



**National Alliance of Black School Educators**

**Legislative & Advocacy Priorities for**

**the 113th Congress**



National Alliance of Black School Educators – 310 Pennsylvania Ave. SE – Washington, DC 20003

March 26, 2010

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
Committee on Education & Labor  
United States House of Representatives  
2161 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable John Kline  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education & Labor  
United States House of Representatives  
2161 Rayburn House Office Building

Representative Dale Kildee  
2107 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Mike Castle  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
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On behalf of the National Alliance of the Black School Educators (NABSE), a 5,000 member organization of school leaders (superintendents and principals), teachers, parents, school board members, and central office staff, we wish to acknowledge and thank each of you for your commitment, over the decades, to issues of equity as the Federal Government intervenes in supporting the goal of the best public schooling for all of America's children; inclusive of America's black children.

Secretary Arne Duncan is applauded for his efforts to improve the current Education Law, "No Child Left Behind." While many of the recommendations listed in the Blueprint are laudable, NABSE hopes that the Blueprint is fluid and open to suggestions from other practitioners and concerned organizations such as ours.

At the core of NABSE's recommendations for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the notion that parity and equity in student achievement and excellence in education attainment for all citizens is dependent on the equitable and adequate targeting of federal dollars. The distribution of these funds should be based on need and provide a substantial investment in education-relevant resources that positively affect the educational experience of students. The notions of capacity building and continuous improvement also underlie our recommendations. The popular press and much of the country's policy, equates poor Black and Latino students only with urban communities. The reality is that a significant number of children of African descent attend schools in very poor rural communities. Of the current African American superintendents in the country, two-thirds head either poor rural or newly re-segregated school districts in suburban rings. While NABSE certainly advocates for all children of African descent, our advocacy argument is not limited to that population but also holds true for children in the hills of Tennessee, the factory-idle regions of Pennsylvania, the hollows of Kentucky, and the children of mine workers in West Virginia as well as the "Barrios" of urban centers.

We request that the House Education and Labor Committee carefully consider the following priorities in its deliberation of the reauthorization of ESEA:

- 1) Funding Equity for Children of Poverty
- 2) Demonstration Program/Models for Addressing the School -to-Prison -Pipeline



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- 3) An elementary demonstration World Language Program embedded in Title I of ESEA for poor children
- 4) Address the teacher pipeline at HBCUs, HISs, and Tribal College.
- 5) A Comprehensive Model of Accountability
- 6) Community and Parent Engagement.

We stand ready to provide committee staffers with appropriate reports and data. For example, we have developed a Title I poverty analysis of all districts, either led by African American superintendents or districts whose African American student enrollment is heavily populated by students of African descent living in poverty.

We thank you for your attention and welcome the opportunity to provide invited testimony and to talk with you and your staffs about the ideas developed in this commentary.

We look forward to working with you throughout the reorganization process.

Sincerely,

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NABSE President and  
Superintendent  
Beaumont ISD  
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Quentin Lawson  
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Government Relations Liaison

**PRIORITY 1**

**Funding Equity: Title I**

While NABSE is most appreciative of the expanded and needed Title I funding for FY 2011, the funding formula applied still uses a methodology that does not ensure adequate and full funding for all of America's needy children.

The federal government has a limited but important role in helping realize this vision of high-quality schooling for all. It should help provide tools and resources to empower schools where students are underserved by partnering with schools, districts, states, communities, and organizations to ensure all schools are of higher quality.

This brings us to the discussion of resources for poor school districts in our country. **While NABSE certainly advocates for children of African descent, the advocacy argument holds true for the children in the hills of Tennessee, the factory-idle regions of Pennsylvania, the hollows of Kentucky, and the children of mine workers in West Virginia as well as the barrios of urban centers.**

The most prevalent and persistent gaps in student achievement exist as a result of the effects of poverty. Children of poverty tend to live in low-income neighborhoods and attend low-income schools where student achievement often lags.

We ask that Congress address the funding formula in the section of Title I-A that provides for targeted grants and finances incentive grants. Currently, these grants are determined by concentration of poverty. This, of course, is the right focus. We are, however, as concerned as our other colleagues in the educational community (The American Association of School Administrators, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Rural and Community Trust) with the ways in which the concentration of poverty is defined. Currently, concentration of poverty is based on the number of poor students in a district or the percentage of poverty in the district, whichever is higher. Thus, districts with a given number of poor students may receive Title I funding even though they have a relatively small concentration of poverty and may in fact receive more Title I funding per student than smaller districts with much higher percentages of poverty. This is particularly troublesome because small districts with high concentrations of poverty have lower poverty wealth and require additional support to provide per pupil spending comparable to larger, wealthier districts.

