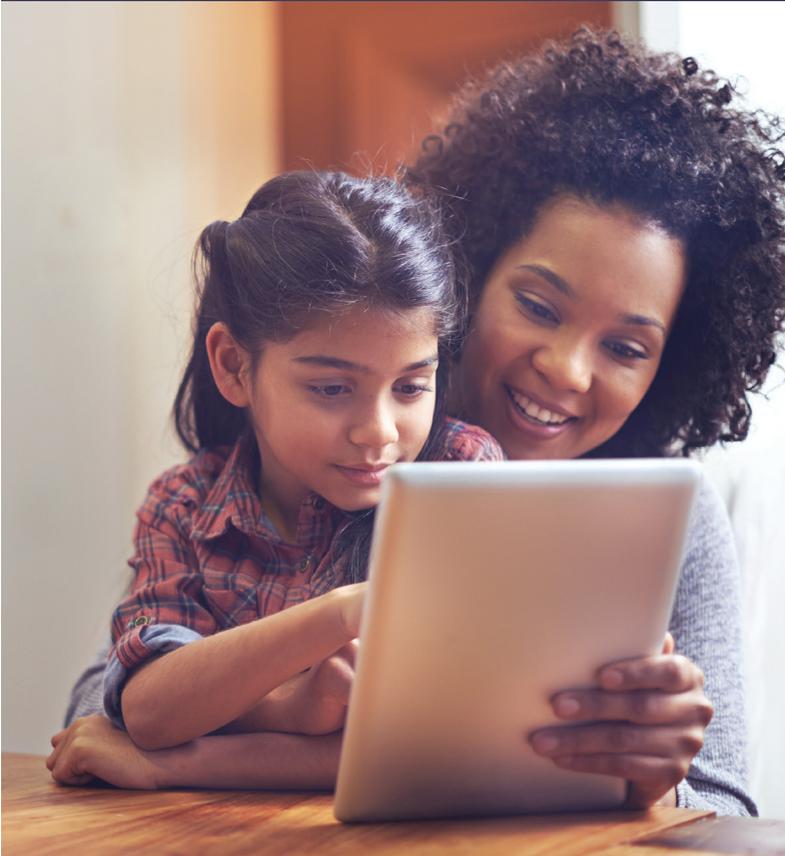
The Secretary of Education has started to provide feedback on Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plans and some states have been given the green light and are beginning to activate their plans. On the flip side many have been asked to amend their plans before they can be implemented, which could result in delayed funding.



The Focus of ESSA

ESSA is the most recent authorization for federal education spending. ESSA signals a shift of power from the federal government back to the states. States are now responsible for deciding how to improve student and school performance themselves. They are also charged with developing their own accountability systems including end-of-course exams as well as other academic, and non-academic measures of student progress.

- ESSA is intended to eliminate end-of-course exams as the single measure to prove learning success.
- The new statute returns decision-making power to states and districts to define what constitutes a successful district, school and teacher, and how to measure success.
- Federal funding will be based on evidence of academic improvement as delineated by the state plans.
- ESSA also outlines acceptable use of grant dollars to strengthen the development, implementation, and expansion of technology-based approaches that improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement.



States are also allowed to use non-academic metrics, like self-regulation, problem-solving, social and emotional awareness, and growth mindset, to measure student skill development and learning.

Examples of non-academic accountability measures might include: attendance, graduation rates, social-emotional learning (SEL), evidence of engagement, and support for special student groups through personalized or student-centric learning.

ESSA's Primary Areas of Focus

Equity: The overarching goal of ESSA is that all public school students receive a quality education that is as equitable as possible. It provides states with more flexibility in how they meet the needs of the most disadvantaged students: students in poverty, minorities, students in special education programs, and those with limited English proficiency.

Standards and Assessments: States are allowed to determine their own learning standards, and the federal government is prohibited from mandating any standards to the states. ESSA maintains the existing state testing requirements for reading, math, and science.

Accountability: There is new flexibility for states in determining their accountability programs as long as they set student performance goals, hold schools accountable for student achievement, and use other measures of student performance in addition to test scores. ESSA also allows states leeway in determining how to weight both academic and non-academic factors in improving student achievement.

School Improvement: ESSA places most of the responsibility for turning around struggling schools at the district level. The Department of Education is more interested in how states will identify struggling schools. States need to have a process to monitor schools and step in if districts are unsuccessful.

Teacher Quality: The focus here is on how states will reform their teacher preparation and certification process as well as provide quality ongoing professional development.

State and Local Report Cards: Schools must provide public information on school performance measures that include: test score results, high school graduation rates, school funding information, and teacher qualifications.

How Enterprise-Level Learning Management Systems (LMS) Can Support ESSA Focus Areas

The responsibility for developing teachers into effective facilitators of student learning is primarily on districts and states. An enterprise-level LMS allows educators to access learning standards, assessments, content resources, digital learning and communication tools, and professional learning support in a central location. This provides districts and states the ability to standardize the resources, tools, and supports they provide all teachers. An enterprise LMS promotes:

Equity: Centralizing all teaching and learning resources and tools allows a district to leverage its investments in technology, content, and personalized learning initiatives while providing access to the same resources for all students and teachers.

Standards and Assessments: Multimedia resources, assessments, and other learning materials can easily be aligned to standards and lesson plans that support student mastery of skills and student-directed learning objectives. With an enterprise-level LMS, students have a safe environment where they can explore, create, collaborate, communicate, and reflect on their learning goals.

Accountability: There are multiple paths to learning, and students learn differently. Many districts are turning to the UDL framework to meet students' individual learning goals, and an enterprise-level LMS supports those individual learning paths while linking them to learning standards and assessments. Student agency and self-direction allow students to take responsibility and be accountable for their own learning. Teachers find learning resources and assessments aligned to standards in one place. Progress monitoring data is automated.

School Improvement: An enterprise-level LMS not only provides individual educators with relevant student performance data on assessments and progress toward learning goals but rolls up the data school-wide and district-wide so that administrators can monitor both student achievement and teacher efficiency and performance. This advanced reporting allows districts to intervene more quickly if a struggling school's learning targets are not being met or learning gaps are not being closed.

Teacher Quality: This is an area where an enterprise LMS can really shine. Being able to offer professional learning opportunities in real time using the same platform teachers are using for standards-based lessons and assessments allows schools and districts to support teachers with targeted coaching that they can immediately apply in their classrooms. Embedded collaboration and communication tools support teachers as they change their teaching practice to become facilitators of student-directed learning.

State and Local Report Cards: An enterprise LMS is data central. Every conceivable measure or learning objective is available for analysis. Evaluating student proficiency and teacher efficiency on standards-based curriculum and teaching objectives is provided at the classroom, school, and district-wide basis.

Summary

An enterprise-level LMS not only supports ESSA's primary focus areas, but it is a next-generation management tool that houses standards-based curriculum, learning objectives, assessments, digital communication tools, and collaboration and coaching support to help districts and states positively impact student achievement. An enterprise LMS helps standardize planning and collaboration for better student outcomes; provides professional learning support for teachers; and improves teacher recruitment and retention while districts and states get the data they require to monitor student and school progress. As states and districts implement their ESSA plans and leverage technology that puts the focus on helping more students meet their own learning goals, an enterprise LMS can provide teachers with the resources and support they need to improve their efficiency and efficacy, and districts and states get the advanced reporting they need to demonstrate compliance with ESSA regulations.

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