

Education Advisory Committee

NCLB Re-Authorization Considerations

The purpose of the **Education Advisory Committee** is to conduct an analysis of the No Child Left Behind Act and provide recommendations for Congressman Cannon's consideration regarding the re-authorization of the Act by engaging parents, civic and business leaders, teachers, and other members of the education community in an honest and open dialogue.

The Guiding Principles of the Committee are:

1. All children can learn and should be expected to reach high standards.
2. Parents, students, and educators should have access to best practices research. Schools must be empowered to implement such practices.
3. Accountability for public education systems in the United States must improve to enable students to excel.
4. Education results for all students must improve in order for the United States to remain competitive in the global marketplace.
5. Parents have a right to expect their children to be taught by a highly qualified teacher.
6. Education decisions should be made at the local level whenever possible.

The Education Advisory Committee (EAC) has been meeting since March 2007. Initially, the Committee invited in persons from state agencies and local school districts as well as particular Committee members to brief them on the specifics of the No Child Left Behind (*NCLB*) law. These visits provided the Education Advisory Committee members information and dispelled misinformation in ways that assisted the Committee in further developing its recommendations for consideration.

In addition to their general participation on the EAC, Committee members participated in sub-committees on Accountability, Teacher Quality, Assessment, English Language Learners, Curriculum and Standards, and School Choice. The sub-committees were charged with considering current NCLB legislation and then making recommendations for consideration to the full committee.

The following items for consideration represent those recommendations that emerged consistently across groups. An overarching issue that emerged from the Committee was the need for expanding state and local control for providing education to all students.

The first primary consideration addressed by sub-committees was the need to address **Accountability** at the state and district levels. For instance, the Committee suggests:

- Accountability should be based on multiple measures with increased discretion and flexibility at the local level.
 - Primary issue regarding the re-authorization is how to refine accountability in ways that improve teaching and learning and increase public awareness of the schools' performance across multiple indicators:
 - Allow states to require additional measures of school quality across grade levels (e.g., highly qualified/quality teachers; organizational quality indicators such as school climate, graduation rates, AP passing rates)
 - Allow states to include other subject areas (e.g., science, social studies, fine arts, etc.)
 - Allow states to use additional indicators in determining Adequate Yearly Progress status
 - Allow states to require additional accountability plans from districts/schools not making AYP with particular groups of students for designated period of time (e.g., English Language Learners)
- Inclusion in Accountability Ratings
 - Include English Language Learners based on their English language proficiency.
 - Inclusion for students who receive special education services based on students' Individualized Education Plan.
- AYP designation
 - Based on performance and growth of students and student groups

The second primary consideration addressed by sub-committees was the need to address **Data Quality, Accessibility, and Use** at the state and district levels. For instance, the Committee suggests:

- Accurate information provided in a timely manner (Current release of information for both the child and the school is too late for most parents to act on the information.)
- Information provided to parents that indicates child's performance in relation to the school as a whole, district, state, and comparable groups of schools.
- Information regarding supplemental service providers, supplemental service allocation, and any costs or expenses for the parents customarily associated with the service, provided to parents in a timely manner that gives them the greatest flexibility in attaining these services.

The third primary consideration addressed by sub-committees was the need for increased **Flexibility** at the state and district levels to meet the requirements of NCLB. For instance, the Committee suggests:

- Flexibility for states to define Highly Qualified teachers (e.g., provisional certificates, equivalent qualification standards) and funding for helping districts meet Highly Qualified standards.
- Focus also on “equivalent.”
 - Primary issue regarding the re-authorization is how the following circumstances will be addressed with regard to the Highly Qualified standards:
 - Districts with hard-to-fill assignments/schools (e.g., rural areas, special needs)
 - The continuance of programs such as High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE)
 - Professional development for teachers, teachers at schools not making AYP
 - Mentoring programs for teachers
- Flexibility for provisions regarding school consequences and sanctions
 - Primary issues regarding the re-authorization are the degree to which the following can be placed under state authority versus a fixed national model:
 - Sequence for consequences and sanctions (i.e., supplemental services prior to or in tandem with school choice)
 - Get rid of reconstitution provisions and instead focus on restructuring based on local determined needs.
 - Funding for supplemental services would be made available to parents whose students did not reach performance and/or growth standards for proficiency, perhaps in the form of a warrant to be used at an approved service provider.

A fourth primary consideration addressed by sub-committees was the need for increased **Parental and Community Engagement** at the school level.

- Expand Title II funding to include a portion that would be designated to expanding the ability of teachers, principals, and other school officials to engage in school, family, and community partnerships effectively.

A fifth primary consideration addressed by sub-committees was the need for increased **Funding** at the state and district levels to meet the requirements of NCLB.

- Funding areas that need to be addressed in the re-authorization include:
 - Resources to attract and retain teachers to schools that are low performing
 - Funding for supplemental services would be made available to any student who at the end of the first year was not proficient and is eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch.
 - Unused Federal funding provided for transportation under choice provision could be re-allocated for use with students in schools that did not make AYP.

Advisory Committee Members

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