

## **NEWS RELEASE**

EMBARGOED: Not for release before 12:01 a.m. EDT, Feb. 18, 2010

Contact: Chloe Louvouezo at 202-955-9450 ext. 320 or clouvouezo@communicationworks.com

## Eliminate Federal "Adequate Yearly Progress" Requirements and Revamp Federal Role, Center on Education Policy Urges Policymakers

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Feb. 18, 2010—The upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act should eliminate federal requirements for "adequate yearly progress," (AYP) according to the Center on Education Policy (CEP), an independent nonprofit group that has studied the No Child Left Behind Act since 2002. Instead, federal policies should encourage states to adopt rigorous, common standards and assessments for tracking student achievement but allow more flexible, research-based approaches for identifying and supporting low-performing schools, CEP suggests.

CEP's proposals to scrap AYP, along with the federal deadline for bringing all students to proficiency by 2014, echo those from the Obama Administration and a growing chorus of critics of NCLB. In a list of recommendations for ESEA reauthorization, CEP also proposes allowing states that adopt the common standards being promoted by the nation's governors and common, high-quality assessments to pilot a variety of systems for measuring improvements in student achievement and other outcomes and gauging instructional quality. Under CEP's plan, states could also experiment with different types of support, interventions, and monitoring for low-performing schools instead of applying the penalties in current federal law. The recommendations further encourage all states to assess achievement in core subjects in addition to reading and math.

"We applaud the Obama Administration for proposing to eliminate AYP, but we also urge the Administration and Congress to look at our comprehensive set of specific recommendations to refine, repeal, and add other key elements to ESEA, such as research-based interventions for struggling schools," said Jack Jennings, CEP's president and CEO.

CEP's recommendations are based on a two-year review of current and past federal policies and a wide range of research, including its own comprehensive studies of NCLB and student achievement in all 50 states. In developing the recommendations, CEP also brought to bear its long-term experience with federal policies and consulted with numerous experts of varying backgrounds.

"We're proposing more rigorous and coherent standards and assessments on the front end in exchange for less punitive policies on the back end," said Jennings.

CEP recommends several additional changes to ESEA, such as creating an "opportunity-to-learn" general aid fund that is contingent on states encouraging a more equitable distribution of state and local education dollars, and requiring states to work with school districts to develop incentives for more experienced teachers to teach in low-income schools. The CEP proposals would also place greater priority on high school reform in current federal programs and establish coherent partnerships among K-12 schools, early childhood education, and out-of-school learning supports.

The full list of ten recommendations is shown below. These recommendations, along with five principles for revamping the federal role in K-12 education, are discussed in the new paper, *Better Federal Policies Leading to Better Schools*.

###

Based in Washington, D.C. and founded in January 1995 by Jack Jennings, the Center on Education Policy is a national, independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. The Center does not represent any special interests. Instead the Center helps citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create conditions that will lead to better public schools.

## Recommendations for Reauthorizing ESEA

- Standards-based reform. Keep the basic elements of standards-based reform but change or eliminate aspects that are not working.
- **2. Standards.** Encourage and support the state movement already underway to adopt rigorous common standards in core subjects.
- 3. Assessments. Encourage collaborative state efforts to develop high-quality tests aligned to the common core standards and individual state efforts to assess achievement in areas beyond reading and math.
- 4. Systems for continuous improvement. Allow states that adopt the common core standards and assessments to move away from the federal requirements for adequate yearly progress and experiment with different systems for determining improvement and identifying low-performing schools.
- **5. Support to low-performing schools.** Let states, districts, and schools experiment with promising approaches to providing support and determining interventions for low-performing schools.
- **6. Resource equity.** Ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn by encouraging an equitable distribution of state and local resources for education.
- 7. High school reform. Place higher priority on improving low-performing high schools by expanding funding for high school reform in current programs and tailoring requirements to address the unique needs of high schools.
- 8. Students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). Encourage appropriate accountability and better instruction for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- **9. Teacher quality.** Support research and state experimentation on what makes a teacher effective and how to measure this, and require states to work with school districts to address disparities in the distribution of experienced teachers.
- **10. Complementary learning.** Establish a coherent partnership among K-12 education, early childhood education, and out-of-school learning.