### Federal
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) scales back the federal role when it comes to accountability and school improvement while increasing transparency requirements.

#### Standards
- Requires states adopt academic standards in reading/English, language arts, mathematics, and science aligned to post-secondary requirements.

#### Assessments
- Requires states adopt yearly assessments in reading/English, language arts, and math, as well as across grade span testing for science.
- Requires 95% of students to be tested, while allowing for local opt-out policies.
- Authorizes 1% percent exemption of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Maintains funds for state and local assessment audits.
- Requires the district to notify parents annually of the testing participation policy.
- States may use alternative assessment including ACT or SAT.

### States
States play a major role in the implementation of the new law. A clear understanding of the state role can help you shape the new accountability system and understand how it will affect your school district.

#### Standards
- Minnesota’s plan must include assurance of challenging academic standards, aligned with credit-bearing course work of MNSCU. Alternative academic standards may be used for students of disabilities. English Language Proficiency standards must be aligned to assessments.

#### Assessments
- Statewide average of 95% of all students must be tested.

**Key Assessment Decisions:**
- To allow nationally recognized high school assessments available at the high schools.
- To exempt 8th graders who take advanced mathematics in the middle school.
- To adopt or modify alternative assessments for students with significant, cognitive disabilities.

### Local School District
The change in focus to the state’s accountability plan will impact schools, personnel and the students. Local school boards will play a lead role in its implementation.

#### Standards
- Local school districts must adhere to Minnesota guidelines for academic standards to prepare all students for college and career.

#### Assessments
- If allowed by MDE, the school district may apply to use the nationally recognized assessment (ACT/SAT).
- If state funds are available for assessment audits, the district may apply. ESSA requires the state to sub grant 20% of their award to school districts for funding local assessment audits.
- Develop a process for alternative assessments for students with cognitive disabilities.
**School Improvement**

State must reserve 7% of Title I funds for School Improvement Grant Program type activities.

Schools identified as needing comprehensive support and improvement:
- 5% lowest performing schools
- High schools that graduate less than two-thirds of students
- Subgroups underperforming for a number of years

**State Accountability**

Minnesota will develop new accountability plans; stakeholders must be included in the process. The new plan must include ambitious, long-term goals with measurements of interim progress toward meeting goals to be approved by USD OE.

The accountability system will include the following measurements:
- Graduation rates.
- Academic achievement as measured by proficiency on annual assessments (may include growth for high school).
- English Learners progress and proficiency.
- At least one new indicator of “school quality” or “student success”.

Key Accountability Decisions for Minnesota:
- How much weight to assign each indicator with school quality or student success.
- What is the minimum number of students necessary to carry out plan?
- Should 3% of Title I funds be set aside to establish a grant application program?
- How to provide assistance to schools using Title I funds for early childhood education.
- How to measure, evaluate and report equitable distribution of effective and experienced teachers.
- Will Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce goals be sufficient?

**School Improvement and Report Card**

MDE will identify and monitor schools for “comprehensive support and improvement” as well as set exit criteria. States must annually notify districts with schools that have “consistently underperforming” subgroups.

Key Decisions for Minnesota:
- Decide if school districts of less than 100 students may be exempt from required improvement activities.
- Process to report on professional qualifications and address disparities that exist.

Report cards must disaggregate data by: Major racial and ethnic groups; Free or Reduced Price Lunch; English Learner status; Special Education status; Gender Homeless status (NEW); Foster Care status (NEW); Status as a child of active duty military parent(s)/guardian(s) (NEW).

Report card must include school quality, climate, and safety, including rates of in-school suspensions.

**Federal Accountability**

Substitutes AYP with a state accountability system with certain federal requirements. Must include long-term goals and indicators of progress.

**Local Accountability**

Develop a strategic school district plan to ensure continuous progress for all subgroups.

**School Improvement**

- Develop “comprehensive improvement” plans for identified schools.
- Schools that have been notified of “consistently underperforming” subgroups must develop and implement an improvement plan. Plans must address resource inequities.
- Report disaggregated data with three new subgroups to MDE for local district report card and state report card.