



Leaders' Guide for the Education Study Consensus

LWVUS Education Study Chairs

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY PROCESS

Studies are part of League Program and, in League parlance, League Program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy as well as the procedure for adopting these programs. Program is such an integral part of the League that, according to *League Basics*, the League publication formerly titled *In League*, "Program is the League's reason for being."

Program has three parts: 1) selection of an issue, 2) study of that issue, consensus and formulating a position, and 3) use of that position to influence public policy. All LWVUS positions are included in the League publication, *Impact on Issues, 2010-2012: A Guide to Public Policy Positions*.

This guide briefly covers how we got here, and, secondly, the perspective of participating in a national study at the local level. The purpose of a study, at any level, is to educate members so that they can be informed participants in consensus and provide the necessary data for formulating the ultimate position.

Additional information about conducting a national study is on the LWVUS website with a power point entitled, "The ABCs of a National Study."

Selection of an issue begins with the Program Planning each League is asked to do. This is where the local Leagues identify issues that deserve a study at the national level or updates of existing positions. These are issues where the LWVUS has no position, and, therefore, cannot act. Remember, Leagues cannot take action without a position.

In Program Planning before the 2010 Convention, the largest number of Leagues expressed an interest in the "Federal Role in Public Education." This interest was duly noted; the LWVUS Program Planning Committee recommended and the LWVUS Board approved this Education Study at the 2010 Convention, where it was adopted. Step one completed.

Study and consensus begins right after Convention when the LWVUS Board appoints a study committee chair, sets up the process for selecting the committee, and approves the scope and timeline for the study. This sets the parameters for the study committee's work. The scope is distributed to the local Leagues to give general direction to their preliminary work.

The study committee begins its work of refining the areas to be studied, researching and writing background information about the different areas contained in the scope, and preparing consensus questions and other materials to help direct local League discussion to consensus. All of these materials are/will be posted at www.lwv.org.

As each local League reports its consensus (or lack thereof) the reports are consolidated, and, based on this information, the committee formulates the position which, when approved by the Board, can be used for action.

WHAT IS A CONSENSUS?

It is easier to say what consensus is not, than what it is. Consensus is not a vote; rather, consensus is mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion. During discussion, everyone has an opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Consensus questions, created by the appropriate study committee and approved by the Board, provide

structure for the meeting. Members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent that consensus has/has not been reached on each question. The study committee analyzes the consensus responses and, using this information, creates a position statement.

Scope: The committee's first task is to create a scope for the study. A scope describes the limits of the study, describes areas to explore and often includes focus areas. The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope. The scope of this public education study was approved by the LWVUS Board and distributed to local Leagues to give them direction during the study process.

Background materials: After establishing the scope, committee members research and write about various issues included in the scope, compile a list of resources, consolidate information, develop a glossary and create the consensus questions. The materials, resources and power points are posted at www.lwv.org.

When the LWVUS Board of Directors approves the position for "the role of the federal government in public education," it immediately becomes the League's position and is the basis for action on the issue. This type of member involvement in the consensus process tends to ensure member commitment to the resulting positions. In addition, members have the opportunity at each Convention to decide whether or not to re-adopt these positions or update them.

TIMELINE FOR THE STUDY

June 2010: The "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" proposed and passed at the biennial League of Women Voters Convention in Atlanta, GA

October 2010: The committee and scope approved by the LWVUS Board of Directors

November 2010 to April 2011: Study materials, leaders' guide, consensus questions, resources and timeline under development

April 2011: Consensus questions approved by the LWVUS Board of Directors

May through November 2011: Local Leagues study the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" and come to consensus

November 30: Consensus reports due to LWVUS website at www.lwv.org

December 2011 to February 2012: Committee analyzes the data from consensus and writes the position paper for the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education"

March 2012: LWVUS Board of Directors reviews the consensus results for comment and approval of the position for the "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education"

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study, as adopted by the LWVUS Board, states:

The Education Study scope is broad and includes the following areas under the role of the federal government in public education (preK through grade 12): the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments which are required for many federal grant programs but are national, not federal. The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope.

Although the study focuses on the federal government, the original intent of the study included the Common Core Standards. These were written and funded by the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Historically we have always had national standards written by the teaching organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Math and the National Council of Teachers of English. However, the discussion here will focus upon how these new standards called Common Core State Standards will be used by the federal government.

