

ESEA Reauthorization

Priorities for Final ESEA Bill



As the Senate and House embark on a conference committee to negotiate a final ESEA reauthorization this fall, educators believe these are essential elements that must be included:

- ▶ **Include student and/or school supports in state accountability plans to create an opportunity “dashboard”**
 - Disaggregating data for subgroups of students is one of the best concepts to come from No Child Left Behind, but should not be limited to statewide standardized tests. States, school districts, and individual schools should be required to report and disaggregate data on student and school supports, and then work to rectify any gaps. In addition to continuing to disaggregate student subgroup data, NEA supports including—and expanding—the provision of S. 1177 that requires state accountability plans to include AT LEAST one measure of student or school supports.
 - Both S. 1177 and H.R. 5 require each state’s accountability plan to include a system for identifying and differentiating among schools. NEA supports a final bill that requires states to identify the overall performance of subgroups of students and differentiate among subgroups of students with regard to different elements of the system. In addition, we firmly believe that states must be required to develop actionable plans to intervene in schools with significantly low student outcomes or gaps among student subgroups.
- ▶ **Reduce the amount of standardized testing in schools and decouple high-stakes decision making and statewide standardized tests**
 - NEA supports including in the final bill the SMART Act (part of both H.R. 5 and S. 1177), which requires states and districts to conduct audits to identify duplicative assessments, and then act upon plans to eliminate duplication.
 - NEA supports strong language about flexibility to develop assessment systems that move beyond standardized tests. While H.R. 5 provides that local assessments can be used instead of state standardized assessments, S. 1177 includes a strong pilot program in which assessments based on competency and performance can be used instead of state standardized assessments—i.e., assessments driven by teaching and learning, not accountability alone.
 - NEA supports strong language about the right of parents and guardians to have their children opt out of state standardized assessments. Both H.R. 5 and S. 1177 contain strong provisions that include notifying parents and guardians of their opt-out rights and ensuring that students who opt out do not count toward the required 95 percent participation rate. However, only

H.R. 5 makes it clear that all parents have the right to have their children opt out of federally-required assessments.

- ▶ **Ensure that educators' voices are part of decision making at the federal, state, and local levels**
 - NEA supports decision making that includes all professionals and policy making that takes into account educators' expertise and knowledge of their students' needs. Educators are on the front line, ensuring all students access to great public schools regardless of their zip code.
 - S. 1177 calls for committees of practitioners to participate in and advise on state-level decisions. NEA supports maintaining this language and expanding it to include local-level districts.
 - NEA supports maintaining the "savings clause" provisions (collective bargaining protections) that guarantee educators a voice in turning around and supporting identified schools. We also urge adoption of Senate language that extends those protections to professional issues within a school (such as induction and mentoring) and professional development programs.