We strongly believe that a weighted formula based on the **number** of poor students should be eliminated from this definition. Instead, school district allocations should be based on the **percentage** of poverty. That way, all districts at the same percentage of poverty will receive the same amount per student, through targeted grants.

We have been here before. During the sixties and early seventies, in poor and minority communities (from the Delta in Mississippi, to the rural mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire, to the Appalachian communities of West Virginia, and to the Urban Epicenters of Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, Houston and Birmingham) citizens were engaged in making their once divided and isolated

communities whole. Through various community actions and model city and school programs, visible progress was being made and the horrible vestiges of segregation, isolation, and poverty were being chipped away.

Just as these efforts began to work and to show some promise, progress was halted by voices that said that the “Great Society programs” were a waste and a failure. A campaign was forged to carry out an agenda that in fact blamed the victims, namely poor, disenfranchised families and communities for their plight.

This discussion is not about whether Title I is a success or failure. That is another argument, and another story. NABSE can respond quite compellingly that Title I has been a strong force in impacting the lives of less advantaged students socially, emotionally, and academically. As Jack Jennings so eloquently stated in past articles in both *The Kappan* and *Education Week*, --while eliminating the achievement gap is a worthy goal—and we agree that it is—that is not the stated purpose of Title I, nor the standard for determining its success.

On another note, much has been made of the notion that “we’ve spent billions over 40 years.” We continue to applaud the federal Government’s significant interest (accounting for the 9% of the National budget of \$9,683 per pupil) because it is a marker for leveling the playing field. Our argument, thus, is not about federal involvement but rather how and where it allocates taxpayers’ dollars. Does money matter for poor students? Does parity cost? You bet! As Grissmer, Flanagan and Williamson conclude in their research for the National Center for Research that “the money doesn’t matter” argument doesn’t hold. There seems to be significant support for the thesis that money directed at disadvantaged students *does* bring higher academic score but money directed toward more advantaged students may have a smaller or negligible effect.

The Grissmer study demonstrates that, if we look at the fact that 46 percent of Title I goes to the very poorest 15 percent of all schools, a more consistent story is emerging from the empirical data (a story we believe is not being told and can easily be ignored.) The research shows that the largest gain in test scores over the past 35 to 40 years has been made by White, African American, and Hispanic economically disadvantaged children. This did not happen without federal support for the past two decades. Does money count? You bet! No, it is not the only variable, but it is a clear and present significant variable.

So what does it take to “get on with it” and to provide equity, access, and equal protection in the financial realm for all American’s poor children in public schools?

We recognize that there are inequities in per pupil spending between states, between school districts within those states, and between schools within those districts. Many states have certainly begun to weigh in on this phenomenon. Still, as the federal government looks to strengthen its role in “School Reform” and “High Standards,” it must also provide an effective means to assist in assuring equity in funding for the poorest of America’s children through full and equitable funding of Title I. As John Podesta and Cynthia Brown explained, “It is fundamentally unfair to hold educators accountable for reaching uniform high standards when the monetary tools they are given are so unequal.”

Equity in full funding for Title I would mean that school districts with the highest concentrations of poverty would be able to spend as much per pupil as districts with lower concentrations of poverty. This would require an allocation of resources based on formula change specifically targeted at districts serving higher concentration of children in poverty.

The Center for American Progress report *NEEDED: Federal Action for Fair Funding of High-Poverty Schools*, February 2010 points out the need for a formula revision. The document states, “There is much confusion about the four distinct formulas in current use. These formulas—the products of 40-plus years of political compromise—are poorly aligned with the clear purpose of Title I-A funds” which are “to provide financial assistance to local education agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means...”

NABSE raised its concerns about targeting poverty in a substantial way, as early as the reauthorization of ESEA during the Clinton Administration, and continued during the Bush (II) Administration. We continued in a more focused means during the hearings in 2008 including testifying before the HHS Committee. Since that time, other policy organization educators and members of Congress have begun to voice the same concern.