LOCAL BOARD INFORMATION

There are several roles for the local League board during the study process. The board appoints a study chair and/or committee to help educate membership and the community about the study issues. It is best to have a committee to share the work and introduce less experienced members to the League process on a short-term project, but this is not always possible. Ideally, some of these members have basic knowledge of the issues and some study experience, but some may just have an interest in learning more about the subject.

With the support of the board, the committee may schedule and facilitate community meetings about issues in the study, bring in outside speakers (local educators or administrators, and faculty from the education department of a nearby college would be easy choices for this study). These meetings may be held any time in the process after the scope is determined and often include outreach to other members of the community interested in the topics to be discussed.

Then, after the consensus meeting(s) are finished and the committee prepares the consensus report, it is brought to the local board for approval before it is submitted to the national study committee. Be sure in planning consensus meetings to allow time for this board approval before the reporting date is due.

GUIDE FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

The study guide is intended as a resource for local League study committees, to help presenters and facilitators knowledgeably answer questions that may arise during discussion, in a framework focused on reaching consensus. There is more detailed information included than you will want to present.

There are more questions about the federal role in public education than we can address in the limited time available for consensus. The Study Committee has focused the study materials on the issues that fall within the scope of the study as defined in our charge from the LWVUS Board.

A prime responsibility of the facilitator and the study committee will be to keep the discussion focused on the consensus questions and avoid distracting asides, however fascinating they may be.

Because public education is a large and complicated subject and the federal role is not clearly defined, your presentation should be carefully planned. If you are holding more than one meeting, it is suggested that you present and take consensus on each section at the same meeting. If it is your custom to present a workshop followed by consensus in one day-long event, you may choose to either do part of the background and take consensus in the morning and the other half in the afternoon, or do all of the background in the morning and consensus after lunch.

There are no questions about the history of the federal role in public education, but it needs to be addressed. Devote brief time to it at the start of any meeting and include at least the history timeline. The balance of the meeting(s) should be divided between the two groups of questions: (Common Core Standards and Equity and Funding). If you are doing it all in one meeting, time-wise you should probably give a bit more time to funding and equity: maybe a 40-60 balance. If you are doing more than one consensus meeting, one for standards and assessments, one for funding and equity, try to include the three general questions, the basic philosophical questions, in both meetings.

Trying to put all of the background and content in one meeting and consensus in another is tempting but can lead to several problems:

- Some members will attend one meeting and not the other
- Those who attend the first meeting and not the second will receive good information but will not be able to participate in the consensus
- Those who attend only the second meeting will not have the depth of background to follow the discussion; that can lead to repetition and frustrate those who have attended both.

GETTING TO CONSENSUS

Almost everyone is an expert on public education because of their experiences, either personal (they attended school) or through their children, grandchildren or friends. Each will have interesting stories to share. Many showing interest in this topic are teachers, retired teachers, current and former school board members, administrators, and other education activists. While their insights are valuable, it is the responsibility of the facilitator(s) to keep the group focused on

the consensus questions. The following are suggestions that have been found helpful in reaching this goal.

Before the consensus meeting, committee members should:

- Review the study materials on the LWVUS website
- Review the Power Point slides
- Make sure that the consensus questions have been reviewed and save time at the end to make sure your information is sent to your local board for review and completing the online Consensus form at www.lwv.org

Understand the ingredients of a successful meeting

- There is a common focus on content
- There is a common focus on process
- The discussion leader or facilitator maintains an open and balanced conversational flow
- Someone is aware of protecting individuals from personal attack
- Everyone's role and responsibility are clearly defined and agreed upon

In other words, everyone on the committee is on the same page.

Assign specific tasks to committee members. Decide:

- how much time to allot to each section of the discussion,
- who will present each part,
- who will facilitate the consensus part of the meeting if different from the presenters,
- who will be the recorder, and
- who will make sure the results of your consensus get to your LWV board for approval and for completing the online form at www.lwv.org

Decide how to present the study material

Break the presentation into manageable chunks that lay people can understand. Be careful to explain educational jargon and acronyms. A variety of voices and styles help people stay focused. Be prepared to answer questions for clarification along the way. The material is complicated in some areas and you will want to check for understanding.

