

## State Board of Education's 2011 Federal Funding and Legislative Platform

The 2011 Federal Funding and Legislative Platform consists of recommendations for consideration on federal appropriations and legislative initiatives and is to be used by Ohio's State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Federal Liaison when working on federal matters.

	Platform Subjects	Platform Recommendations
1	<b>NCLB/ESEA Reauthorization</b>	Provide incentives for states to set high expectations for all students, allow for innovative approaches to improve teaching and learning, and establish fair accountability systems that reward student progress and differentiate consequences. For accountability purposes, allow states and LEAs to modify special education inclusion rates based on the types of disabilities. Grant states appropriate time to comply with any new requirements and provide research and guidance to implement reforms. Increase support to assist all districts and schools with meeting the federal requirements. Continue formulaic funding but also provide competitive grants such as RttT and i3 programs.
2	<b>State Assessment Systems</b>	Enhance support to develop, administer and score the federally mandated assessments, continue support for development and implementation of common assessments, provide assistance to states that wish to use multiple measures and allow the use of sampling of students for required assessments.
3	<b>School Improvement</b>	Maintain and strengthen support of important federal programs to assist school districts, especially those at risk, to raise student achievement. Provide a stable funding mechanism for state agencies to assist with turning around the lowest-achieving schools and districts. Allow state discretion in determining the definition of their lowest achieving schools as well as flexibility in the models, interventions and supports used to turn around these schools.
4	<b>Data Systems and Technology</b>	Maintain and strengthen support of programs for schools, districts and states to utilize technology and to develop systems to adhere to federal data reporting requirements. Provide educators with training in the use of technology.
5	<b>Students with Diverse Learning and Language Needs</b>	Continue to increase the alignment of federal laws with ESEA requirements to ensure all states, schools and districts are held accountable for the improved educational outcomes for all students. Federal government should satisfy agreement to provide full funding of IDEA, maintain support of Title III of ESEA and provide fiscal flexibility for districts.
6	<b>Educator Quality and Effectiveness</b>	Allow for innovation under Title II of ESEA/NCLB and enhance support to improve educator quality and capacity. Provide incentives and bonuses to recruit and retain effective educators, especially in high-needs areas. Incentivize states and LEAs to evaluate educator effectiveness.
7	<b>Early Childhood Education/Head Start/Literacy</b>	Require federal Head Start (HS) programs to align their educational programs and teacher requirements to improve school readiness. Permit states to administer the federal HS program in conjunction with their own early childhood programs and modify the federal HS allocation to ensure equitable per child funding. Provide support to districts to create early childhood education teams, and expand comprehensive literacy initiatives to reach more students and families.
8	<b>Middle and High Schools/STEM/ Career Technical Education</b>	Increase focus on middle and high school reform efforts to ensure students are prepared to succeed in high school and graduate college or career ready. Provide incentives for LEAs to adopt drop-out prevention strategies and to combat absenteeism. Enhance support for STEM education and preserve and protect alternate pathways to post-secondary education and the workplace, such as career and technical education programs, dual enrollment, and early college.
9	<b>Student Transportation</b>	Provide assistance to states on pupil transportation services.
10	<b>Supportive Learning Environments</b>	Provide guidance, resources and assistance to states and LEAs to foster family engagement, implement Response to Intervention (RTI), personalize/expand student learning, and create positive school culture addressing safe schools, student wellness and nutritional issues.

## NCLB/ESEA Reauthorization

- 1. Provide incentives for states to set high expectations for all students, allow for innovative approaches to improve teaching and learning, and establish fair accountability systems that reward student progress and differentiate consequences. Grant states appropriate time to comply with any new requirements and provide research and guidance to implement reforms. Increase support to assist all districts and schools with meeting the federal requirements. Continue key formula programs to ensure stability of services to intended student groups while awarding competitive grants such as Race to the Top (RttT) and Investing in Innovation (i3) to states, districts and educational organizations for embracing and implementing lasting education reforms.**