Mills and Brown shed a very transparent light on the issue of funding with state and across states as follows:

**Illinois and California both face very high costs and exert low fiscal effort, yet California received \$1,521 per poor child to Illinois’ \$1,819.**

**What’s worse, the state with the higher concentration of children in poverty has the lower allocation rate in each of these pairs. And while these per poor children differences may seem small, they matter a great deal when scaled up to the school or state level. Take California, which has more children in poverty than any other state and runs larger schools than all but five, with an average enrollment of 651 pupils. A high-poverty school in California could receive nearly \$200,000 less than it would receive if it were in Illinois. The cumulative shortfall for California amounts to several hundred million dollars, a sum worthy of concern.**

**Interstate funding inequity in Title I-A funding is perhaps of even great concern. For instance, poor children served by Michigan’s Flint City School District drew \$1,984 in Title I-A funds, while those served by Detroit City School district drew \$2,266. Detroit’s 19 percent advantage outstrips the difference in the cost of providing education, as reflected by these districts’ values on the Comparable Wage Index. Moreover, their different allocation rates highlights a bias toward extremely large districts as Flint and Detroit serve roughly the same high concentration of children in poverty—38 and 39 percent, respectively—although Flint serves 9,577 low-income children while Detroit serves 80,289 low-income children.**

**It is not hard to find even more grave examples of inequity. Take South Carolina, for example, where the Greenville County School District serves a substantially lower concentration of children in poverty, 14 percent, than other districts in the state, particularly those in the “corridor of shame” along Interstate 95. Nearly 22 percent of the children served by the Calhoun County School District, the eastern portion of which is definitively in the “corridor of shame,” come from low-income families, but the district receives \$1,266 per poor child, substantially less than the \$1,700 seen in Greenville. This allocation pattern flies in the face of fairness considering that the two districts face nearly identical costs.**

NABSE will support a formula change that:

- 1.) Is based totally on percentage of poverty rate from free and reduced lunch provisions rather than “number” weighting,
- 2.) Enforces the Title I comparability provisions,
- 3.) Replaces the current hodgepodge of formulas.

Using the percent of pupils eligible for free and reduced lunch within a school district as an indicator of school district poverty, those districts having lower concentrations of poverty spend far more money per pupil with respect to both total spending and spending on instruction. Districts with higher concentrations of poverty, on the other hand, tend to have less money to spend per pupil compared to districts with lower concentrations of poverty.

Therefore, we urge Congress in this reauthorization to:

- a.) Address the spending gap in a fair and equitable means through the formula change,
- b.) Provide strong regulatory language (in the statute) for state and district with high concentrations of poverty that ensure that federal dollars are supplementary and not supplementing.
- c.) Retain a strong, robust, accounting system that ensures that states will follow the formula.

We recognize that it means that some alterations to funded and select districts. We would therefore entertain a hold-harmless provision. Children in poverty have for too long been the losers in America’s resource allocations. Their “losing” continues to impact the quality of life in our nation. If change is coming, now is the time!

**PRIORITY 2**

**Enforce the Comparability Provisions**

Language in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the so-called “comparability provision,” was supposed to promote equality of education. Its basic notion is that state and local funds for schools should be equitable before Title I funds are added to schools with large concentrations of low-income students. The comparability provision, however, contains a “loophole” that has, for a long time, allowed local funds to be inequitably distributed. ESEA already requires that states develop policies and incentives to balance the qualifications of teachers across schools serving more and less advantaged students, so that disadvantaged students do not experience a disproportionate number of teachers who are unqualified, inexperienced, and out-of-field. We now know that the aspect of this law is weakly enforced. (New American Schools, 208)

As John Podesta, Director of Center for American Progress, indicates in his summary of the treatise, Ensuring Equal Opportunity in Public Education: How Local School Districts Funding Practices Hurt Disadvantaged Students and What Federal Policy Can Do About It, that there is a mismatch of U.S. education resources through the inequality in the funding of local schools by their own districts, Nationwide, local school districts account for about 50 percent of all public school operating costs, which means these districts’ budgeting practices have a greater direct effect than state or federal education investments. **Indirectly, however, existing federal legislation condones and has historically supported the way local school districts fund their schools. Federal education funding requirements, in short, exacerbates existing inequality in education at the local level.**

A more sensible Title I enacted comparability provision would force local school districts to change the way they allocate and account for funding of their schools, which over time would ensure that a more fair and equitable local educational funding process would take hold across the country. This would be a major step in repairing the broken system of funding for the disadvantaged.