Schedule a practice session prior to the presentation/consensus meeting

Schedule a practice session for discussion leaders, recorders and facilitators. It is helpful to have an experienced League member present to help with timing and balance between background and discussion. The recorder should come away with what needs to be recorded and what to do with questions and opinions about topics not covered by the consensus questions. (Suggestion: Another sheet of chart paper labeled as "parking lot" where these may be noted for discussion at a later time.) Many Leagues with multiple units will hold training ahead of time for the unit leaders. This is very important so that the unit leaders understand the scope, are prepared for the discussion and understand the reporting procedures.

Make sure committee members are familiar with any education positions your state or local League may have adopted, also the education portion of the LWVUS Equality of Opportunity position. Consult *Impact on Issues, 2010-2012: A Guide to Public Policy Positions*.

It is important to be aware of any place where there might be a conflict and be prepared to discuss it. Copies of the local, state and national positions should be available for reference at the meetings.

TIPS FOR CONSENSUS MEETING

Explain the ground rules and meeting structure

The facilitator should explain the meeting ground rules at the beginning—how the meeting will be structured, how much time will be devoted to what. The materials are divided into three sections: History, Equity and Funding (includes a discussion of special populations and early childhood education), and Common Core Standards and Assessment.

Review the difference between voting and consensus

Explain the difference between a majority vote and coming to consensus as the sense of the meeting. A senior League member or board member can help the facilitator explain. The time devoted to this will depend on the experience of the members participating.

The role of the discussion leader/facilitator is to make sure that:

- everyone has a copy of the agenda/program and knows what to expect,
- meeting format and ground rules are understood up front,
- members understand they have a role in the meeting/consensus, and
- everyone stays on track until the day's goal is met.

Define the recorder's role

The recorder should be at the front of the room in clear view of the members participating. It is best to record on large easel paper that can be viewed by everyone. After each question check back with the participants to make sure the consensus of the room is captured before you move on. After each section, make notes to include in the comments section. Remember, this is limited to 200 words or less in each box. Comments are optional, not required

Review state and local positions

Facilitators and presenters should be knowledgeable of any state and local educational positions and present any possible conflicts up front.

Ask the group's help in keeping on topic

People will usually cooperate if they understand why you must ask them to keep their comments focused. A "Parking Lot" so they do not feel ignored is often helpful. Explaining up front encourages positive peer pressure.

Make sure everyone understands the materials presented

Encourage people to ask questions when they do not understand something. This material is often complicated and the language may be unfamiliar. Including the glossary in the handouts as a reminder of what terms mean may be helpful. Asking for raised hands can help assure everyone is included.

How to handle “breaking news”

Many of the issues we are discussing are currently in the news, both nationally and locally. These may distract from the work of the consensus meeting(s). Events may happen the morning of your meeting. If you are aware of them, present them up front before starting the discussion. Explain that these events, however interesting, are not a part of the consensus process. Acknowledge the concerns and move them to the “parking lot” for discussion at another time. This is the role of the local study committee.

If you have a “talkative group”

You know your League. If they like to talk, have trouble keeping focused or have a lot of opinions, it may be useful to have a timed agenda and a time-keeper to assist the facilitator.

The importance of the end of the meeting review

It is important to allow ten or fifteen minutes at the end of the meeting for the recorder to review the notes and reaffirm the sense of the meeting. This is reassuring to everyone that his/her thoughts have been heard.

AFTER THE MEETING

Schedule a committee debriefing.

Schedule a meeting of your committee to debrief as soon as possible after the consensus meeting so discussion is still fresh in their minds. Early access to the recorder’s notes by email is helpful. **Do not** file the report electronically yet. Prepare your report using the WORD version that is included in this kit and present it to your local League board for approval. If you have had more than one meeting or come to consensus in multiple unit meetings, it will be the job of the committee to consolidate these reports and make one report for your board. After that approval, one delegated person will go to the website and file the online report. Full instructions will be provided when you log into the response form, and only one report per League will be accepted.

DISCUSSION POINTS KEYED TO CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

The goal of the consensus meeting(s) is to come to agreement on your League's answers to the consensus questions. The following discussion guide has been compiled to help focus your discussion. It is presented in a format parallel to the consensus questions for convenience of reference. These comments and questions will enable you to "jump start" a discussion that is lagging, veered off topic or failed to start. This is **not** a script that must be followed, but ideas and aids to help you cover the material in a limited amount of time.

