

## The Three R's of ESEA (No Child Left Behind) Reauthorization Roll Back, Review, Reaffirm

**Roll Back** to The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 “An Act — To *strengthen and improve* educational *quality* and educational *opportunities* in the Nation’s elementary and secondary schools.”

**Title I** – *Education of Children of Low Income Families* to provide **financial assistance** to local education agencies in support of **children from low-income families** in order to **expand and improve community efforts** to meet these children’s learning needs.

**Title II** – *School Library Resources, Textbooks, and Other Instructional Materials* to provide access to educational materials **for all students** in the State **recognizing the invaluable human and material resources that a library provides for a community.**

**Title III** – *Supplementary Educational Centers and Services* to be made **available to the entire community** to provide services not currently offered but deemed vital to educational improvement in underserved areas. These are services deemed **essential to children being “ready to learn.”** All communities should be encouraged to **use their existing resources wisely** by encouraging cooperative efforts with existing non-profits and civic organizations. \*(Note the interconnection of community in Titles I, II & III.)

**Title IV** – *Educational Research and Training; Cooperative Research Act* to support educational research and training that enables the Department of Education to more effectively accomplish its purposes and to perform its duties including **dissemination of information.** This **research and training must be targeted** at *improving the quality of teaching, counseling, advising, and parental and community engagement practices—to improve student achievement.* \*(Note: Although Title I was the centerpiece of the original ESEA of 1965, Title IV is now central to our improvement and progress.)

**Title V** – *State Departments of Education* funding through this title is “to stimulate and assist in strengthening the *leadership* resources of State educational agencies” **to assist states in identifying “educational problems, issues, and needs in the State.”** \*(Note: Accountability remains with the states to ensure they meet their responsibility of providing equitable resources and monitoring outcomes.)

### Review the Purpose

Successful, sustainable school improvements occur where people solve their own problems and focus on ensuring that every child is offered the educational opportunity and support to achieve his or her potential. Quality schools serve kids, communities, and our country by continuously striving to be responsive to societal needs through effective education.

We do not have to re-invent any wheels: Effective schools have **principals** who focus on the *quality of instruction*, the focus is broadly understood, **teachers expect** all students to obtain at least minimal *mastery*, and tests are used as the basis for *program evaluation* because it is in the **local school where analysis and intervention takes place** in order to put student learning first. It was Ronald Edmonds who was the lead researcher on Effective School Correlates and he found that all the schools he studied (which were high-minority, high-poverty, high-achieving schools) focused their design on more **efficient use of existing community resources.** This improves efficiency while providing effectiveness.

Chronically low-performing schools are like repeat offenders; there is an underlying issue they can't resolve on their own. For these schools, it is a failure on the part of communities to recognize and fulfill their responsibility to their neighborhood youth for it is only upon a wide and varied base of community supports that students can make use of excellent education.

**Engagement is not only essential for continuous school improvement to occur; it is the most important factor in determining a student's chance at life-long success.**

Traditionally and statistically, our highest poverty areas have proven themselves least likely to provide high-quality educational opportunities and proper supports. Thus, the federal government stepped in to assist where state and local education officials, alone, had proven unable to sustain education reforms. This is why we have federal education law — to ensure excellence and equality.

We know what works. Now we must ensure well-trained people exist where we need them most.

### **Reaffirm Our Commitment to Public Education through Research, Resources & Results**

A wide base of knowledge and best practices can be found for any and all educational issues. But to put research into practice on the ground in every community requires a network of specialists.

**Engaging Parents and Communities** Those Title I schools that have not been successful in engaging parent and community support need to be approached through a different avenue. The Keeping PACE (Parent And Community Engagement) Act had the right focus — ensuring that schools are centers of communities — but what was proposed through wasteful granting processes and outside agencies can be done through the already *existing community resource* of the Cooperative Extension System.

The Cooperative Extension System already has successful programs throughout the country that include a whole host of youth programs for “at-risk youth participation in school retention and enrichment programs where they learn science, math, social skills, and much more, through hands-on projects and activities.” <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinks/extension.html>

“Extension expertise meets public needs at the local level.” Our land-grant system has the infrastructure to reach every district in need of help with research-based effective programs. They have the capacity to work cooperatively with existing non-profits and other educational institutions to assist communities in using and expanding what works for them, locally.

**Improving Leadership** Improving school leadership holds the potential to have the most immediate impact on school improvement. Schools identified as chronically low-performing need strong, effective leadership to take these schools through a successful school improvement process. To expect under-performing states to train their own “turnaround” leaders is doing the same thing they have been doing and expecting different results.

It is more efficient and expedient “to establish a National Education Leadership Academy” to “greatly enhance our national capacity to transform schools by gathering in one place the most

outstanding leaders of school turnaround, trainers and scholars of transformation”... “to create a state-of-the-art curriculum and pedagogy, including field placements, to train principals, superintendents and senior district officials to effectively lead, guide and coordinate teams of stakeholders in this critical [improvement/turnaround] process.

<http://www.citizenseffectiveschools.org/neladraft.pdf>

**Improving Teacher Quality** With proper leadership and community supports in place, we can responsibly approach the issue Americans consider the *top national education priority* — improving the quality of teachers. Through ESEA, we can ensure this current generation reaches its potential by immediately improving continuing education by focusing on locally identified problems for which we already have a variety of solutions including those provided long ago by President Kennedy. <http://www.educationnews.org/education-policy-and-politics/victoria-young-the-education-lessons-jfk-left-behind/>

Following the model of the Agricultural Research Centers that did and continue to serve our country well, we can enlist the services of the existing Regional Educational Research Laboratory facilities to more freely share their research and further assist with the needs of our nation’s chronically low-performing schools. Their research findings can be brought into practice through existing adult education agencies and guided by newly improved leadership.

**Accounting for Results** On the local level, a properly executed school improvement process will include measureable “indicators of success” targeted specifically at each schools’ problem areas. As it has been written, the “appropriate objective measurements” will be used to judge the “effectiveness of the programs in meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.” <http://www.nctic1p.org/files/40646763.pdf>

In 1933 the National Study of School Evaluations first released their findings concerning self-evaluations by schools along with the benefits of having outside reviewers (Quality Review Teams). They have continued updating both their information and evaluation instruments for assessing the factors that impact student learning which are in use around the country and world. [http://eeando.unl.edu/SISP/resource\\_files/Factors%20impacting%20Student%20Learning.pdf](http://eeando.unl.edu/SISP/resource_files/Factors%20impacting%20Student%20Learning.pdf)

So it would be appropriate and reasonable at this time to “reduce the amount of mandated testing to requirements in the 1994 federal law of once each in elementary, middle and high schools.” [http://www.edaccountability.org/FEA\\_2\\_Page\\_Summary\\_Recommendations\\_2011\\_final.pdf](http://www.edaccountability.org/FEA_2_Page_Summary_Recommendations_2011_final.pdf)

To provide equal opportunity, the States must assess the equity of resources in their districts and **work cooperatively to use existing resources** to fill their “materials gap.” National monitoring of achievement gaps through the random use of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) should continue unchanged with the results of our progress reported annually to the President, Congress, and the Nation.

Our shared responsibility must serve our students well. This can be done through ESEA.

This “brief” was provided by Victoria M. Young, author of *The Crucial Voice of the People, Past and Present: Education’s Missing Ingredient*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. [www.TheCrucialVoice.com](http://www.TheCrucialVoice.com)