

Myth vs. Fact

Higher Education Alignment and Common Core

Myth: The *Every Student Succeeds Act* requires states to have standards that align to higher education requirements, and because colleges have adopted Common Core State Standards, ESSA cements the requirement for K-12 schools to teach Common Core.

Fact: The federal government relies on accrediting agencies to evaluate the quality of education offered at institutions of higher education. Accrediting agencies are responsible for assuring the quality of the institutions and the programs they offer. While the U.S. Department of Education is responsible for approving the various accrediting agencies, the Higher Education Act, however, explicitly prohibits the Secretary of Education from controlling colleges' curriculum standards. These provisions include the following:

General Provisions Act

20 U.S. Code § 1232a

General Requirements and Conditions Concerning the Operation and Administration of Education Programs: General Authority of the Secretary

Section 438. Prohibition Against Federal Control of Education

This section clarifies that no provision of any applicable program is intended to authorize the federal government to exercise any "direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system," or over the selection of "library resources, textbooks, or other printed or published instructional materials by any educational institution or school system." Additionally, no provision of any applicable program shall be construed to authorize the federal government to require "the assignment or transportation of students or teachers in order to overcome racial imbalance."

20 U.S. Code § 1099b - Recognition of accrediting agency or association

(g) Limitation on scope of criteria

Nothing in this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish criteria for accrediting agencies or associations that are not required by this section. Nothing in this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 shall be construed to prohibit or limit any accrediting agency or association from adopting additional standards not provided for in this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish any criteria that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards that accrediting agencies or associations shall use to assess any institution's success with respect to student achievement.

20 U.S.C. 28 Higher Education Resources and Student Assistance

Subchapter IV Student Assistance

Part F—General Provisions Relating to Student Assistance Programs

§ 1092. Institutional and financial assistance information for students

(h) Transfer of credit policies

(2) Rule of construction.--

Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to--

(A) authorize the Secretary or the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity to require particular policies, procedures, or practices by institutions of higher education with respect to transfer of credit;

(B) authorize an officer or employee of the Department to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any institution of higher education, or over any accrediting agency or association;

SEC. 633. [20 U.S.C. 1132y092] RULE OF CONSTRUCTION. (International Education section)

Nothing in this title shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to mandate, direct, or control an institution of higher education's specific instructional content, curriculum, or program of instruction.