We suggest you either do your consensus meeting in one session (maybe background in the morning, a break for lunch and discussion, then consensus in the afternoon) or two shorter meetings. The first two sets of questions (under History and Common Core Standards) can be covered in one meeting, the last set (Equity and Funding) in another. It is important to do background and consensus on each part at the same session so all those coming to consensus have access to the discussion during the background presentation.

Do not use the computer form to record your session. Use the WORD form that has been provided. The online form should be completed only after your board has approved the consensus.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

General Questions

These General Questions apply to the overall focus of the study. We think you will find it interesting to ask these questions briefly at the beginning of your consensus meeting(s), record the answers, and then go back to them again at the end of the session. See if opinions have changed during the discussion. While they may seem simple, they are important to developing strong positions. All page numbers are from the PDF versions of the background papers.

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
Much too small too small about right too large much too large
2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
 - a. To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.
 - b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - d. To monitor state efforts for funding
 - e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.

This looks like an easy question but will be very important in forming a strong position for future action.

3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Common Core Standards

Common Core Standards and the related assessments are an important part of the study with one section devoted just to this. Make sure members clearly understand that these are national standards, developed by the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and are not a federal government mandate, even though acceptance of the standards was a requirement to qualify for "Race to the Top" funding. Remember this is a national study and the question is how these should relate to national programs. This is not the place for a discussion of "our state math standards are better than these," however tempting it may be. Background on pages 3 and 4 of the "Common Core Standards and Assessments" research paper will help with understanding.

Educational standards define the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their educational career.

Curriculum is an educational plan that spells out which goals and objectives will be achieved, how to achieve those goals and what topics should be covered as well as the methods and materials to be used for learning and evaluation.

There is a logical progression from standards to assessments based on these standards to curriculum aligned with the standards and tests. How much of a role do we think the federal government should have in this continuum? (see pdf page 3 of Common Core Standards paper)

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)
- Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
 - All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
 - All programs receiving federal funding from any source
 - All of the above
 - None of the above

This is a key follow-up question to the previous one. If your group rejects the national standards, then the answer will be easy. If they accept the common core standards, then this will be an important discussion. Pages 7-9 of the "Common Core Standards" paper discuss the assessments that are being developed. The first question is simply – are these assessments needed, and the second question is how should they be utilized? Here you may want to discuss the comparisons of states that are published by different organizations each year and how they are usually based on different tests in different states. There is also room for discussion of the costs of these tests and whether those costs should be fully covered if mandated. Be sure to also consider the costs of tests originated by the state and local districts. (see pdf pages 1-6 Common Core Standards)

5. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common cores standards?

Yes

No

If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)

- a. Voluntary
- b. Mandated
- c. Mandated, if fully funded

If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)

- a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
- b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.
- c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

A potentially logical next step could be to develop a national curriculum that would meet the standards and be aligned with the assessment tools. Carefully consider this in light of answers to the two previous questions and strive for a consistent answer. What should the federal role be? Is this different from a national role that is not mandated? (see pdf page 11 Common Core Standards and Glossary)

6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)

- a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
- b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
- c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
- d. No national curriculum.

This question concerns the current two consortia who have won \$3.5 million to develop assessments that follow the Common Core State Standards by 2014. This is where streams get mixed, as they have received a **federal** grant to prepare assessments based on **national** standards. What should be the goal(s) of these groups? (see pdf page 7 Common Core Standards)

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)
 - a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
 - b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
 - c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
 - d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
 - e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.

This question focuses upon the purpose of a national assessment program. The purpose of any mandated, nationally normed (see Glossary) test has been much debated. This goes to the much debated parts of NCLB, to value-added statistical models for evaluation of teachers, merit pay and similar topics often in the news. Be prepared here for discussion that may be highly charged. But it is important to know if we have consensus on these items. (pdf pages 8-11 Common Core Standards)

8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)
 - a. Data should be “norm referenced” (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
 - b. Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
 - c. Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.
9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):
 - a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
 - b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
 - c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
 - d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
 - e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

If you are taking consensus in two sessions this would be the end of session one. This is the time to go back and review the first question with this group and to check that the recorded consensus is that agreed upon by your members.

