

National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators
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2013 NAFEPA POSITION PAPER
Reauthorization of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act

Presented by the Federal Impact Committee: Cliff Brush, Chair (Oregon); Kimberly Glass (Arkansas); Bob Harmon, (Washington); Denise Ling (South Carolina); Everett Mann (Ohio); Tom Sipe (Oklahoma); Debra Baros, NAFEPA President (Texas); and Elizabeth Pinkerton, Consultant.

Since the enactment of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), states and school districts have worked to improve instruction and learning for all students. NAFEPA members support the premise that each child receives a high quality, standards-based education, which results in increased academic achievement and a successful, productive life. Members have prepared this position paper on ESEA reauthorization organized around four main topics:

- IMPLEMENTING HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS and ASSESSMENTS
- IMPROVING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS and EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION
- IMPROVING COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA
- IMPROVING STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

I. IMPLEMENTING HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS and ASSESSMENTS

- A. Replace Adequate Yearly Progress with other valid and reliable measures that gather and report growth data for students, their cohorts, schools, and districts.
- B. Use student, school, and district performance data to establish ambitious yet realistic growth targets.
- C. Use student, school, and district growth target data to monitor progress toward closing achievement gaps.
- D. Continuously improve growth targets and measures of progress toward growth targets for English Language Learners and for students with disabilities.
 - a. Exempt English Language Learners from statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics for their first three years in U.S. schools, or until they have reached proficiency on the annual English language proficiency assessment—whichever happens first.
 - b. Incorporate the provisions of IDEA so that the IDEA takes precedence on all matters associated with students with disabilities, including requirements in a student's IEP for student testing, for the parents' ability to opt students out of state testing, for out-of-level assessments, and for any accommodations and modifications the student's IEP may provide.
- E. Allow flexibility for appropriate assessment and accountability systems for alternative schools, taking into account their highly mobile student populations.
- F. Include provisions that respect parents' rights to opt students out of testing so that opt-outs do not impact schools' participation rates, but are monitored and publicly reported with other school and/or district performance data.

II. IMPROVING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS and EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

- A. Identify the attributes and characteristics of effective teachers and administrators. Provide supports to grow those attributes and characteristics among all educators.
- B. Ensure that the most effective teachers work with the struggling students, and develop plans and incentives to recruit and retain those teachers.
- C. Recognize and reward teachers and principals who demonstrate the highest levels of documented student growth.
- D. Allow states to use their credentialing and licensing programs to determine “highly qualified” status for all teachers, including teachers in special education, English learner programs, career and technical education, alternative education, and those teaching multiple subjects in middle schools.

III. IMPROVING COLLECTION and USE of DATA

- A. To be valid and reliable, data collections should use consistent criteria and systems that, at minimum, gather and report “growth model” results over time for individual students and their cohorts at the state, district and school levels.
- B. Data collections should be designed, implemented, monitored, and adjusted to reliably identify schools and districts most in need of improvement.
- C. Data collections should use both summative and formative assessment “growth data” at the district, school, and classroom levels to inform improvement planning at schools in need of improvement, to identify and reward effective instruction, and to guide effective professional development for teachers, administrators, and classified staff.
- D. Data collections should be coordinated between the ESEA and IDEA to maximize alignment, minimize duplication, and recognize the abilities of students with disabilities and/or talents and gifts.

IV. IMPROVING STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

- A. School improvement plans must be evidence-based.
- B. School improvement must be designed and implemented to improve teaching and learning, to close and eliminate student achievement gaps, and to engage all stakeholders, including families and school communities.
- C. Interventions for schools in improvement status should be differentiated according to their level of underperformance and should provide the supports necessary to achieve the desired improvement.
- D. Title I school improvement plans should align with federal, state, and local requirements. Title I schools should not be expected or required to construct and implement multiple improvement plans.
- E. The ESEA should empower districts to assign staff in schools, based on need.
- F. Model examples of how educators and school communities successfully work together to develop and implement effective school and district improvement plans should be identified and disseminated.