

**The Washington State School Directors' Association supports reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind *this year*.**

As passionate education advocates (representing more than a million school children in Washington), we know first-hand the negative and taxing effect that the current **No Child Left Behind** (NCLB) law is having on our students, teachers, and communities.

NCLB had good intentions, lofty and appropriate goals, as well as bipartisan support when it was passed. But more than a decade later, the unintended consequences of the punitive nature of this law now undermine the good work happening in many local districts across the nation.

We have studied NCLB and closely reviewed the discussion draft offered by Senator Alexander. We feel strongly that there is room for compromise and that nothing being debated is worthy of a partisan blockade, from either side. We need reauthorization this year and we're depending on leadership in Congress to find compromise in the Legislature and push for passage. Everyone in education – students, teachers, school directors and stakeholders – need reauthorization passed *this year*.

**Four major elements**

1. **Rein in the Department of Education** – the Department of Education should not be a policy-creating entity. Change the role, and the semantics of their interaction and role in education. Structure the reauthorization such that the Department of Education becomes an *enabler* for education, rather than an enforcer, a rule-maker, and a prosecutor.
2. **Take School Choice out of ESEA** – don't kill the reauthorization effort because of the divide around school choice. Rather than incorporating school choice directly in ESEA, put a placeholder into the law for "alternatives" in education, and then work through that law independently of ESEA. Make ESEA focus on enabling the delivery of education in our country, for everyone, and about leadership and accountability - not about opting out.
3. **Streamline Annual Testing** – we can support annual testing, if we let districts focus on the best testing methods and weed out what clearly does not work in our local districts and states. We want accountability, we want to know when students are exceling and when they're struggling, and we want that knowledge as soon as possible.
4. **Make ESEA more data-centric and data-intelligent** – we live in a data-rich world, and can use data to be more effective in moving education ahead. With multiple measures, and the capacity to react to kids' needs in near real-time, we can greatly compress and manage how a child's education needs are identified and augmented. Importantly, we must structure ESEA so data is used as an *enabler* for teachers and students, not a cacophony of more ways to imply someone (student, teacher, or school) is failing.

The effects of NCLB are not annual, not trivial, and not sustainable – they are *cumulative*, they are troublesome, and they're preventing kids, communities, and educators from doing their best work.