Rationale: Congress is scheduled to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as currently defined in the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* of 2001. The reauthorization should focus on high expectations, high standards and improved academic achievement for all students at every level of education to ensure that students master the skills needed for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. States should be provided with incentives to revise their standards and benchmark them to the best international models, either individually or through state-led consortia. States, local school districts, and schools should be held accountable for the results of all students and subgroups of students reaching proficiency and beyond in the required subjects. Likewise, the federal law and subsequent regulations should recognize states' existing standards-based reform efforts and provide them with the resources, flexibility and innovation to implement those reforms at levels sufficient to improve teaching and learning. States should be given the ability to establish fair accountability systems for schools and districts that move all students towards college and career readiness while applying rigorous interventions for those that do not meet adequate yearly progress. These accountability models should give consideration to other indicators, such as individual student growth, as long as they do not mask subgroup proficiency in the required subjects. However, for accountability purposes, states and districts should be able to explore differentiated inclusion systems for assessing the growth of special education students based on a weighted factor for the types of disabilities. To ensure the highest level of public confidence, states should be provided ample time, guidance and technical assistance when required to make changes to comply with new federal rules and requirements. In order to achieve the goals of NCLB and raise the achievement of persistently underperforming schools and districts, there must be more of a partnership between all stakeholders (federal, state and local) in targeting the necessary resources to the most at-risk students, schools and districts. The ESEA reauthorization should maintain formulaic funding for key programs that target resources to specific students and services but also provide competitive programs such as Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation grants to award states, districts and educational entities for embracing and implementing innovative reforms to improve academic standards, student achievement, teacher effectiveness and college and career readiness.

## State Assessment Systems

- 2. Enhance support to develop, administer and score the federally mandated assessments, continue support for development and implementation of common assessments in English and mathematics, provide assistance to states that wish to use multiple measures and allow states to use a sampling of students for required annual assessments.**

Rationale: ESEA/NCLB includes significant requirements to test every student in reading and math annually in grades 3-8, and again in high school and in science once each during grades 3-5, 6-8 and in high school. The estimated costs for Ohio to develop, administer and score the 14 federally mandated assessments are much higher than what the state receives from the federal government. The State Board of Education and the Ohio General Assembly have approved tests that include constructed-response questions that require students to provide written responses enabling them to be assessed on reasoning and application of knowledge. Such tests are more costly to develop and score than basic multiple choice tests. Moreover, Ohio is part of the state consortia that is developing a common assessment for English and mathematics that will include multiple choice, extended response and computer enhanced items along performance-based assessments as part of a multiple measures strategy to determine a student's mastery of academic content and demonstration of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Resources should be provided for states to develop and fully implement these new measures, including support for alternate assessments and necessary accommodations for students with disabilities, that are aligned with world class Common Core standards. A sound, balanced assessment system, which is required by state and federal statute, is an effective tool to ensure the State Board's priority of closing achievement gaps and raising overall student performance is measured appropriately. Ohio also recommends that the reauthorization of ESEA allow for a sampling of students be tested, as opposed to every student, in order to meet the federal annual assessments requirement and for funding that permits states to participate in international assessments (such as TIMMS and PISA) with sufficient numbers of students to qualify the state as its own "country" for comparison purposes.

### **School Improvement**

**Maintain and strengthen support of important federal programs to assist LEAs, especially those at risk, raise student achievement. Provide a stable funding mechanism for state agencies to assist with turning around the lowest-achieving schools and districts. Allow states the discretion in determining the definition of their lowest achieving schools as well as flexibility in the models, interventions and supports used to turn around these schools.**

Rationale: ESEA/NCLB requires State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to implement a statewide system of technical assistance and support for districts to turn around schools identified in improvement status. Similarly, SEAs are required to identify and assist with turning around the lowest-achieving schools under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 in such programs as the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), Race to the Top and the School Improvement Grant (SIG). In 2008, Ohio was approved by the USDOE to use a "Differentiated Accountability" system which categorizes schools and districts based upon the aggregate percentage of student groups that do not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) in reading and mathematics. Without the flexibility, a school or district improvement status was based on the number of years it missed AYP. Ohio's education reform agenda places a high value on having every student attend an excellent school, and regardless of whether the next ESEA reauthorization focuses the state's responsibility to turn around only the lowest achieving schools or on all schools and districts in improvement status based on AYP, states need to have a stable funding source to fulfill this responsibility and help ensure all students attend schools focused on delivering high quality educational services. States are in a better position than the federal government to understand the particular reasons their schools and districts are under performing academically and thus should be given the discretion to determine the definition to apply to their lowest performing schools. Similarly, states should have flexibility to determine the types of models, interventions, technical assistance and supports used to turn around low performing schools and be held accountable for this transformation. As an example, a state should have the authority if it wants to increase the number of years, from 2 to 4, before a principal needs to be dismissed or reassigned from a low performing school.

