

Side-by-Side Guide to Reauthorization

The Obama administration's blueprint for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act seeks to retain assessment, accountability, and other features of the existing law while offering states and school districts greater flexibility.

No Child Left Behind Act

- Teachers must be "highly qualified," meaning they demonstrate subject-matter proficiency and meet state certification requirements.
- States set their own academic standards.
- Perennially struggling schools can choose from a range of improvement options, the most popular of which is a broad category called "other methods of restructuring."
- The law requires all students to reach proficiency on state tests by the 2013-14 school year.
- There is no clear distinction between schools that miss achievement targets because all of their students are struggling vs. those that are having trouble with a particular subgroup of students, such as students in special education.
- Schools that miss achievement targets for two years in a row must let students choose another school, including a charter school. And those that miss targets for three years must offer students extensive tutoring.
- Student performance is measured using "status models," which compare different cohorts of students to one another.
- Schools that make strides in closing the achievement gap don't get any sort of special reward.
- States primarily rely on reading and mathematics tests to gauge student progress, although states must also test their students in science in specific grade spans.
- Students are tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school.
- Student data are disaggregated by racial- and ethnic-minority group, as well as by special populations, such as English-language learners.

ESEA Renewal Blueprint

- States would have to come up with a definition of "effective teacher" and "highly effective teacher" based in part on student outcomes.
- States would have to adopt college- and career-ready standards, such as those being drafted by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.
- Struggling schools would have a list of four very specific options for turning around low-performing schools. In nearly all cases, the school's principal would have to be removed.
- A goal would be set making all students college- and career-ready by 2020, but that isn't a hard and fast deadline.
- Schools that are persistently low-achieving would be subject to a different set of interventions than those that miss achievement targets for one or two subgroups of students.
- Schools that don't meet achievement targets wouldn't automatically have to offer public school choice or tutoring.
- Student performance would be measured using "growth models," which look at individual student progress from year to year.
- Schools that make strides in closing the achievement gap would be rewarded with money and flexibility.
- States may choose to assess students in subjects other than reading and math, such as foreign language and history, and make those tests part of their accountability system.
- Students would be tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school.
- Student data would continue to be disaggregated by racial- and ethnic-minority group, as well as by special populations, such as English-language learners.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education, *Education Week*