



**NCLB/ESEA Reauthorization Platform of 2011**  
**State Board of Education**

The platform consists of recommendations for Ohio’s Congressional delegation to consider when reauthorizing the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, currently authorized as the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*. Ohio’s State Board of Education, Ohio’s Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Ohio Department of Education’s Federal Liaison will use this platform to provide input to the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S Congress to ensure Ohio’s issues are addressed during the reauthorization process.

<b>ESEA/NCLB Subjects</b>	<b>Discrete Platform Recommendations</b>
<b>Standards and Assessments</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Require states to develop rigorous standards and set high expectations of what students should know and be able to do in mathematics, English language arts and science;</i></li> <li>2. <i>Require states to have assessments aligned to the standards for the subjects listed above and test all students in grades 3-8 and in high school.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Require an assessment participation rate of at least 95% but allow for flexibility in measuring the rate and provide exemptions for extenuating circumstances.</i></li> <li>4. <i>For assessing students with diverse learning and language needs, provide states the authority to determine the appropriate accommodations to use and the applicable percentage of students using alternate and modified assessments against grade level standards for accountability purposes;</i></li> <li>5. <i>For assessing high-achieving students, provide states with the flexibility and authority to use above-grade level assessments; and</i></li> <li>6. <i>Maintain funding for states to develop and implement standards and assessments and provide incentives for states to partner on common standards and assessments.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Accountability</b>	<p><i>For federal accountability purposes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Require student achievement results to be publicly reported and disaggregated by student subgroups at least annually.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Require states to establish reasonable goals and timelines for all students reaching college and career ready benchmarks.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Require accountability determinations based off the growth of student outcomes on the performance indicators;</i></li> <li>4. <i>Require state-determined supports and interventions to all schools and local education agencies (LEAs); and</i></li> <li>5. <i>For high school accountability, require states to be measured by a uniform graduation rate that includes more than a 4 year rate, especially for students with disabilities (SWD) and dropout prevention programs.</i></li> </ol>
<b>School Improvement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Require states to identify their lowest achieving schools according to state definition;</i></li> <li>2. <i>Require states to turn around their lowest achieving schools;</i></li> <li>3. <i>Require states to hold accountable all schools and districts for any subgroups of students underperforming but allow states to determine the interventions and supports used for accountability purposes;</i></li> <li>4. <i>Maintain a stable funding mechanism for state education agencies to assist in turning around their lowest-achieving schools and districts; and</i></li> <li>5. <i>Incentivize state accountability systems to provide financial and non-financial supports for high performing schools.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Great</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Require both inputs (highly qualified teacher criteria) and outputs (effectiveness) for all</i></li> </ol>

<b>Teachers and Leaders</b>	<p><i>teachers and administrators;</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <i>Require state-determined educator evaluations to be used as a measure of effectiveness;</i></li> <li>3. <i>Require student outcomes to be a significant measure of educator evaluation frameworks;</i></li> <li>4. <i>Require states and school districts to ensure an equitable distribution of effective educators to all school buildings and use educator salaries and weighted average teacher seniority as factors in the distribution; and</i></li> <li>5. <i>Provide financial and non-financial incentives to effective educators who agree to teach in hard to staff schools.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Data Systems and Technology</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Provide formula funding to states to meet longitudinal data requirements and adhere to federal data reporting requirements; and</i></li> <li>2. <i>Support efforts to utilize technology and data systems to improve instructional practices and make sound instructional decisions.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Cohesiveness of Federal Acts and Collaboration with Education Partners</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Require a comprehensive alignment of provisions of federal education act, such as IDEA, with the ESEA to remove duplication and ensure clarity, consistency and cohesion of all federal education requirements on SEAs, LEAs, schools and other stakeholders; and</i></li> <li>2. <i>Require collaboration across the education continuum including early childhood entities, K-12 public LEAs, SEAs and institutions of higher education to improve teaching and learning.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Research, SEA Capacity and Burden Relief</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Require the USDOE to maintain an easy to access repository of best practices on key education reforms on such areas as turning around low performing schools and effective instructional practices;</i></li> <li>2. <i>Require federal agencies, prior to contacting sub-recipients (state and local education agencies) for new data requests, to determine what data is available elsewhere;</i></li> <li>3. <i>Require federal agencies, prior to establishing new data submission requirements on sub-recipients, to provide such sub-recipients with a comprehensive review and cost analysis of the reporting infrastructure needs, funding sources available to meet the requirements, timelines to develop the systems and the need for and purpose of such data;</i></li> <li>4. <i>Require federal agencies to provide sub-recipients with pre-populated information on applications and data requests; and</i></li> <li>5. <i>Require the USDOE and other federal agencies to provide states and LEAs sufficient time to implement the changes needed to comply with the reauthorized ESEA Act and subsequent regulations.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Funding Flexibility and Consolidation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Maintain key formula programs (i.e. IDEA, Title I, etc) but allow for flexibility in the use of the funds across education programs; and</i></li> <li>2. <i>Consolidate smaller federal education programs into larger formula programs.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Competition and Innovation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Provide competitive grants to states for sub-awarding to LEAs for programs such as early childhood education, literacy, STEM, school choice, supportive learning environments and customized learning opportunities.</i></li> </ol>



