Assessments Required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- **Math, Reading/Language Arts:** Grades 3-8, one assessment for each subject grades 10-12
- **Science:** Once in grades 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- **English Language Proficiency:** Annual assessment for English Learners
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):** Biennially for grade 4 and 8
- **Schools funded by Bureau of Indian Affairs:** Must use statewide assessments (MCAs)
- **Alternative Assessment:** Up to 1 percent of students with most serious cognitive disabilities

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Optional Assessments Under ESEA

- **Modified Assessment:** Up to 2 percent of students with disabilities who demonstrate difficulty with standard statewide assessments
- **Additional academic assessment measures:** Those not identified in ESEA may be used as part of accountability and assessment system but may not replace the required statewide assessments

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Requirements for ESEA Assessments

- **Aligned to state academic standards**
- **Appropriate technically and content-wise**
- **Multiple up-to-date measures of student achievement including high-order thinking skills and understanding**
- **Reasonable accommodations for ELs and students with disabilities**
- **Produce usable reports for students, teachers, administrators and parents**
- **Able to disaggregate results by subgroup**
- **ESEA does NOT prescribe use of assessments in student promotion or graduation**

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Accountability with Assessments

- Assessment results must be the primary tool in measuring schools for accountability
- Additional measures used in accountability system must be secondary to assessment results
- State must annually report assessment results to the public and the US Dept. of Education
- At least 95 percent of students must participate in the assessment

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Authority of the Secretary: Reviews and Waivers

- Secretary must approve any changes to a state's plan for assessment and accountability
- US Dept. of Education must review and approve all new assessments for use in accountability system
- Secretary has broad authority to waive provisions of ESEA for states that apply (e.g. recent ESEA Flexibility waivers)

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ESEA Waivers and Assessment

- Statutory language on waivers does not preclude waivers of assessment requirements
- In recent ESEA Flexibility Request discussions, Secretary Duncan has not allowed for changes to assessment requirements
- It appears that no states requested flexibility in assessment requirements
- States were still limited to using assessment data and graduation rates in designating Priority, Focus and Reward Schools

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Reauthorization of ESEA and the Future of Assessments

- Little if any discussion in Congress of changing assessment requirements for math and reading
- House (Kline) bill did eliminate requirement for science assessments
- Test reduction has not been a major agenda item for advocacy groups in this discussion
- Involvement and investment of most states in Race to the Top assessment consortia (not MN) that are developing new assessments. Will make it more difficult to change requirements in the future
- While Secretary has not allowed for changes in testing in ESEA Flexibility waivers, he has spoken on the need for test reduction

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Reauthorization of ESEA and the Future of Assessments Continued

- **While major changes seem unlikely, smaller changes do look likely:**
  - Allowance for off-grade-level adaptive assessments
  - Elimination of modified assessment option (already the unstated policy of US Dept. of Education)
  - Possible elimination or changes to science assessment requirements

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