
A COMMON AGENDA

to improve student achievement



Minnesota's school
board leaders
working together
to deliver the promise
of quality education



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No Child Left Behind Act

Congress should make the following modifications to NCLB:

- Eliminate goal of universal proficiency for all students.
- Eliminate impossible achievement goals for special education students and English Language Learners.
- Revisit assessment methodology for determining AYP.
- Eliminate the punitive measures of the NCLB Act.
- Eliminate inconsistent NCLB agreements between the federal government and each state.

NCLB: State Flexibility and Local Control Recommendation

Congress should make the following modifications to NCLB:

- An independent board should be established to review states' requests regarding changes, waivers, and federal action on those requests.
- The U.S. Department of Education should be required to disclose every ruling made on state plans and state requests for plan changes and waivers in ESEA programs.
- The federal government should have a limited ability to capriciously add requirements to federal programs without timely and meaningful regulatory process or new legislation.
- AYP sanction options should be offered only to low-achieving students within the group that failed to meet AYP targets in the same subject for two or more years — not all students in the school.
- Sanctions for schools and school districts should only apply when AYP is not met by the same group on the same indicator for two or more years.

NCLB: Funding Recommendation

NCLB should not create mandates for states and school districts that require significant amounts of resources.

Congress should make the following modifications to NCLB:

- NCLB requirements should be directly linked to federal funding that covers the **full** cost of these mandates.
- If funding is inadequate, the mandates of NCLB should be suspended until Congress and the Executive Branch are able to fulfill the funding obligations.
- All plans, reports, audits, and staffing mandates should be eliminated if they are not fully funded and not critical to improved achievement for low-income students.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The federal government has always fallen short of the congressional agreement to fully fund its share of the IDEA. Local and state budgets have absorbed the shortfalls. The federal government shortchanged states and local school districts with an unfunded liability of more than \$13.2 billion in FY 2008 alone. IDEA appropriations need a 130 percent increase for full funding. It is time to make special education mandatory and deliver on a long overdue promise.

Congress should:

- Increase the federal contributions to IDEA funding from 18 percent to 40 percent.
- Accomplish full funding by 2012, meeting the commitment of the 2004 IDEA Reauthorization.
- Eliminate the cross-subsidy of special education programs by general education funds.
- Realized that student needs will not go away as a result of funding reductions.
- Adjust upward the special education funding levels to more closely reflect reality or provide districts with assistance in holding down rising special education costs.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Congress should support the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in order to bring much needed funds to public schools, including:

- Additional funding to special education and Title I. This proposal will move Congress closer to its commitment to fund 40 percent of special education and shore up Title I programs that are lacking funds. This cash infusion will free up money from school districts' general education funds, which are often employed to cross-subsidize such programs.
- Ensuring IDEA funding does not impose additional maintenance of effort requirements for school districts.
- The extension of school-based Medicaid reimbursement costs through June 30, 2009.
- An investment that will pay off in the future. In many Minnesota communities, school districts are the largest employer. The Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides short-term investment with long-term goals for both schools districts and their communities.