### NCLB/ESEA Platform of 2011

The NCLB/ESEA platform consists of discrete recommendations for broad subject areas. Ohio's specific rationale is provided below each recommendation.

**Standards and Assessments:** *States are leading the way in development and application of standards and assessments to ensure students are college and career ready. Ohio has rigorous standards and aligned assessments for several subjects. For federal purposes, the next reauthorization of ESEA should:*

- 1. Require states to develop rigorous standards and set high expectations of what students should know and be able to do in mathematics, English language arts and science;*
- 2. Require states to have assessments aligned to the standards for the subjects listed above and test all students in grades 3-8 and in high school;*
- 3. Require an assessment participation rate of 95% but allow for flexibility in measuring the rate and provide exemptions for extenuating circumstances;*
- 4. For assessing students with diverse learning and language needs, provide states the authority to determine the appropriate accommodations to use and the applicable percentage of students using alternate and modified assessments against grade level standards for accountability purposes;*
- 5. For assessing high-achieving students, provide states with the flexibility and authority to use above-grade level assessments; and*
- 6. Maintain funding for states to develop and implement standards and assessments and provide incentives for states to partner on common standards and assessments.*

**Rationale:** ESEA/NCLB requires states to develop rigorous standards and set high expectations of what students should know and be able to do in mathematics, English language arts (ELA) and science as well as 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. ESEA/NCLB also requires a 95% participation rate and provides some flexibility, for accountability purposes, in measuring the participation rate. For example, states should be able to average the participating rates over two or three years and exempt students with significant medical emergencies. The Ohio State Board of Education believes that the next reauthorization of ESEA should maintain a strong emphasis on rigorous standards and sound and reliable assessment systems to ensure that all students are on a path to be college and career ready.

In June 2010, the Ohio State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in ELA and mathematics as well as revised Ohio's content standards in science and social studies. The standards will be effective in 2014-2015 when the newly aligned assessments are implemented. Ohio has also adopted model curriculum for these standards. Moreover, Ohio is a participating member in two consortia that are developing common assessments for ELA and mathematics that will include multiple choice, extended response and computer enhanced items along with 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. In Ohio, all students are tested in grades 3-8 in math and ELA and also tested in science in grades 5 and 8. Currently, Ohio students are also required to pass the Ohio Graduation tests in these subjects to receive a high school diploma. Under HB 153, Ohio is moving to a new two-part high school graduation assessment system that will better measure college and career readiness. Specifically, it will include using a nationally recognized standardized test and end-of-course exams.

