

U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS PRIORITIES FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

WHEREAS, in many U.S. cities, fewer than two-thirds of the ninth graders go on to earn a high school diploma, and less than a quarter ultimately earn a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, on recent international tests, American 15-year olds scored 24th out of 29 developed nations in math and 17th in science; and

WHEREAS, a generation ago the U.S. ranked first in the world in the rate of college completion for 25- to 34-year olds, but the nation is falling behind and now ranks 10th; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Mayors has played a longstanding national leadership role in improving the quality of education, improving student academic excellence, and closing the achievement gap; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, the Conference endorsed the President's comprehensive plan for public education, with a focus on (1) early childhood education, (2) reform, innovation, and investment in elementary and secondary education, and (3) restoring America's leadership in higher education; and

WHEREAS, there is a pressing need to reform No Child Left Behind, the most recent version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and

WHEREAS, the President released his Blueprint for Reform of the Act in March 2010, emphasizing three major goals for reauthorization: (1) raise standards, (2) reward excellence and student academic growth, and (3) increase local control and flexibility while maintaining focus on equity and closing achievement gaps; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan has worked closely with the Conference and individual mayors in diverse cities across the nation to promote a joint strategy for advancing student success and closing the achievement gap, and the President's Blueprint for Reform is tightly aligned with adopted Conference policies,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors endorses the President's Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors supports the following ESEA reauthorization policy priorities:

- Setting a national goal that every student should graduate from high school ready for college and a career, regardless of income, race, ethnic or language background, or disability status.
- Developing and using a new generation of assessments aligned with higher standards, capturing higher-order skills and deeper learning, to provide more accurate measures of student growth and better inform classroom instruction.

- Ensuring a more complete, well-rounded education for students to contribute in our democracy and thrive in a global economy, from literacy, mathematics, science, and technology to history, civics, foreign languages, the arts, and other subjects.
- Supporting ambitious efforts to recruit, place, reward, retain, and promote effective teachers and principals, and to enhance the profession of teaching by recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding excellence.
- Improving access to effective teachers and principals for students in high-poverty, high-minority urban schools.
- Investing in more effective pathways and practices for preparing, placing, and supporting beginning teachers and principals, especially in high need schools.
- Taking steps to ensure equity, including comparability in resources between high- and low-poverty schools.
- Continuing the incentives for systemic reforms first promulgated in Race to the Top, and allowing local school districts to take on bold, comprehensive reforms even in the absence of an effective state application.
- Supporting the expansion of high-performing public charter schools and other autonomous or mayorally-chartered public schools.
- Increasing access to a challenging high school curriculum, including college-level, dual-credit, and other accelerated courses.
- Streamlining funding streams to promote student success and innovation, and to provide greater flexibility to successful local schools.
- Promoting schools as centers of their communities and investing in models that keep students safe, supported, and healthy both in and out of school.