



## Recommendations for the Reauthorization of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) March 2007

*Working together to support and improve California's public schools*

**Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)**  
*representing nearly 15,500 school administrators*

**California Association Of School Business Officials (CASBO)**  
*representing more than 4,000 school finance and administrative managers*

**California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)**  
*representing all 58 county superintendents throughout California*

**California Federation of Teachers (CFT-AFL-CIO)**  
*representing nearly 90,000 education employees*

**California School Boards Association (CSBA)**  
*representing more than 1,000 K-12 school districts and county offices of education throughout California*

**California School Employees Association (CSEA)**  
*representing more than 230,000 classified school employees*

**California State PTA**  
*representing more than one million parents, teachers, and students in California*

**California Teachers Association (CTA)**  
*representing over 330,000 educators*

**Service Employees International Union (SEIU)**  
*representing more than 50,000 school employees in California*

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### **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):**

- AYP must be revised to include growth and index models.
- AYP must be amended to include and recognize additional levels and measurements of student achievement, including progress towards meeting performance levels and cut scores.

### **Assessment and Testing:**

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required individual education programs (IEPs) must take precedence for student testing, including parents' ability to opt-out students, out-of-level assessments and the variety of accommodations and modifications that may be provided.
- ESEA must state that when conflicts arise between ESEA and IDEA regarding measures of student achievement, IDEA shall take precedence.
- ESEA must honor a parents' right to opt students out of testing and to not count those students against schools' participation rates.
- ESEA must ensure that states develop valid and reliable assessments, which gauge English language proficiency, as well as content knowledge.

### **Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT):**

- HQT must be amended to reflect local realities – California has an evolved credentialing system that emphasizes testing, coursework and pedagogy. States are in the best position to determine whether their teachers are “highly qualified.”
- HQT must allow special education, English language learner, career technical education, alternative education and middle school teachers who are fully certified by their state to be considered “highly qualified.”
- HQT must require teachers in all schools that receive federal funds, including charter schools and nonpublic schools, to meet all the requirements of “highly qualified.”
- ESEA must provide incentives to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in difficult to staff subjects and schools.

### **Paraprofessionals:**

- States must be given flexibility to determine the qualifications for paraprofessionals to meet “highly qualified” standards.
- Timelines, guidance and resources must be provided for paraprofessional development.
- Funding must be provided for training and professional development for paraprofessionals to meet ESEA qualification requirements.

### **Interventions and Corrective Actions:**

- Schools and districts not showing “student academic achievement growth over time” must be the real focus of interventions and corrective actions.
- Sanctions must be applied only when AYP is not met by the same group of students for two or more consecutive years in the same subject on the same indicator.
- States and districts must be allowed to decide the order in which to provide intervention services and the ability to use different, research-based interventions for schools.
- Targeting of supplemental education services and school choice options must be permitted only for those subgroups which did not make AYP.
- Federal law must honor state laws and regulations relating to application of intervention and corrective actions.
- Private providers of supplemental education services must demonstrate experience working with special populations, the ability to collaborate with schools and demonstrate actual student academic achievement outcomes.
- The length of time for schools in need of improvement should be extended. ESEA should allow districts up to two years to take local corrective actions in its schools before requiring restructuring. Further, the length of time for districts in need of improvement should also be extended given the complexities of systems changes.

#### **Funding:**

- Rather than labeling schools as in need of improvement, ESEA must instead provide the resources to help schools put in place proven programs to close achievement gaps.
- Sanctions relating to corrective action and restructuring, including the withholding of funds, must be deferred in any year that appropriations for ESEA are not increased over the previous year until ESEA is fully funded.
- Secure funding must be provided for states to make multi-year investments for both short- and long-term student improvements, including data systems.
- If funding decreases, schools must be held harmless for programs that could not be implemented. If funding fades, program requirements must also fade.
- Adequate funding for schools and districts must be provided to ensure appropriate professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators.

#### **Other Issues:**

- Outcomes for students must be focused on equitable access to high quality teaching and learning – not just on proficiency and minimum competency.
- Public schools must not be required to provide services, including professional development support, to private schools unless those schools follow all of the provisions of ESEA. Further, charter schools must be held to the same accountability requirements as all public schools and districts if they receive federal aid under the Title I program.
- There needs to be transparency and equity in the flexibility afforded by US Department of Education (USDOE) to all states.
- States must not be compared against each other regarding AYP because of the flexibility in ESEA for states to set their own local standards.
- USDOE shall not expand or exceed the mandates of ESEA (i.e. increasing the local requirements for the monitoring of teacher distribution within a district or in the interpretation of statute) when developing regulations unless it is expressly authorized in statute.
- Maintain the strong parental involvement provisions of ESEA and ensure that local plans include both a communication strategy ensuring district communications are regular, two-way, meaningful, and timely and that recognizes parents as full partners in their child's education

and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children.