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. However, there is a significant cost to develop, administer and score the 17 federally mandated assessments and in Ohio, the State Board of Education has 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 assessments, as well as end-of-course assessments that more accurately measure

college and career readiness, are more costly to develop and score than basic multiple choice tests. 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. Regarding assessing students with diverse learning and language needs, states are in the best position to determine which students should be assessed using alternate or modified assessments. The next reauthorization of ESEA should require the assessment of all students and hold states and LEAs accountable for the achievement of all students. However, there should not be an arbitrary limit or percentage placed, by law or regulation, on the amount of students using such assessments for accountability purposes. Moreover, states should be allowed to assess high-achieving students on assessments that are above-grade level. This is necessary to ensure that high-achieving students are not artificially held back due to the restrictions under current ESEA assessment regulations which prohibit all out-of-level assessments, including access to above-grade level assessments.

**Accountability:** *All public schools, LEAs and states should be held accountable for ensuring all students are college and career ready (CCR). While the federal law should require states to commit to the fundamentals and principles of next-generation accountability systems, states should take the lead in the development of more ambitious, more valid and more meaningful accountability systems. For federal accountability purposes, the law should require:*

- 1. Student achievement results to be publicly reported and disaggregated by student subgroups at least annually;*
- 2. Establish reasonable goals and timelines for all students reaching college and career ready benchmarks;*
- 3. Accountability determinations based off the growth of student outcomes on the performance indicators;*
- 4. State-determined supports and interventions to all schools and districts; and*
- 5. For high school accountability, require states to be measured by an uniform graduation rate that includes more than a 4 year rate, especially for students with disabilities (SWD) and dropout prevention programs.*

**Rationale:** The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act's provisions regarding disaggregated reporting and transparency were fundamental to ensuring state, LEA and school accountability for the success of all students. Surpassing ten years since its enactment, states are now in a position to build upon the lessons learned from NCLB and move to a new generation of accountability that is state-driven but bound by the core principles inspired by the Act. Those core principles are listed above. Ohio has joined with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in the organization's collaboration with over 40 states on an initiative to build the next generation of accountability systems. States are committed to being held accountable for student success and want to improve upon the current systems. Under the initiative, states want to build systems to ensure deeper and more meaningful diagnostic reviews that will guide the interventions and support strategies to improve student achievement. Ohio's HB 153 (biennial budget) made several additions to Ohio's accountability system to require school districts to be ranked according to several performance measures. Furthermore, the new budget bill will require interventions and reforms for buildings in the lowest 5%, require teachers in buildings in the bottom 10% to retake licensure tests and recognize the top 10% of schools.

**School Improvement:** *The next reauthorization of ESEA should ensure that all students and subgroups of students attend schools that deliver high quality educational services. Specifically, the Act should:*

- 1. Require states to identify their lowest achieving schools according to state definition;*
- 2. Require states to turn around their lowest achieving schools;*
- 3. Require states to hold accountable all schools and LEAs for any subgroups of students underperforming but allow states to determine the interventions and supports used for accountability purposes;*
- 4. Maintain a stable funding mechanism for state education agencies to assist in turning around their lowest-achieving schools and districts; and*
- 5. Incentivize state accountability systems to provide financial and non-financial supports for high performing schools.*

**Rationale:** Currently under the ESEA, states are required to identify their lowest achieving schools and implement a statewide system of technical assistance and support for districts to turn around schools identified in improvement status. Similarly, states are required to identify and assist with turning around their lowest-achieving

schools under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 for such programs as the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), Race to the Top and the School Improvement Grant (SIG). The process of turning around chronically underperforming schools is in its infancy and research and best practices should be shared across the nation. Similarly, a stable funding source is needed to assist states in correcting the habits that attributed to a school's poor performance and sustaining efforts to ensure the school does not return to its past performance. Under Ohio's RttT program and initiatives specified in Ohio's HB 153, Ohio will develop a system to annually rank order all school districts and schools based on several performance measures. Also, under HB 153, school buildings in the lowest 5% for three consecutive years who are also under academic watch or emergency must undertake one of four specified restructuring actions and teachers in buildings which are in the bottom 10% must retake licensure tests. In addition, students attending schools in the bottom 10% for two out of the three most recent school years and are not rated effective or better on their most recent report card will qualify for the EdChoice Scholarship program. Conversely, HB 153 also provides financial and non-financial incentives for high performing schools and districts. For example, the state provides school districts and community schools that are rated excellent or excellent with distinction in the prior academic year with an additional \$17 per pupil. HB 153 also will recognize the top 10% of all public schools based on student performance and cost effectiveness. It will also allow traditional public school districts to request a school or group of schools be designated as innovation schools or zones that allow certain state laws and regulations to be waived to implement plans to raise student performance. The next ESEA reauthorization should give consideration to similar financial and non-financial incentives for high performing schools and districts.

