



**2011 NAFEPA POSITION PAPER**  
**Reauthorization of the**  
**Elementary & Secondary Education Act**



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 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**

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**I. IMPLEMENTING HIGH QUALITY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS**

- A. Support the concept of voluntary common core standards.
- B. Support the development of common national (or regional) assessments that do the following:
- Incorporate a consistent definition of “proficiency,” allowing for multiple performance levels.
  - Are benchmarked against requirements for post-secondary education, viable careers, and international performance expectations.
- C. Replace Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with other valid and reliable measures of student academic progress that identify schools and districts needing improvement. Other related elements:
- Abolish the unrealistic goal of 100% of students scoring proficient by 2014.
  - Establish student academic proficiency targets that are ambitious, yet realistic, and that allow for growth, state flexibility, the annual monitoring of individual students and student groups in order to close the achievement gap.
  - Improve accountability measures for English language learners and Students with Disabilities.
    - Allow states to grant exemptions from including English Learners’ test scores in the state-wide 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 comes first.
    - Incorporate the provisions of IDEA, allowing this legislation to take precedence on all matters associated with students with disabilities including student IEP requirements for student testing, parents’ ability to opt-out students, out-of-level assessments, and the variety of accommodations and modifications that may be provided.
  - Allow flexibility for appropriate assessment and accountability systems for alternative schools, taking into account the highly mobile populations of these schools.
  - Include provisions that respect a parent’s right to opt a student out of testing so that it does not impact a school’s participation rate, yet it still is monitored and publicly reported.

# National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators

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## II. IMPROVING TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

- A. Identify common attributes among “effective teachers” and “effective principals” and provide support to build these assets.
- B. Recognize and reward teachers and principals who demonstrate the highest levels of documented student growth.
- C. Allow states to use their credentialing and licensing programs to determine “highly qualified” status for all teachers (including special education, English language learner programs, career and technical education, and alternative education) and middle school teachers teaching multiple subjects.
- D. Increase flexibility regarding the requirements for highly qualified teachers for small middle schools, small high schools, and schools in rural areas.
- E. Allow the use of the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) to determine subject matter competence for new teachers hired to teach in alternative settings.
- F. Clearly report on the equitable distribution of “highly qualified” and “effective” teachers among high and low poverty schools.

## III. IMPROVING THE COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA

- A. Establish consistent criteria and develop data collection systems that provide the capacity to report “growth model” results over time at the state, district and school levels for individuals and cohorts.
- B. Utilize summative as well as formative assessment “growth data” at the district, school, and classroom levels in order to reform instruction and drive instructional improvement—and reward the five percent of schools each year making the greatest growth.
- C. Revise accountability provisions and use the corresponding data to accurately identify the schools and districts most in need of improvement.

## IV. IMPROVING STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

- A. Continue formula-based support for federal programs including Title I, Title III, and IDEA.
- B. Include provisions to engage a diverse stakeholder group, including parents and community members, to select improvement strategies that meet the needs of students. These effective, research-based strategies could include: extended school day or year (summer) programs, specific staffing, preschool program options, and incentives for improved school performance.
- C. Allow states and districts the ability to choose from a range of appropriate interventions when a school is identified for school improvement—including when the school is ranked in the lowest five percent.
- D. Continue school choice and supplemental educational services as voluntary interventions.
- E. Allow states the authority to grant waivers to districts that seek to retain a building principal when using a school reform model that requires principal dismissal.