Every Student Succeeds Act:
Game Changer for Health and Physical Education

The U.S. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This bipartisan legislation replaces No Child Left Behind as the federal education legislation that funds and provides the framework for elementary and secondary education in the United States.

The passage of ESSA was a major victory for the health and physical education profession and the 50 million students in schools across the country. Under No Child Left Behind, subjects like health and physical education suffered due to the emphasis on adequate yearly progress and student testing. ESSA aims to shift the focus to a well-rounded education for students, which should include health and physical education.

Here is how ESSA impacts school health and physical education:

- School health and physical education are identified as part of a student’s “well-rounded education”. This term replaces the term “core academic subjects” from previous versions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, like No Child Left Behind.
- Subjects that are part of a well-rounded education are eligible for federal education funding.
- School districts will be able to access funding for health and physical education from Title I (low-income schools), Title II (professional development), and Title IV through their state department of education.
- Funding previously awarded to school districts through the Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) from the U.S. Department of Education will no longer exist after FY 2016.
- Title IV, Part A block grants will be distributed to states and school districts using the Title I formula. School districts must spend this money on: supporting a well-rounded education, safe and healthy students programs, and effective use of technology. This funding offers states and school districts the opportunity to improve school health and physical education programs.
- ESSA funding for Titles I, II and IV will begin to flow to states in July 2017. The 2016-2017 school year will be a transition year for states and school districts. States have already begun to develop ESSA implementation plans. Make sure YOU are part of the process!

For more resources and information visit: [www.shapeamerica.org/essa](http://www.shapeamerica.org/essa)