***Great Teachers and Leaders: The next reauthorization of ESEA should:***

- 1. Require both inputs (highly qualified teacher criteria) and outputs (effectiveness) for all teachers and administrators;*
- 2. Require state-determined educator evaluations to be used as a measure of effectiveness;*
- 3. Require student outcomes to be a significant measure of educator evaluation frameworks;*
- 4. Require states and LEAs to ensure an equitable distribution of effective educators to all school buildings and use educator salaries and weighted average teacher seniority as factors in the distribution; and*
- 5. Provide financial and non-financial incentives to effective educators who agree to teach in hard to staff schools.*

**Rationale:** Currently under ESEA/NCLB, all teachers of core subjects must be highly qualified based on a required list of inputs such as teacher certification, bachelor degrees and passage of licensure exams. As a first step, it is important to have a caring, competent and knowledgeable teacher in every classroom and a qualified administrator in every school. However, it is equally important to establish a process for evaluating educators to determine their level of effectiveness in raising student achievement. An appropriate evaluation framework should include several measures, but it must include student growth as a significant factor. As part of Ohio's RttT program, school districts adhere to annual performance reviews for teachers and principals. In addition, HB 153 requires the SBE to develop a standards-based framework for evaluating teachers and principals and designate four levels of performance. ODE is also required to rank school buildings according to a performance index score, and teachers employed in the lowest 10 percent must retake (or take for the first time) licensure exams. Public schools participating in RttT and who have performance-based compensation written into their RttT scopes of work must begin paying teachers according to a performance-based schedule that includes a teacher's license level, highly qualified teacher (HQT) status and evaluation ratings. Under RttT, Ohio will implement strategies for ensuring placement of effective and highly effective teachers and principals in Ohio's schools that enroll significant numbers of high-need students.

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 (Enterprise Universities), 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 LEAs 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.

***Data Systems and Technology: The new ESEA reauthorization should:***

- 1 Provide formula funding to states to meet longitudinal data requirements and adhere to federal data reporting requirements; and*
- 2 Support efforts to utilize technology and data systems to improve instructional practices and make sound instructional decisions.*

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 students have 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 LEAs. 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 (FFATA) 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 federal requirements regardless if states or LEAs have 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 making sound instructional decisions. Educators must be provided with professional development in the use of these new data and technological advances as well as data reporting requirements.

***Cohesiveness of Federal Acts with ESEA and Collaboration with Education Partners: The next reauthorization of ESEA should:***

- 1. Require a comprehensive alignment of provisions of federal education act, such as IDEA, with the ESEA to remove duplication and ensure clarity, consistency and cohesion of all federal education requirements on SEAs, LEAs, schools and other stakeholders; and*
- 2. Require collaboration across the education continuum including early childhood entities, LEAs, SEAs and institutions of higher education to improve teaching and learning*

Rationale: A top priority for the State Board of Education is higher achievement for all students. To help achieve this goal, policy makers and education laws should view education as a continuum of lifelong learning that starts at birth and goes beyond college and career. The various federal education-related acts, as well as the programs under the various acts, must be aligned in a cohesive and systematic manner with the goal of all students being college and career ready. Given that the ESEA is the most comprehensive, it is important that the purposes and provisions of the ESEA titles, the other federal acts and the subsequent regulations are not duplicative or inconsistent but rather aligned with the same accountability expectations, common definitions, fiscal maintenance of effort and supplement not supplant language, etc. For example, there is a potential conflict of meaning with the IDEA purposes and the uniform graduation rate of ESEA regulations; different terminology used for fiscal purposes under ESEA programs; inconsistency between the definitions of IDEA's highly qualified teacher definition and ESEA's definition; and conflicting definitions and regulations regarding linking pre-K-16 data collection under the AMERICA Competes Act with the provisions of ARRA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to name a few. The alignment and cohesiveness of all the federal education-related acts as well as providing clarity on the inconsistencies between the program requirements and different acts will help ensure SEAs, LEAs, schools, students, teachers, parents and stakeholders avoid using time and resources in interrupting federal requirements and present a more complete picture of the purposes and interconnectivity of the acts and programs.

