



American Indian Education in the Every Student Succeeds Act

[The Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. ESSA is a piece of legislation meant to protect and support the nation’s vulnerable children, and it specifically provides opportunities for tribal involvement in state planning. This document highlights aspects of ESSA as it relates to American Indian education, as well as implementation decisions that could possibly affect Indian education. Importantly, ESSA:

- **Requires meaningful consultation with tribes on Title I planning.** There is an opportunity to provide input on decisions affecting procedures such as school rating methodology that lead to resource allocation. Notable issues for Title I stakeholder input:
 - Choosing the minimum number of students (commonly referred to as the *minimum N*) required for a subgroup’s performance to be included in school ratings
 - Identifying indicators of school success
- **Authorizes [State Tribal Education Partnerships](#) (STEP) grants.** STEP grants provide funding for tribal education agencies to collaborate with state education agencies.
- **Provides The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) with greater autonomy and flexibility, and qualifies BIE to apply for discretionary funding.** Prior to ESSA, opportunities to apply for programs such as [Race to the Top](#) were only available to state agencies.
- **Allows for cooperative agreements between tribes and local education agencies**
 - Entering into cooperative agreements between local education agencies and tribes surrounding Title VI funding is now possible
 - Applying for Title VI funding independently is now possible for agencies such as tribes, Indian organizations, consortiums, and the Indian Congressional Budget Office if an eligible local education agency does not apply
- **Formalizes support for Native language immersion programs.**
 - Authorizes funding for the development and evaluation of Native language programs
- **Elevates the importance of teaching language and culture.**
- **Removes “highly qualified” teacher requirement.** ESSA allows greater opportunity for recruitment and retention of Native teachers.

Resources and further reading:

1. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction—ESSA website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/esea/essa/default.aspx>
2. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction—Office of Native Education website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd/default.aspx>
3. Link to the Federal Register Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by ESSA: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/05/31/2016-12451/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-of-1965-as-amended-by-the-every-student-succeeds>
4. Link to the National Indian Education ESSA informational fact sheets: <http://www.niea.org/for-advocates/education-priorities/elementary-and-secondary-education-act-esea-and-every-students-succeeds-act-essa/>