

Forum on Educational Accountability

<http://www.edaccountability.org>

Recommendations for Improving Federal Law

The Forum on Educational Accountability (FEA) calls on Congress to make major changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, currently “No Child Left Behind” or NCLB). FEA’s recommendations will strengthen public schools, improve learning, and enhance equity.ⁱ

On assessment:

- Reduce the amount of federally mandated statewide testing (e.g., once each in grades 3-5, 6-8, 9-11).
- Support development of student assessment systems that include performance assessments and classroom-based evidence as part of public reporting and accountability.
- Require states to use multiple sources of evidence of various types (“multiple measures”) to evaluate students, educators, schools and districts.
- Ensure that new assessments reflect the needs of diverse learners and are designed to inform instruction. Use principles of universal design for learning.
- Eliminate federally-mandated use of student standardized test scores in educator evaluations.

On accountability:

- Eliminate “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) requirements and sanctions.
- Continue to report data disaggregated by demographic group.
- Use multiple sources of evidence to evaluate schools, such as academic outcomes, improvement efforts, availability of resources, and periodic on-site reviews by qualified teams.

On public school improvement/capacity building:

- For schools in difficulty, allow a flexible range of improvement options tailored to local needs.
- Build the improvement plans from essential elements demonstrated to be effective in significantly improving schools.
- Fund Title I schools to provide time for educators to collaborate and meet staff-identified professional development needs.
- Fund Title I-funded schools to enable them to provide programs to strengthen parent involvement and support for student learning at home.
- Provide Title I funding to strengthen states’ ability to support systemic school improvements.
- Condition teacher preparation grants on programs’ providing one-year intensive clinical placements.

On opportunity to learn and equity:

- Make Title I and IDEA Part B mandatory, fully funded federal budget items. Use formulas that ensure all high-poverty public schools receive adequate funding support. Significantly increase

support for professional development, the education of English learners, school improvement, parental involvement, and the capacity of states to assist districts and schools.

- Provide federal support to assist states in developing comprehensive indicator systems on resource distribution important to learning. Include out-of-school data on significant factors that affect student learning, such as poverty. Require states to use this evidence in evaluating schools and developing strategies to overcome inequities in opportunity to learn.
- Fund increased access to opportunity through early learning and high quality preschool. Work with states to ensure adequate facilities, tools, and services. Promote school discipline policies that ensure a climate conducive to learning.

ⁱ FEA is an alliance furthering the concepts found in the *Joint Organizational Statement on NCLB*, signed by 156 national education, civil rights, religious, disability, parent and civic organizations. This document may not reflect all individual positions taken by signatories to the *Joint Statement*. Additional relevant materials, including more details on our recommendations, are at www.edaccountability.org.