Equally important to having a cohesiveness of laws and regulations for lifelong education, it is paramount that the various factions responsible for our nation's educational success do not work against each other or in isolation. The disconnect between the key education entities cannot continue especially as our nation's students trail in academic performance to other countries and funding opportunities are likely to decline. There must be collaboration, partnering and shared accountability for the educational entities responsible for the education continuum. This collaboration is needed from the childhood education entities responsible for preparing children ready to enter kindergarten to school districts responsible for preparing students for college remediation-free, to the state education agencies responsible for rigorous standards to institutions of higher education responsible for preparing our educators for the classroom. Ohio's RttT grant is a good example of collaboration that is needed. ODE, Ohio Board of Regents as well as several education, organizations and business stakeholders partnered on several important education reforms to improve teaching and learning. The next reauthorization of ESEA should ensure that there is accountability on and a collaborative effort between all the main entities responsible for the education continuum.

**Research, SEA Capacity and Burden Relief:** *The next ESEA reauthorization should:*

1. *Require the USDOE to maintain an easy to access repository of best practices on key education reforms on such areas such as turning around low performing schools and effective instructional practices;*
2. *Require federal agencies, prior to contacting sub-recipients (state and local education agencies) for new data requests, to determine what data is available elsewhere;*
3. *Require federal agencies, prior to establishing new data submission requirements on sub-recipients, to provide such sub-recipients with a comprehensive review and cost analysis of the reporting infrastructure needs, funding sources available to meet the requirements, timelines to develop the systems and the need for and purpose of such data;*
4. *Require federal agencies to provide sub-recipients with pre-populated information on applications and data requests; and*
5. *Require the USDOE and other federal agencies to provide states and LEAs sufficient time to implement the changes needed to comply with the reauthorized ESEA Act and subsequent regulations.*

Rationale: Education has always been the primary role of states and LEAs, however, recent federal education acts and regulations have expanded the federal involvement on what has traditionally been a state and local matter. While federal program funds are appreciated, the federal involvement should be more than just allocating, monitoring and enforcing state and local compliance. True partnerships are needed at all levels, including the federal government, to reach the goal of having all students being college and career ready. As an example, the USDOE should maintain a repository of best practices on each program, such as turning around struggling schools, that is easily accessible on the USDOE website and that is shared with states, LEAs and other educational entities.

One of the most burdensome issues for states and LEAs are the new ARRA and FFATA reporting requirements. It is clear that reporting is not going to go away and is likely to be more and more onerous. Transparency is crucial and timely and accurate information on federal programs is important to ensure the public's trust of tax payer funded programs and the appropriateness, performance and accountability of the funds. However, requesting information just to have information is not productive and even more frustrating is when similar requests are made by different offices in the same federal agency especially when the information is already available. State and LEAs do not have the capacity, resources or systems to keep up with all the new data requirements that are coming from various federal agencies. The recommendations listed above would be a good first step in reducing some of the burdens and duplicative efforts.

Moreover, Congress and the federal agencies have historically placed overly aggressive timelines on states and school districts to implement new Acts, requirements and regulations with an apparent disregard to the time, costs, data system development and collective efforts that are needed to achieve these requirements. For any new requirement that is imposed on states and school districts by Congress and the Administration, a comprehensive cost analysis and check list of criteria should be provided to the states and school districts for input prior to Congressional action. In Ohio, changes to accountability and other education provisions many times must be approved by Ohio's State Board of Education and the Ohio General Assembly. Sufficient time should be afforded for these policy and law making bodies to undertake a thorough review and conduct their business.