### **Data Systems and Technology**

**4. Maintain and strengthen support of programs for schools, districts and states to utilize technology and to develop systems to adhere to federal data reporting requirements. Provide educators with training in the use of data and technology to improve instruction.**

Rationale: To effectively meet ESEA/NCLB requirements, states must put in place databases, technology and processes that link student test scores, the length of time they've been enrolled in schools, and graduation records over time. These databases and processes must be able to disaggregate data — separating, comparing and reporting information according to various student groups. Recent federal laws and regulations have only increased the data and systems requirements on states and school districts. Under the America COMPETES Act states must have seamless data systems linking preK-higher education. In addition, under ARRA of 2009 and other recovery initiatives, states and school districts are required to report quarterly on the uses of the federal funds, including expenditure data, employment data and education reform progress. Moreover, recent guidance regarding the federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FATA) of 2006 requires monthly reporting on all new federal funding. The federal government should provide states and districts with resources to develop or

enhance existing data systems to comply with these recent federal requirements, regardless if the state has proactively made strong investments in information management systems. In addition, federal programs that provide districts with critical technology and connectivity abilities should be preserved and supported. Advances in data and technology are continual and serve as key tools to make sound instructional decisions. Educators must be provided with professional development in the use of these new data and technological advances as well as the data reporting requirements.

### **Students with Diverse Learning and Language Needs**

- 5. Continue to increase the alignment of federal education laws with the ESEA requirements to ensure all schools and districts are held accountable for the improved educational outcomes for all subgroups of students. Federal government should satisfy agreement to provide full funding of IDEA, maintain support of Title III of NCLB and provide maximum fiscal flexibility for districts to meet the needs of students with disabilities and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.**

Rationale: The top priority for the State Board of Education is higher achievement for all students. There should be continued alignment of federal education laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with ESEA/NCLB to ensure all students have access to the general curriculum and educational opportunities. States need to ensure school districts utilize scientifically-based research and programs and strategies proven to enhance academic success on effective intervention strategies to assist different populations of students who may be underperforming and support districts in creating personalized education plans for all students, enabling all students to achieve at higher levels. Similarly, federal programs such as Title III of ESEA/NCLB should be supported to ensure LEP students and English Language Learners (ELL) have equal educational opportunities to achieve state performance standards and close achievement gaps. LEP and ELL represent one of the fastest growing populations of students in Ohio. These students have unique challenges inherent to their instructional needs and required academic gains.

The purpose of the IDEA is to ensure that all students with disabilities are provided appropriate special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. When Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 a promise was made to provide 40 percent of the National Average Per Pupil Expenditure (NAPPE) in the federal special education grants to states. In December 2004, President Bush signed into law the reauthorization, known as IDEA 04, which provided a goal of reaching the 40 percent level over the next seven years. However, special education funding is still subject to the discretionary appropriations process and still represents only about half of what was promised. Meanwhile, states and LEAs have seen significant increases in the cost of providing special education and related services to students with disabilities. Under IDEA, LEAs must offer a continuum of services to students with disabilities. As the cost of providing services increases, more and more state and local funds are used to provide the services. School districts should be allowed to replace the local resources they use to meet the needs of students with disabilities with any federal increases in IDEA funds. Allowing districts to use the increased federal IDEA funding to replace local funds would help move toward a better balance of local, state and federal funding to meet the federal statutory requirements. IDEA 04 moved in the right direction by allowing local school districts to reduce local expenditures on certain programs below prior years' levels by up to 50 percent of new federal special education funding each year as long as an equivalent amount of the local funds are used for activities authorized under ESEA/NCLB.

### **Educator Quality and Effectiveness**

- 6. Allow for innovation under Title II of ESEA/NCLB and enhance support to improve educator quality and capacity. Provide incentives and bonuses to recruit and retain effective educators, especially in high-needs areas. Incentivize states and LEAs to evaluate teacher and principal effectiveness.**

Rationale: A priority for the State Board of Education is to improve educator quality and increase capacity to raise student achievement. This begins with having a competent, caring and knowledgeable teacher in every classroom and effective administrators in every school. The federal government should enhance its support of teacher quality grants under Title II of ESEA/NCLB, which provides needed professional development to our educators to improve student achievement. In addition, it is necessary to support innovative methods to recruit, prepare and retain highly qualified and effective educators, particularly in hard to staff areas. States and school districts should be permitted to and receive additional support to develop these innovative programs such as troops to teachers, Charter Colleges of Education, alternative licensure programs, credential review and pilot differentiated and incentive pay structures, which are based on educator skills and knowledge as well as increases in student performance. Moreover, the federal government should be supportive of state initiatives to address mid-career professionals and retrain current licensed educators seeking different positions as well as programs such as career ladder, job-embedded professional development, mentoring, and teacher residency programs.