**PRIORITY 3**

**Establish a World Language Elementary Enrichment Program Embedded In Title I of ESEA**

We are proposing the establishment of a demonstration world language elementary enrichment program in Title I of ESEA. We propose that these demonstration programs be concentrated in the highest poverty regions inclusive of turnaround schools within the federal regions of the nation. As the administration advances its career and college ready program, it must be mindful of the pillars of equity, access, and excellence. Therefore it is important, in addition to rigorous academic parameters, there be opportunities for these children to grow in an enriched environment. There is nothing more appropriate for enrichment, than building across cultures and class; than the ability to be bi-literate in more than one language and to build trust and understanding amongst diverse learners. Moreover, bi-literacy is a necessary skill for participation in a 21<sup>st</sup> century diverse world and economy. More importantly, it is a critical element which will enable our country to participate efficiently in a global political, social, and economic context.

We have prepared a proposal, as attached, and have shared it with the administration. We have formed a partnership with the American Association of School Administrators to request this initiative as a part of the reauthorization of ESEA.

**See Proposal in Addendum**



## PRIORITY 4

### **Retaining Today's Student for Tomorrow's Success (addressing the school-to-prison-pipeline)**

We support the Obama administration's "Blueprint" goal of assuring that America's youth are college and career ready. We would add a goal that our youth should also be prepared to be civic-ready.

We would like to call attention to the large pool of students, particularly poor White, Black, and Brown students who are on a trajectory that is commonly referred to as the school-to-prison-pipeline.

Within that construct, there are myriad studies and reports that confirm the high social and economic cost to America when we lose such a large pool of students: Low graduation rates, lost wages, and declining or stagnating literacy and numeracy rate among our youth. While it is true that there are communities in our country that benefit from the prison industry, a growing and robust economy for all of America's communities is impacted by the loss of talent, ingenuity and civic literacy.

The "Blueprint" and the President's budget provide Congress with several intersects for action in the reauthorization deliberations.

The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) and other policy organizations including the Advancement Project, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the Charles Hamilton Institute for Race and Justice provide reams of evidence detailing the problem. The most recent report from the Advancement Project *Exploring the School-to-Prison-Pipeline* explores in depth this issue. The question is: what role the federal government, through Congress, can play to aid in solutions to the problem as it prepares to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. We believe that within the framework of the administration's "Blueprint" that there are several junctures to begin to put into language specific actions. These junctions are:

1. The School Turnaround Construct
2. The Homeless Youth Construct
3. The Rural Education Construct
4. The Promised Neighborhood's Construct &
5. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Construct

Congress has already authorized a ready-and-able network to address solutions to abort the school-to-prison-pipeline.

The USDOE now funds a network of service providers (two located in the office of Elementary and Secondary Education and one in the Institute of Education Sciences), which include the comprehensive centers, the equity assistance centers, and the regional laboratory **program**.

We recommend that the USDOE utilize its already existing network of service providers including the comprehensive centers, Equity Assistance Centers, and Regional Education Laboratory Programs to



provide direct service and technical assistance to neighborhood and community stakeholders currently wrestling with the school-to-prison-pipeline.

These coordinated service providers would then help to develop and implement strategies of intervention, proven best practices, and research-based community engagement strategies. In short, we can find no more compelling use of taxpayers' dollars than to support existing structures that would enable communities to disrupt the criminalization process of our youth that starts in the middle school and continues through high school.

Finally, we believe that the Federal Government's support of this proposal complemented with the provisions (hopefully soon enacted) of Congressman Robert Scott and his colleagues' Youth Promise Act will go a long way to stop the costly prison-pipeline for America's children.

## **PRIORITY 5**

### **A Comprehensive Model of Accountability**

As a member organization of the Forum on Education Accountability (FEA), we concur with the premise put forth by FEA on multiple indicators and multiple assessments. We believe that providing flexibility to state and local education agencies in developing assessments that can be validated and reliable as part of their state plan is simply the right thing to do. After all, the Constitution ultimately holds states responsible for the education of their citizens.

We request that Congress adopt the FEA approach available on [www.edaccountability.org](http://www.edaccountability.org). However, it is important to adequately fund the states' ability to determine how well their students are doing. It is as important to help states find out how much their students are learning, as it is for Congress to continue funding smart bombs. The administration's Blueprint does consider this factor.

Multiple indicators of school performance along with a strong accountability anchor allow districts and states to move beyond equalizing test scores and to examine other indicators so that educational equity is achieved. In a 21<sup>st</sup> century World Class Educational System, it is appropriate to examine structures and processes from other strong research-based fields, for example:

- a) Multiple measures is the hallmark of good social science research. Earl Babbie, in his book, The Practice of Social Research, notes, "... there is no single indicator that will give you the measure of the variable you really want" (p.141). In this sense, no single indicator can adequately measure a student's academic performance or ability, but rather a multitude of indicators and measures should be employed to assure equity and excellence.

