



# Public Education: The Federal Role

## In keeping with the United States Constitution:

- ★ Authority for public education rests at the state level.
- ★ Local school boards must have final responsibility and freedom in the design and implementation of programs and assessment methods.
- ★ The principle of separation of church and state, as interpreted by the United States Supreme Court, must be maintained.

## The federal role in education should be one of support, not governance.

### NCLB fundamentally changed federal involvement in public education.

- ★ Prior to the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, federal involvement in public education focused on overcoming inequities that state and local government lacked the resources to address:
- ★ Supporting construction of new schools during the baby boom,
- ★ Supplementing local revenues to mitigate the impact of poverty (ESEA).
- ★ Ensuring access to education for students with disabilities (IDEA),

## Congress must correct the problems NCLB has created.

NCLB Issues	Current ESEA/NCLB law	Steps Congress must take to correct NCLB
Standards	NCLB mandated that states establish standards and assessment programs, and dictated sanctions for failing to meet the standards.  NCLB compliance has forced districts to narrow curricula contrary to needs of 21 <sup>st</sup> Century learners.  Data collection has been confused with research and best practice.	<b>Congress must base goals on achievable, not idealized assumptions.</b> Congress should: Support only best education practices based on independent, clinical research; Eliminate the annual testing of students in grades 3-8, since its value is not supported by clinical research; Insure that a new ESEA recognizes the value of individual student differences and supports innovation to meet their needs; Conduct research based on specific questions and using best practices that include thorough data collection and analysis.
Accountability	NCLB's adequate yearly progress (AYP) standard does not adequately reflect the success of a school's program. NCLB's current process for measuring achievement will result in all schools ultimately being designated as failing by requiring 100% compliance without exception. NCLB forces low-performing schools along a continuum of changes unsupported by research.	<b>Congress must recognize that Adequate Yearly Progress determinations do not distinguish between wholesale failure and statistical anomalies.</b>  Congress should eliminate sanctioning schools since that does not improve performance.
Schools labeled as low-performing	All schools being labeled as low-performing was a planned consequence when the law was passed in 2003. In Monroe County, this unattainable goal has led to 16 of our 19 school districts having some of their schools labeled as in need of improvement, even though by all other standards, these schools are successful.	<b>Congress must replace the existing one-size-fits-all performance mandate with a new system that supports student creativity and individualism.</b>  <b>Congress must allow local leadership to develop improvement plans based on their understanding of local needs.</b>
Funding/Special grants and programs	Failure to fully fund NCLB and IDEA forced communities to use local resources to comply with the federal requirements, adding to the local tax burden. Complying with NCLB's testing requirements has forced states to redirect educational dollars away from classrooms to pay private companies for test development and administration.	<b>Congress must fund ESEA/NCLB and IDEA as intended and promised.</b> Any federal legislation not fully funded should be in the form of a recommendation, not a mandate. Funding for IDEA should be a mandatory item in the federal budget.

**MCSBA OPPOSES any funding streams  
—such as vouchers, education tax credits, and support for charter schools—  
that divert funds and distract attention from public education.**

MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

220 Idlewood Road, Rochester, NY 14618  
585/328-1972 [www.mcsba.org](http://www.mcsba.org)

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