Innovative programs can assist in providing effective educators in every classroom and school, especially in the most needed areas, and close the achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Too often low-wealth and other high-need districts are faced with difficult staffing decisions, especially around math, science, foreign language and special education. Highly qualified and effective teachers who commit to teaching in high-need areas and in these subjects should receive bonuses and other incentives, such as loan forgiveness. States should be held accountable and take the necessary steps to address equitable access of effective teachers for poor and minority students and the initiatives above will assist in supporting the plans for equity. To ensure accountability and improve effectiveness, states and LEAs should be provided with incentives to implement teachers and principals evaluations that include multiple measures including student growth as a component of those evaluations.

#### **Early Childhood Education/Head Start/Literacy**

- 7. Require federal Head Start (HS) programs to align their educational programs and teacher requirements to improve school readiness. Permit states to administer the federal HS program in conjunction with their own early childhood programs and modify the federal HS allocation to ensure equitable per child funding. Provide support to districts to create early childhood education teams and expand comprehensive literacy initiatives to reach more students and families.**

Rationale: Research shows the effectiveness of early childhood education programs in raising student achievement and closing achievement gaps between at-risk children. To properly prepare children to enter kindergarten ready for success, early childhood education and Head Start programs must have standards that include an academic component. Teachers in these programs should meet high state licensure standards that are, at a minimum, an associate's degree to provide quality instruction and care. More children will come prepared for school if school readiness programs have more rigorous teacher requirements, proper professional development and required early learning assessments. Allowing states to integrate their own early childhood programs with federal Head Start would enable programs to leverage resources to increase services to families, sustain and enhance state efforts toward teacher credentials, and move toward greater unity of performance outcomes for children, teachers and programs for all state funded pre-kindergarten programs. Unfortunately, Ohio's per child allocation for federal Head Start is significantly lower than comparable states. States are held to the same level of expectations for services, but there are inconsistencies in the federal allocations. In order for Ohio's Head Start programs to achieve the school readiness goals for children, Congress must ensure that Ohio's per-child allocation for Head Start providers is comparable to other states.

Moreover, there should be a federal investment in and a requirement for school districts to create early childhood education teams to ensure a much more seamless delivery of services from preschool through grade three. These teams would have the responsibility for coordination of efforts around curricula, assessments, professional development of early childhood educators and collaboration with community based organizations to support their early childhood education program. Likewise, the federal government should strengthen its investment in literacy achievement across the K-12 education continuum. Literacy is the central foundation of teaching and learning and the critical element in higher academic achievement

for all students. The academic success of all school-age students almost always depends upon their mastery of literacy. Federal support for proven effective literacy programs at K-3 schools should continue and serious consideration should be given to expanding those literacy resources and practices to all elementary students across the state and similarly at the middle and high school level. Lastly, as part of a comprehensive literary strategy, focus should also be given to improving the literacy skills of parents and families, especially low-income families, who in turn may become more engaged in their children's education.

### **Middle and High Schools/STEM/Career and Technical Education**

- 8. Increase focus on middle and high school reform efforts to ensure students are prepared to succeed in high school and graduate college or career ready. Provide incentives for LEAs to adopt drop-out prevention strategies and to combat absenteeism. Enhance support for STEM education and preserve and protect alternate pathways to post-secondary education and the workplace, such as career and technical education programs, dual enrollment, and early college programs.**

Rationale: A priority of the State Board of Education is to design and support high achieving middle and high schools to ensure a seamless transition that prepares students to succeed at every level, including post-secondary education and the workplace. To ensure America's competitiveness in the new global economy, the federal government must focus more on the reform efforts at the middle and high school levels. Too many students disengage from school long before graduation, especially low income and minority students, and, as a result, lack the skills necessary to succeed in today's workplace. Increased rigor, relevance and relationships need to be embedded across the continuum to keep students engaged in school, along with enhancing support for personalized learning environments that improve learning conditions and incorporate strategies for drop-out prevention as well as incentives to combat absenteeism and truancy. All students have to be provided with the opportunity to engage in a challenging curriculum that prepares them for success. Emphasis needs to be focused on early mathematics, science and literacy skills, and support for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) throughout the entire P-16 education continuum. Moreover, high schools, districts and states should be held accountable for ensuring all students graduate, based on valid and meaningful high school assessments. Given appropriate time, all states should be required to have uniform graduation rates that accurately measure on-time graduation for all students.

