



# Improve teacher and principal effectiveness

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## Introduction

We must ensure that all students have the strong teachers that they need and deserve if our nation is to remain a global economic leader. Effective teachers are critical to raising achievement and closing longstanding gaps between student sub-groups such as low-income students and students of color. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, offers an important opportunity to improve teacher and principal effectiveness. To make greater use of ESEA as a lever for reform, Congress should hold the line on formula funding while increasing competitive funding programs that support promising reforms. We also believe that federal funding should be used more strategically and ensure that all students have access to strong teachers.

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## Recommendation #1

Authorize a Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund that supports innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers and principals

A new Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund, or TLIF, would award grants to states and school districts to support innovative strategies that attract and support effective teachers and principals in high-need schools. States or districts could use the funds to develop more aggressive recruitment strategies, strengthen tenure processes, and institute career ladders for teachers, among other reforms. Under TLIF, states or districts should be required to demonstrate that the activities are increasing educator effectiveness. Given the program's importance, TLIF should be made the new Part A of Title II of ESEA. State Teacher Quality Grants would become Part B.

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## Recommendation #2

Create a Teacher and Leader Pathways program that focuses on preparing effective educators for high-needs schools

A Teacher and Leader Pathways program would consolidate a number of existing recruitment and preparation programs into a larger program focused on preparing educators for high-needs schools. The program would focus on teacher and principal preparation and provide competitive grants to districts as well as non-profit and university partners. Programs would be designed to meet the specific needs of districts. And the programs must either have a record of preparing effective educators or commit to tracking and measuring the effectiveness of graduates in the classroom.

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## Recommendation #3

Require states to develop teacher and principal evaluation systems and ensure the equitable distribution of strong teachers

Congress should require that states create new evaluation frameworks for both teachers and principals. For teachers, the evaluation system should be in use no later than five years after ESEA reauthorization. The new teacher evaluation systems must include measures of teacher impact on student growth as a substantial factor in the evaluation. Another significant part of the teacher evaluation process should be rigorous observations of their practices in classrooms. Evaluations should differentiate teachers into at least four groups of performance, with states determining the names of the categories and their precise cut-off points.

Once a state has a new teacher evaluation system in place, it should use the results to inform critical human resources decisions, including tenure, compensation, professional development, as well as to hold teacher preparation programs accountable for the performance of their graduates. The data should also be used to identify and to redress inequities within districts based on factors of race and poverty. If a district has not significantly narrowed gaps in teacher effectiveness between schools over time, they should lose part, or eventually all, of their ESEA Title II funds. Until stronger evaluations systems are online, Congress should require states to create a Teacher Quality Index that would identify inequity and guide action to fix it.

Similarly, principal evaluation systems need to be introduced, and should be in use no later than four years after ESEA reauthorization. Districts could create their own evaluation systems as long as they followed guidelines set by the state. State guidelines should include a measure of schoolwide academic growth as well as research-based rubrics that assess whether principals are taking the actions they need to improve student learning and teacher practice.

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#### Recommendation #4

Boost state capacity and consolidate programs

Federal education funding should advance equity and excellence in education. To make the greatest use of ESEA dollars, Congress should continue to support formula-based programs while boosting competitive funding for programs that encourage reform. In order to boost capacity, states should retain an additional 2.5 percent of Teacher Quality funds so that they can develop and implement improved evaluation systems.

At the same time, there are a number of programs within Title II of ESEA that are too small to have much of an impact. They should be consolidated to better leverage the funds. Like the Obama administration, we propose eliminating or consolidating a number of these programs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our federal education spending while ensuring those funds are spent fairly to improve the educations of all of our children.<sup>1</sup>

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What our recommendations are based on

- [Advancing Teacher and Principal Effectiveness: Four Recommendations for Reforming the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
- [Essential Elements of Teacher Policy in ESEA: Effectiveness, Fairness, and Evaluation](#)
- [So Long Lake Wobegon?: Using Teacher Evaluation to Raise Teacher Quality](#)
- [Increasing Principal Effectiveness: A Strategic Investment for ESEA](#)
- [Principals' Approaches to Developing Teacher Quality](#)

<sup>1</sup> Glenda Partee, "Education Transformation: Doing What Works in Education Reform" (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2010).



## CAP's Body of Work on ESEA Topics

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### Increasing Teacher and Principal Effectiveness

- [Advancing Teacher and Principal Effectiveness: Four Recommendations for Reforming the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
- [Essential Elements of Teacher Policy in ESEA: Effectiveness, Fairness, and Evaluation](#)
- [Measuring What Matters: A Stronger Accountability Model for Teacher Education](#)
- [So Long Lake Wobegon?: Using Teacher Evaluation to Raise Teacher Quality](#)
- [Treating Different Teachers Differently: How State Policy Should Act on Differences in Teacher Performance to Improve Teacher Effectiveness and Equity](#)
- [Increasing Principal Effectiveness: A Strategic Investment for ESEA](#)
- [Principals' Approaches to Developing Teacher Quality](#)

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### Closing the Comparability Loophole

- [Walking the Talk: Closing the Comparability Requirement Loophole in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
- [Comparable, Schmocomparable: Evidence of Inequity in the Allocation of Funds for Teacher Salary Within California's Public School Districts](#)
- [Pulling Back the Curtain: Promoting Fiscal Equity and Providing All Students with Access to Effective Teachers Will Not Require Forcible Re-assignment](#)

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### Simplifying the Title I Formula

- [Bitter Pill, Better Formula: Toward a Single, Fair, and Equitable Formula for ESEA Title I, Part A](#)
- [Spoonful of Sugar: An Equity Fund to Facilitate a Single, Fair, and Equitable Formula for ESEA Title I, Part A](#)
- [Secret Recipes Revealed: Demystifying the Title I, Part A Formulas](#)

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### Extending Learning Time

- [Transforming Schools to Meet the Needs of Students: Improving School Quality and Increasing Learning Time in ESEA](#)
- [Expanded Time, Enriching Experiences: Expanded Learning Time Schools and Community Organization Partnerships](#)
- [Union and District Partnerships to Expand Learning Time](#)

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### Innovation

- [Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation](#)
  - [Advancing Teacher and Principal Effectiveness: Four Recommendations for Reforming the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
  - [Walking the Talk: Closing the Comparability Requirement in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
  - [Fast Track to College: Increasing Post-secondary Success for All Students](#)
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## Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

- [Incentivizing School Turnaround: A Proposal for Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#)
- [Turning Around the Nation's Lowest-Performing Schools](#)
- [Levers for Change: Pathways for State-to-District Assistance in Underperforming School Districts](#)

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## Providing Wraparound Services

- [Maximizing the Promise of Community Schools: Streamlining Wraparound Services for ESEA](#)
- [Breaking the Mold: Combining Community Schools with Expanded Learning Time to Help Educationally Disadvantaged Students](#)
- [Promise Neighborhoods Shows Real Potential but Needs the Right Funding](#)
- [A Look at Community Schools](#)