



TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT FOR IEP MEETINGS

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), will take effect in 2016. NDSC took the lead in advocating for key improvements in the law that raises expectations for your children.

1. ESSA states that no more than 1% of all students (approximately 10% of students with disabilities) can participate in a state's alternate assessment instead of the general assessment. NCLB had no limit. **IEP TIP:** If you expect the alternate assessment to be suggested at the IEP meeting, you should request a copy of the state participation criteria for this assessment, BEFORE the meeting, to help you plan for this discussion.

2. ESSA encourages states to develop, share information on and promote the use of accommodations to increase the number of students who can take the general assessment instead of the alternate assessment. **IEP TIP:** Prior to the IEP meeting, request a copy of the state's most recent accommodations policy to prepare for a discussion about whether the general assessment with accommodations is appropriate for your child.

3. ESSA provisions raise expectations by making it clear that ALL students, regardless of their disability or the type of state assessment they take, are expected to make progress in the general education curriculum, must be permitted to try to earn a regular diploma, and should be on track for postsecondary education or employment. **IEP TIP:** Insist on IEP goals that are aligned to grade-level content. Use these ESSA provisions to advocate for inclusion and to focus on the goals, supports and services needed for post-school success.

4. ESSA states that employment should be consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which focuses on competitive integrated employment. **IEP TIP:** Use this connection to WIOA to advocate for minimum wage (or higher) integrated job experiences during high school.

5. ESSA mentions Universal Design for Learning (UDL) numerous times, recognizing it as an accepted best practice. **IEP TIP:** Ask your IEP team what they are doing to implement UDL and share the resources at www.udlcenter.org. Some means by which your child is engaged, processes information and demonstrates knowledge may be included in the IEP as accommodations or more informally shared with teachers.