

ESEA: NEA'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

The federal role: The role of the federal government in public education historically has been to serve as a catalytic and positive force for change, and as a driver of equity. In partnership with states and districts, the federal government now should guarantee equal educational opportunity for all students and support school transformation.

The purpose of public education: The public education system is critical to democracy. Its purpose is to:

- Maximize the achievement, skills, opportunities, and potential of all students by promoting their strengths and addressing their needs
- Ensure that all students are prepared to thrive in a democratic society and in a diverse and rapidly changing world as knowledgeable, creative, and engaged citizens and lifelong learners

How will we fulfill the purpose?

CHAMPION STUDENT SUCCESS: Prepare all students to thrive in college, careers, and life

- Replace Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with authentic accountability systems designed to improve learning, identify successful schools, and support struggling ones
- Ensure students can think critically, solve problems, and are prepared to be engaged citizens
- Increase wraparound services to help students come to school ready to succeed
- Use multiple sources of evidence of student learning and school performance over time
- Support standards and assessments that are accessible for all students and that address the unique instructional and assessment needs of students with disabilities and English-language learners
- Encourage high-quality longitudinal data systems that improve instruction and protect student and educator privacy
- Provide a clearinghouse for research and innovative, promising practices to drive student success

ELEVATE THE PROFESSION: Support great teachers and education support professionals

- Help districts recruit and retain excellent teachers and education support professionals, especially in hard-to-staff schools
- Promote high standards and rigorous preparation for entry into the teaching profession
- Foster comprehensive systems of induction, mentoring, and professional development for educators
- Ensure effective instructional leadership among school leaders and master teachers

FIGHT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: Ensure equitable educational opportunities and safe schools for every student

- Provide for adequate, equitable, and sustained funding for schools; fully fund critical programs such as Title I of ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Provide federal incentive grants to support state efforts to implement education finance systems that provide equitable and sufficient funding for each student
- Provide sustained and targeted support and research-based intervention strategies for struggling or “priority” schools
- Eliminate unsafe and inequitable treatment of students due to bullying, harassment, or discriminatory practices
- Require states and districts to submit equity and adequacy plans to eliminate disparities in educational opportunity
- Ensure that all low-income children have access to high-quality early childhood education

For additional information, go to www.educationvotes.org.