



ASCD

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2015

It is time for federal education policies to address and support the needs of today's students and educators. Rather than continuing to rely on an antiquated, turn-of-the-century education law (or a temporary set of waivers), it is necessary to push for a complete, immediate, and long-term congressional reauthorization to establish the goals for our public education system and the supports to meet them. Obviously, ensuring equity and access to high-quality educational opportunities must remain a paramount federal concern and funding imperative. But the national priority for all students should be broader and more ambitious and move beyond college, career, and citizenship readiness to the successful development of the whole child at every level of the education system.

ASCD calls on Congress and the Obama administration to adopt the following recommendations to promote the success of students, educators, schools, communities, and the nation.

- 1 Reauthorize ESEA Now
- 2 Establish a Multimetric Accountability System
- 3 Reduce the Reliance on Standardized Testing
- 4 Promote a Whole Child Education
- 5 Honor and Support the Education Profession



ASCD RECOMMENDATIONS

1

REAUTHORIZE ESEA NOW—One of the top legislative priorities of the 114th Congress must be to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Reauthorization is long overdue and necessary to provide stable, transparent, and uniform policies that are applicable to all states and districts.

2

ESTABLISH A MULTIMETRIC ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM—Current accountability systems have resulted in a narrowing of curriculum and a hyperfocus on test scores. A new multimetric accountability model is needed; the new system must incorporate all subjects, include nonacademic factors, use multiple measures of performance, promote continuous improvement and support, and report community-level data to highlight our shared responsibility for student success. While states and districts should enjoy flexibility and autonomy in their decision making, they must also be held accountable for the progress of and ongoing support for their most in-need students.

3

REDUCE THE RELIANCE ON STANDARDIZED TESTING—The existing state testing requirements are woefully inadequate to determine whether students possess the knowledge, skills, and traits needed for school and career success. State test scores provide an incomplete appraisal of student achievement and by themselves often offer a misleading depiction of student performance and school quality. Standardized tests alone should never be used for high-stakes purposes, and neither students nor educators nor schools should be ranked or rated based on test scores.

4

PROMOTE A WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION—A whole child approach to education can best prepare students to be college, career, and citizenship ready. Such an approach requires Congress and the Obama administration to provide comprehensive opportunities in all academic subjects, including the arts; promote social and emotional learning; offer in-school mental health and counseling services; encourage meaningful student and parental engagement; and make available high-quality early childhood education and affordable postsecondary learning options.

5

HONOR AND SUPPORT THE EDUCATION PROFESSION—Teachers and school leaders are the two most important in-school factors that affect student achievement. Yet, the current approach to preparing, supporting, and evaluating educators does not reflect this reality. A robust federal investment in time and resources is necessary to provide ongoing professional development for teachers and school leaders and successfully recruit, train, and induct them. All educators should receive a stair-stepped induction into the profession, time to reflect and refine their practice, and personalized professional development that recognizes their strengths and allows them to grow. Of course, any educator evaluation system should include multiple measures, evaluate educators only on the subjects they teach, and ultimately be rooted in the goal of enhancing practice.



Visit www.educatoradvocates.org for information about policy resources and to become an ASCD Educator Advocate. Educator Advocates are informed about policy developments and engage with decision makers at all levels and in a variety of ways to promote the policies that best support students and schools.

ASCD is a global community dedicated to excellence in learning, teaching, and leading. Comprising 125,000 members—superintendents, principals, teachers, and advocates from more than 138 countries—the ASCD community also includes 56 affiliate organizations. ASCD's innovative solutions promote the success of each child.

To learn more about how ASCD supports educators as they learn, teach, and lead, visit www.ascd.org. Printer-friendly copies of the 2015 Legislative Agenda are available at www.ascd.org/legislativeagenda. For additional information, contact ASCD Public Policy at policy@ascd.org.

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