Funding and Equity

This part of the study deals more with the traditional federal involvement in public education and how it has evolved. You might want to briefly review the history paper and Timetable posted on the lww.org website. Allow time to fully discuss these questions: whether members think federal funds should be distributed mostly based on need, population and enrollment or they should be given only to those who best qualify for competitive grants. How should mandates and funding be related, or should they? What should the relationship be? One example of a mandate attached to funding was the requirement to lift the cap on the number of charter schools to qualify for Race to the Top funding. This is an area that will require time. (pdf pages 7-8 Equity and funding)

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)
- Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
 - A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
 - Competitive grants only
 - No federal funding

Mandates are not always a bad thing. Integration was a mandate, so was Title IX (gender equity). Most school administrators would emphasize the need for federal mandates to be federally funded. Some are; some, like Head Start, are only expected to do what the funding allows. Others, such as Special Education, have never been fully funded. Think carefully about this one. What is the “common good”? (see pdf pages 3-5 Equity and Funding)

11. If the federal government’s role is the concern of the “common good” then: (choose one)
- Mandates only should be sanctioned.
 - Mandates and funding should both be provided.
 - Funding should be provided through grants only.
 - A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
 - No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

Equity is a word that has had an evolving definition (see Glossary). It is not the same as equal funding as there is a growing awareness that some students are more expensive to educate than others. Others talk about “adequacy,” “equity of opportunity” and “opportunity to learn” – ideas that deal with access to what is deemed necessary in order to have an equal opportunity, opportunities that are often denied children of poverty. While not all of these may be considered the responsibility of the local educational system, is it a federal responsibility to tackle them? Is it a local responsibility? Should these non-academic issues be considered? This is more fully discussed early in the “Equity and Funding” paper. (see pdf pages 3-4 and 8-10 Equity and Funding)

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)
- a. high quality teaching/learning
 - b. adequate and current learning materials
 - c. clean and well maintained physical facilities
 - d. food and health care
 - e. safe and secure neighborhoods
 - f. secure housing

Traditionally all federal funding has been aimed at special groups, those that were deemed underserved by Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) authorizers. These may be minorities – those with disabilities, living in poverty, not speaking English as a primary language or with other identifying characteristics. Each population and its justification are discussed in the paper on special populations. Many of these numbers are growing nationwide, and funding does not always keep up with the growth. The question is, should this funding still be targeted to individual groups? Or should it be either block granted, where it can be used for multiple purposes, and/or blended into the general fund? (see pdf pages 1-4 Equity and Funding and all pages of Special Populations on Equity and Funding)

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered “categorical” rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Much current educational research emphasizes the role of early childhood education in giving all children an even start when entering kindergarten. The question here is the role of the federal government: Should it play a role in extending this to all children? (see pdf pages 1-5 Early Childhood)

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g.Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

a. Strongly Agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly Disagree

b. This funding should be extended to :

All children only those with special needs special needs first

GLOSSARY

Adequacy of funding: This is an attempt to define the cost of an education, which would use research and identified methods to enable a high percentage of students to reach or exceed mandated performance levels.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): This is a statewide accountability system, negotiated separately by every state with the U.S. Department of Education and mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Assessments (Formative vs. Summative):

***Summative Assessments** are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know in order to make a decision or determine a grade. Many associate summative assessments only with standardized tests such as state assessments, but they are also used as an important part of district and classroom programs.*

***Formative Assessments** are part of the instructional process. When incorporated into classroom practice, they provide the information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening. In this sense, formative assessments inform both teachers and students about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made. These adjustments help to ensure students achieve targeted standards-based learning goals within a set time frame.*

Common Core Standards (CCS): The Common Core Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). As such, the initiative is a national one and neither developed nor funded by the federal government.

Compensatory education: Compensatory education is a legal term used to describe future educational services which courts award to a special needs student under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) when a school district has failed to provide a free and appropriate public education that meets their needs.

Cut scores: The cut score on a test (or on multiple tests) is the score that separates test takers into various categories, such as a passing score and a failing score, or a selected score and a rejected score. For example, the cut score on most state driving exams is 70%, meaning that anything below that score is a failing grade, and anything above that score is a passing grade.

de facto: in effect; for all intents and purposes

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or No Child Left Behind (NCLB): The Act is an extensive statute that funds primary and secondary education, while explicitly forbidding the establishment of a national curriculum. It also emphasizes equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability. In addition, the bill aims to shorten the achievement gaps between students by providing each child with fair and equal opportunities to achieve an

exceptional education. As mandated in the Act, the funds are authorized for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs and parental involvement promotion. The Act was originally authorized through 1970; however, the government has reauthorized the Act periodically since its enactment. The current reauthorization of ESEA is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, named and proposed by President George W. Bush. The ESEA also allows military recruiters access to 11th and 12th grade students' names, addresses and telephone listings when requested.