To assist these schools, districts and states with the middle and high school reform efforts, additional federal resources should be provided that are targeted to the schools and districts that need the most assistance. These resources should be provided in addition to, not in place of, the existing federal Title I support for primary education and other important high school programs such as career and technical education. All students should have access to a career-focused education, and proposals to eliminate or block grant federal Perkins funds could hamper states' ability to offer such programs and damage the integrity of the program. Career technical education (CTE) combines classroom instruction, hands-on laboratory work, and on-the-job training to accommodate the different learning styles of students so all may learn and succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce. Perkins helps ensure that state CTE programs are academically rigorous, up-to-date and aligned with the needs and expectations of business and industry and supports on-going professional development to CTE educators in the integration and application of rigorous and challenging academics embedded in CTE courses. Federal programs like Perkins and Tech Prep help promote seamless secondary through postsecondary course work and lifelong learning, necessary to meet the needs of the current and future workforce. Any consideration to merging the Perkins Title I (basic grant) and Title II (Tech Prep) should state that the purpose of the merger is to upgrade all CTE to Tech Prep quality standards. Additionally, high schools should be encouraged and be provided with incentives to increase dual enrollment opportunities and adopt rigorous models, such as Tech Prep and Early College, to assist students in their quest for post secondary opportunities. Incentives need to be in place to radically alter the senior year of high school to ensure a meaningful and smooth tradition to post secondary education or the workforce.

## Student Transportation

### 9. Provide assistance to states on pupil transportation services.

Rationale: Technological advances have been made in the industry and new regulations have been passed in federal regulation that incorporate newer and safer designs to school buses, as well as cleaner operating engines in school buses. While these new vehicles will provide for much cleaner exhaust emissions, the changes have resulted in an increase of approximately \$30,000 per vehicle with an expected additional \$20,000 increase by 2010. Without funding support, school districts are not able to employ the benefits of these changes by acquiring newer buses. The federal government should have a more aggressive partnership with states on subsidizing the cost of purchasing new school buses. In addition, schools are facing extreme financial pressure as a result of increasing fuel costs, resulting in their reduced ability to provide transportation service. The federal government should provide for assistance either through subsidies or tax credits to assist with the purchase of fuel for school buses.

## Supportive Learning Environments

### 10. Provide guidance, resources and assistance to states and school districts to implement programs targeted to assist students with special needs as well as incentives to implement positive school culture, family engagement, personalized and expanded student learning, Response to Intervention (RTI) processes and evidence-based practices that promote safe schools as well as student wellness and nutritional needs.

Rationale: There are individual characteristics and environmental influences that can have a tremendous impact on a students' ability to learn. It is important for school leaders to have a comprehensive learning support system to address the distinctive needs of all their students, whether academic or nonacademic, and to ensure that every child graduates and has the knowledge and skills to succeed in life. Examples of these characteristics and environmental influences include a positive school culture, family involvement, personalized and expanded student learning opportunities, evidence-based practices to promote student wellness such as support services to address any physical, psychological, social-emotional and/or nutritional needs. All students with special needs, including students with disabilities, should receive the necessary accommodations, supports and services to ensure they receive a free appropriate public education. Moreover, support should be given for districts to implement Response to Intervention (RTI), which integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system in order to maximize student achievement. Gifted children should receive differentiated instruction necessary to address their unique needs. As such, school districts should be incentivized to have acceleration policies as well as credit flexibility policies designed to broaden the scope of curricular options available along with customized and tailored learning time and conditions, to ensure that all students are engaged. The federal government should be a partner in providing resources for states to assist LEAs to implement an arrangement of supportive learning environments to address issues that interfere with a child's ability to learn and to help all students (non-proficient to accelerated) become college and career ready.