

**PRINCIPLES FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION
OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)
February 2008**

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has produced many unintended and unfavorable consequences for students, parents and educators across the country. Six years of experience with NCLB demonstrate the law's complexity and the vital need to take the time to carefully consider and fully understand how each proposed change will affect our nation's schools and students. NEA offers these principles for ESEA reauthorization and we encourage Congress to listen to the voices of educators in developing legislative proposals.

- **The federal government should serve as a partner to support state efforts to transform public schools.** The 21st century requires a partnership among all levels of government—federal, state and local—to make up for the historic inequitable distribution of tools and resources to our nation's students, and to create a more innovative educational experience so that students are prepared for challenging postsecondary experiences and the world of work.
- **A reauthorized ESEA must ensure that all children—especially the most disadvantaged—have access to an education that will prepare them to succeed in the 21st century.** The federal government should focus on high-quality early childhood education and child care, parental/family involvement and mentoring programs, as well as access to quality healthcare for children to help overcome issues of poverty that may impede student progress. It must invest in proven programs such as universal prekindergarten, knowledge-rich curricula, and intensive interventions, and must provide resources to help improve teaching and learning conditions through smaller classes and school repair and modernization.
- **A revamped accountability system must correctly identify schools in need of assistance and provide a system of effective interventions to help them succeed.** The paradigm must change from labeling and punishing to investing in proven programs and interventions. States and school districts should be given significant flexibility through a transparent process to meet agreed-upon outcomes, using a variety of growth models based on movement towards proficiency, as opposed to 100 percent proficiency in 2014. School quality and student learning must be based on multiple measures and indicators not based primarily on test scores.
- **Teachers and other staff must be provided supports and resources to help students succeed.** Hard-to-staff schools, especially those with high concentrations of disadvantaged students or those that have consistently struggled to meet student achievement targets, need significant supports and resources, including additional targeted funding to attract and retain quality teachers, and induction programs with intensive mentoring components that will help teachers become successful. A reauthorized ESEA should exclude any provision linking student test scores to teacher compensation.
- **The federal government should require states to detail how they will remedy inequities in educational tools, opportunities and resources.** Funding should be targeted to schools with the highest concentrations of poverty. The federal government should provide resources necessary to meet the law's requirements and mandates.
- **State and local collective bargaining for school employees must be respected and not undermined.**
- **Targeted programs that support special needs students and schools—such as English Language Acquisition, Impact Aid, rural schools and Indian education—should be maintained and expanded.**
- **The federal government should serve as a clearinghouse, making available to educators a wealth of knowledge about how best to teach students and help schools improve practices.**