Equity of funding: An attempt to equalize educational opportunities by sharing resources with equal access across schools.

Equity vs. Equality: Equity connotes fairness, rather than equal funding because there is a growing awareness that some students are more expensive to educate than others. Some educators talk about “equity of opportunity” and “opportunity to learn,” ideas that deal with access to what is deemed necessary to have an equal opportunity, opportunities that are often denied children of poverty.

English Language Learner (ELL) has replaced the term ESL English as Second Language learner. These are students who do not have English as their first language.

Federal vs. National Initiatives refers to both mandates and funding. A national program is one that was developed by a national organization. For example the Common Core Standards were developed by an initiative of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and neither was required, promoted or funded by the federal government. Federal refers to those programs that are funded and/or mandated by the federal government. For this study, the Common Core Standards are a national initiative, but the federal government has required it for the grant program, “Race to the Top.” There have long been national standards developed by professional organizations like the National Council of Teacher of Math, English, etc. But to date, there have not been federal standards.

Formula Grant Programs are noncompetitive awards based on a predetermined formula. These programs are sometimes referred to as state-administered programs.

Funding (Categorical vs. General): Categorical funding refers to the funding under the Elementary and Secondary Act which is awarded to districts with specified populations of high needs learners, for example Native Americans, special needs, poverty, etc. General funding is awarded for all children regardless of economic or social category.

GDP: Gross Domestic Product is the market value of all goods and services produced in a country over a period of time.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from birth to age 18 or 21 in cases that involve 13 specified categories of disability. The current law is the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 commonly referred to as IDEA.

Norm-referenced Tests vs. Criterion-referenced Tests: Norm-referenced tests are those that are interpreted by rank ordering children so that on a particular test children are compared to their

peers, typically with percentile scores. Criterion-referenced tests are interpreted by comparing student scores to certain objectives or criteria.

Peer-reviewed journal is an academic journal edited by acknowledged experts in the broad field. When an article is submitted, an editor sends it to people who are specialists researching the topic addressed in the paper. Based on their feedback, the editor tells the prospective author whether the article is accepted for publication. Some articles are returned for revisions and may be resubmitted to the approval process.

Pedagogical: referring to the process of teaching

Race to the Top: Race to the Top, abbreviated R2T, RTTT or RTT, is a \$4.35 billion U.S. Department of Education program designed to spur reforms in state and local district K-12 education. It is funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was announced by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on July 24, 2009.

Racial Achievement Gap: This terminology describes differences in educational performance between groups of students compared by race or ethnicity.

Standards and Curriculum:

Content standards establish the goals of learning whereas curriculum is the “how” to implement the standards or goals with specific materials and instruction to correspond to the standards. The Common Core Standards initiative is a U.S. education initiative that seeks to bring diverse state curricula into alignment with each other by following the principles of standards-based education reform. The initiative, sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), was announced on June 1, 2009. The initiative's stated purpose is to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.

Performance standards determine how much of the content standards a student must know in order to reach a particular level, such as “proficient.”

Curriculum is an educational plan that spells out which goals and objectives will be achieved, how to achieve those goals and what topics should be covered as well as the methods and materials to be used for learning and evaluation. Neither the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act nor President Obama’s Blueprint supports federal development of curriculum.

COMMON ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACT: American College Test

AERA: American Educational Research Association

APA: American Psychological Association

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

Blueprint: *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*

BIA: Bureau of Indian Affairs

BIE: Bureau of Indian Education

CCR: College and Career Readiness

CCSI: Common Core Standards Initiative

CCSSO: Council of Chief State School Officers

CSSRS: Center for Study of Small Rural Schools

ELA: English Language Arts

ELL: English Language Learners

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Education

HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997

IDEIA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

IEP: Individualized Education Program

K-12: Kindergarten through Grade 12

LEA: Local Education Agency

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment

NAEP: National Assessment of Education Progress

NCES: National Center for Education Statistics

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

NCME: National Council on Measurement in Education

NGA: National Governor's Association

OME: Office of Migratory Education

PARCC: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

RTTT: Race to the Top

SBAC: SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

SEA: State Education Agencies

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

U.S.C: United States Code

USDE: United States Department of Education