

# Forum on Educational Accountability

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## Key Recommendations for ESEA/NCLB Reauthorization

These recommendations derive from the reports and legislative proposals of the Forum on Educational Accountability. The FEA is a working group of signers of the *Joint Organizational Statement on NCLB*. The *Statement* is now endorsed by 138 national education, civil rights, religious, disability, parent, civic and labor organizations. All FEA materials are at [www.edaccountability.org](http://www.edaccountability.org).

- ❖ **Accountability** – *Shift the law’s emphasis from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student learning.* Replace rigid annually escalating sanctions that wait for individual Title I funded schools to fail Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with systemic and other flexible improvements for all Title I funded schools ("capacity building"), initiated from the beginning. Ensure states and localities publicly report what steps they have taken to implement the systemic improvements, as well as assessment results for each school on a disaggregated basis. Replace current AYP requirements, which researchers agree cannot be met by 2014, with expectations that within five years all Title I schools will attain a rate of improvement now reached by more effective Title I schools ("a positive trend in learning outcomes"). Eliminate the requirement that 20% of Title I funds be spent for transfers and tutoring, and remove the governance-change sanctions schedule in the current law. Provide for mandatory district intervention in schools unable to implement systemic changes. States must assume responsibility for changes in schools that after five years are unable to implement the systemic changes or to show a positive trend in learning outcomes. This may include such changes as replacing principals or other staff.
- ❖ **Assessments** – *Use multiple sources of evidence – multiple assessments and multiple indicators of school progress – across core subject areas.* Support development of local and state assessments that enable assessment of higher order thinking and that are instructionally useful. Allow growth measures that track the progress of the same students from year to year. Reduce the amount of mandated testing, because testing every child every year is not necessary for accountability purposes. Support research, development and dissemination of high-quality assessments for English language learners and students with disabilities, including tools to be used by, and for the professional development of, teachers.
- ❖ **Capacity Building** – *Build the capacity of teachers to effectively teach a strong and rich curriculum to all students through professional development that addresses student learning needs identified by school staff.* This includes: regular peer collaboration; intensive mentoring; creation of positions for mentor teachers; and

intensive training in how to engage families and in instructional leadership. Build the capacity of principals to be effective instructional leaders; of districts to provide high quality technical assistance to schools in carrying out the school improvement process; and of states to assist districts and take ultimate responsibility where necessary, through training and funding for this purpose. *Strengthen parent involvement and build the capacity of parents* to support their students' academic learning at home by offering adult literacy and family skills programs and adult mentoring or similar programs for children without available parents.

- ❖ **Funding** – *Fully fund Title I, so all eligible students can benefit from major school improvements and the resource and opportunity gaps can be closed.* Require that 20% of Title I funds be allocated to implement the systemic changes in professional development, with states providing a matching amount for this purpose, and 5% of Title I funds be allocated to implement the systemic changes in family involvement and support. The federal government would provide 50% of the additional costs of carrying out the systemic changes beyond the costs covered by the 20% and 5% set-asides.

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