



Federal and State Education Update (2/27/06)

State Legislative Resource Center: www.qualityednow.org/statelegresource

20 STATES VIE FOR STUDENT GROWTH PILOT PROJECT

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced that up to 10 states would be approved to determine whether they meet the academic expectations of No Child Left Behind based on the amount of growth students makes over time. Friday, February 17, was the deadline for applications and 20 states are vying for this opportunity. While the decision by USED is an improvement, there are still some inherent problems. For one, USED is still requiring that states reach 100% proficiency by 2013-2014. States are unlikely to reach this goal, regardless of whether they use the student-growth model or not. It is also obvious that more states would like to use the student growth option than will be allowed. Most researchers recognize it as a better alternative than the original model; therefore, the option should be extended to any state wishing to use it. It will be important to continue advocating for extending the option to more states and revisiting the 100% proficiency requirement during NCLB reauthorization. More information on the student growth announcement can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/02/02222006.html>.

MORE STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Illinois, New Jersey and Idaho have joined the growing number of states who are considering legislation to fix or urge Congress to fund NCLB. Illinois Senator Kimberly Lightford introduced a resolution that calls on Congress to make sensible changes to NCLB including differentiate schools' ability to meet the AYP expectations, allow school to choose the order of school choice and supplemental tutoring services, provide more funding and allow states to use student growth models. The legislature is also considering a bill that would identify schools for improvement only if the same subgroup fails the same subject for two consecutive years. Several states have requested that option, but USED has consistently denied them. In New Jersey, Assemblyman Craig Stanley has introduced a bill that would prioritize the state's resources and focus on meeting state priorities and pursue waivers from federal requirements when there is a conflict. Stanley has also introduced another bill directing the state to comply with NCLB's testing provisions only if there is sufficient funding. According to a new report, as a result of NCLB states will have to administer over 11 million new tests in 2005-2006, costing \$500-\$700 million. Lastly, Stanley re-introduced a resolution urging Congress to amend NCLB pursuant to the recommendations of the NCSL Task Force. Both Lightford and Stanley attended the CQE State Legislator Summit in San Diego in December.

In the meantime, Idaho has introduced a memorial urging Congress to fix NCLB including allowing states to use a student growth model, correcting the difficulties with calculating AYP, and improving the sanctions by focusing them on the students who need the additional help the most.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

On Friday, the Bipartisan Statement of Principles was sent out to the attendees of the CQE State Legislators Education Summit and some other legislators. We are asking that you encourage your colleagues to sign on in support of recognizing that education reform must start with state and local communities. While states have been doing things individually, this statement will give us a collective sign of support to encourage Congress to bring the voice of state legislators to the table when they start discussing the reauthorization of NCLB. More information on the statement can be found out <http://www.qualityednow.org/statelegresource/principles/>.