***Funding Flexibility and Consolidation: The next reauthorization of ESEA should:***

- 1. Maintain key formula programs (i.e. IDEA, Title I, etc) but allow for flexibility in the use of funds across education programs; and*
- 2. Consolidate smaller federal education programs into larger formula programs*

**Rationale:** It is important to maintain key formula programs such as IDEA, Title I and other targeted programs which serve a high proportion of students and have proven effectiveness for increasing student achievement. States and LEAs need federal resources to ensure all students are on a path to be college and career ready but there are currently too many education programs with extremely narrow purposes, restrictive uses of funds and layers of regulations. Having more programs does not equal more academic achievement. All states and LEAs have unique programmatic and resource needs and the prescriptive nature of the current federal programs has the potential to cause duplicative and poor decisions when using the scarce and limited federal funds. States and LEAs are in the best position to understand how to balance their budgets and use the federal funds on services to increase the academic achievement of their students than having it prescribed by federal statutes or regulations. Consolidating certain funds plus allowing resources to be used across programs does not negate the requirement that states and LEAs need to meet the purposes of the programs and provide services to the populations of students for which the programs are intended. However, the consolidation and flexibility for uses of funds will allow states and districts to spend less time on paperwork and applications, to cut through financial red tape regulations and restrictions, to empower more cost effective local decisions on dwindling resources to meet the needs of their students and schools and to focus their time and effort more on teaching and learning.

***Competition and Innovation: The next reauthorization of ESEA should:***

- 1. Provide competitive grants to states for sub-awarding to LEAs on programs such as early childhood education, literacy, STEM, school choice, supportive learning environments and customized learning opportunities.*

**Rationale:** The new ESEA should provide competitive grants to the states to sub-award to LEAs. Ohio is a leader in education reform and has been successful in applying for several competitive grants such as RTTT, the Teacher Incentive Fund and others. Ohio intends to apply for the new Race to the Top Early Childhood Learning Challenge grant to improve early childhood education opportunities. A key priority for Ohio is to adequately prepare children to enter kindergarten ready for learn and the reauthorization of ESEA should ensure that competitive funding be available for this program. Similarly, Ohio supports competitive funding to help states design and support high achieving middle and high schools with programs to increase dual enrollment opportunities, adopt rigorous curricula models, establish early college high schools, incorporate drop-out prevention strategies, combat absenteeism and truancy, and radically alter the senior year to ensure a meaningful and smooth transition to postsecondary education and the workforce. Given that literacy is the central foundation of teaching and learning, Ohio also believes the reauthorization of ESEA should strengthen its investment in literacy achievement across the pre-K-16 continuum by offering competitive opportunities for proven and effective literacy programs such as the Striving Readers program. Moreover, there is a need to incentivize states to improve the teaching and learning in subjects critical to a global economy and the U.S.'s security needs such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Ohio's Race to the Top application and scope of work provides an emphasis in expanding upon the STEM fields.

The ESEA reauthorization should continue to provide funding, both at a formula and competitive level, to states to expand school choice options for students and parents. From charters (community schools) to scholarships such as EdChoice, Ohio is a leader and has a long history of offering choice programs. Federal incentives should be available to expand opportunities for students to attend high quality and high performing nontraditional school settings. Ohio supports competitive funding for supportive learning environments and customized learning opportunities. Programs such as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grants help states and LEAs address the distinct needs of their students, whether academic or nonacademic. Issues such as having a positive school culture, family involvement, personalized and expanded learning opportunities and evidence-based practices to promote student wellness. Similarly, gifted children should receive differentiated instruction necessary to address their unique needs and incentives should be offered for districts to have acceleration policies and credit flexibility policies designed to

broaden the scope of curricular options available and customized and tailored learning time to ensure all students are engaged. Competitive programs such as these will help states and LEAs initiate reforms to improve educational outcomes of all students. Ohio is a leader in these areas and will apply for these programs if given the opportunity.