

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

RESOLUTION ON REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

Resolution Summary

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 is one of the principal pillars of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The original goal of ESEA—to provide educational opportunities to poor and disadvantaged students—remains essential. The 2002 version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), established an accountability framework for states in order to address achievement gaps among various demographic groups nationwide. High academic standards and accountability for all students comprise the framework for federal education reform under the law.

As Congress and the Administration work on legislation to reauthorize ESEA, there must be a focus on policies that would help transform public schools into high-quality learning centers by recognizing the shared responsibility among local, state, and federal governments. Given the law's complexity, each proposed change must be carefully considered to fully understand its effect on our nation's schools and students.

There are many out-of-school factors that affect student success. Poverty, health care, the availability of summer opportunities for students, and the stability of housing are but a few. Socioeconomic factors must be addressed as part of well-crafted and comprehensive strategies to improve educational opportunities for every student.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act established goals that have widespread support: high standards and accountability for the learning of all children. But implementation of NCLB has shown that the law will not reach the penultimate goal of all students proficient in reading and math by 2014. It is necessary that Congress moves to reauthorize ESEA with a continued emphasis on high standards and accountability but an increased focus on state and local flexibility balanced with appropriate federal support.

Additional Resource Information

- U.S. Department of Education:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/publicationtoc.html>
- National Association of State Boards of Education: <http://nasbe.org/index.php/file-repository/func-startdown/1111/>
- National Education Association: <http://www.nea.org/home/NoChildLeftBehindAct.html>

CSG Management Directives

- **Management Directive #1:** The Council of State Governments will support efforts to recommend effective and efficient changes to NCLB to ensure that all students will graduate high school college and career ready.
- **Management Directive #2:** The Council of State Governments will urge Congress and the Administration to prioritize ESEA reauthorization, and to address the learning needs of all students by fully funding the law so that schools can successfully implement its provisions.
- **Management Directive #3:** The Council of State Governments staff will post the approved resolution on CSG's Web site and make it available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

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WHEREAS, education is the largest line item in state budgets, and without additional federal support schools continue to struggle with funding, mandated annual testing, student transfers, and the requirement to provide supplemental services;

WHEREAS, the next reauthorization should provide greater flexibility to states in how they meet the standards of ESEA, including allowing for the use of longitudinal or growth models as well as multiple sources of evidence to measure individual student academic achievement and school performance. Greater flexibility is needed when assessing and measuring the academic progress of the various student subgroups;

WHEREAS, while The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5) provided much needed fiscal support to maintain education programs, sustained and dedicated federal education support is necessary to avoid future layoffs and to build upon the reforms pursued with Recovery Act funding;

WHEREAS, reauthorization should recognize the distinct needs of rural, suburban, and urban areas in the delivery of educational services, including focusing on the use of online education technology;

WHEREAS, ESEA provides for highly qualified teachers in core academic areas, but should focus on increasing flexibility for meeting the “highly qualified” teacher requirements, particularly for teachers of multiple subjects such as special education, bilingual, middle school, and rural educators, and advancing teacher quality at the highest poverty schools by providing funding to attract and retain quality teachers and improved teaching and learning conditions;

WHEREAS, ESEA should include a class size reduction program to improve student learning, with priority given to high poverty schools. Research has shown that reducing class sizes has a positive impact on maximizing student learning and closing achievement gaps, particularly in the early grades and students who need more individualized attention;

WHEREAS, ESEA should reinforce parental involvement programs and encourage community members to interact with neighborhood schools. Programs that encourage parent and community involvement in the school are vital in strengthening families and enhancing quality of life; and

WHEREAS, ESEA should support compensation systems that are designed to firmly establish teaching as a respected profession, improve student learning through improved teacher practice, and focus on factors shown to make a difference in teaching and learning.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments recognizes that to compete with their international peers, American students must graduate from high school college and career ready. If implemented properly and funded, ESEA reforms could be long-term steps towards economic recovery and sustainability;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments urges the federal government to fully fund the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 108-446), which could potentially save states upwards of \$16 billion nationally; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments calls upon federal education policymakers to work closely with state and local education officials during ESEA reauthorization to examine how ESEA is working in their communities and where improvements are needed, while maintaining a focus on accountability and standards. The federal government must also live up to its commitment and provide the necessary financial resources to implement the ESEA's mandates by fully funding Title I programs to low-income school districts, Teacher Quality Grants, and state-mandated assessment costs.

Adopted this _____ Day of May, 2010 at CSG's 2010 Economic Summit of the States in New York City, NY.

Governor M. Michael Rounds, SD
CSG President

Senate President David L. Williams, KY
CSG Chairman