- b) Our nation’s economic and employment system (Dow Jones, GNP) uses multiple measures to forecast, project, and determine growth. Why is this not good enough for our Nation’s Public Schools?

Most of America’s College Admissions (Public and Private) are based on multiple measures. Why is this not good enough for our children, particularly the least advantaged?

Together, multiple forms of assessment and multiple indicators will provide more opportunities and meaningful success, as well as help ensure that all children receive a comprehensive schooling aimed at educating the whole child.

We applaud the Department’s Blueprint which takes an important step forward by essentially ending AYP for at least 80% of the nation’s schools, and ending the requirement that 20% of Title I funds be spent for tutoring and transfers. That money could instead to be spent to implement other school improvement strategies. **Strong progress for all is what we need.**

**PRIORITY 6**  
**Addressing the Teacher Pipeline**  
**At HBCUs, HSIs and Tribal Colleges**

The work of Linda Darling Hammond, the multi-year grant program of the Carnegie Corporation (TNE) and the recent AACTE policy briefing all support the principle that the quality of teaching is recognized as the most important factor in student learning. Darling Hammond’s work posits that that “The effects on student achievement of having a teacher with very weak credentials as compared to having one with very strong credentials were greater than the effects of race and parent education combined. That is, the difference between the effect of having a very well-qualified teacher rather than one who was poorly qualified was larger than the average difference in achievement between a typical white student with college-educated parents and a typical black student with high-school educated parents. The achievement gap would be much reduced if low-income and poor minority students were routinely assigned such highly-qualified teachers rather than the poorly qualified teachers they most often encounter.”

The 107th Congress recognized the importance of the above principle, including a provision in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that states should ensure that all students have access to “Highly qualified teachers,” defined as teachers with full certification and demonstrated competence in the subject matter field(s) they teach. This provision was historic, especially since the students targeted by federal legislation—students who are low-income, low-achieving, new English language learners, or identified

with special education needs—have been in many communities those least likely to be served by experienced and well-prepared teachers.

We expect that the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress will continue this provision.

We, however, believe that Congress should seize the opportunity to expand the diverse pool of teacher inductees who will work in high need committees and prepare for high-need fields.

HBCUs produce 50 percent of the nation’s African American teachers though they comprise only 2 percent of the nation’s colleges and universities. Additionally, a single institution, the University of Texas, San Antonio (USTA), is a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) producing one of the largest numbers of Hispanic/Latino teachers in Texas and third largest in the nation. If the nation is to offer its children a diverse and qualified teacher workforce, it will need to engage HBCUs and other minority-serving colleges and universities to achieve this goal (Fenwick,. 2001).

The National Alliance of Black School Educators recommends:

- Establish a demonstration *clinical practice professions* model program that would enable these institutions to improve and expand teacher and leadership education program that can help produce a well-prepared diverse educator work force commitment to staying in high-need communities.
- Adopt AACTE’s recommended change as to the definition of a “Highly Qualified Teacher.” The “Highly Qualified Teacher” definition in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) should be revised to require that teachers establish not only their content expertise but their ability to teach it effectively, as measured by their actual performance in classrooms, following extended clinical experience. Prospective teachers should exhibit consistent success through a substantial pre-service clinical experience in a challenging school setting supervised by both university- and school-based faculty. This requirement should pertain to both traditional- and alternative –route candidates. A minimum of 450 sequential hours of closely monitored and supervised clinical experience should be required. No candidate should serve as teacher of record until he or she has completed a preparation program.
- Support national accreditation and ongoing assessment of teacher education programs at HBCUs and other MSIs. Policymakers should support ongoing internal and external examinations of teacher education programs at all MSIs to determine if the programs build on the institution’s mission and strengths and are based in the best research on teacher preparation and development. There are 84 teacher education programs at HBCUs, and 62 (47%) are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) currently has one School of Education at an HBCU as a candidate for accreditation (TEAC, 2009). According to Fenwick (2009), these numbers will increase only when HBCUs and other MSIs are provided the resources necessary to create an institutional infrastructure that supports a culture of assessment. Targeted resources could assist with creating an assessment infrastructure by providing funding for hiring assessment personnel, purchasing computer

software and hardware, and supporting professional development and training (on program and student evaluation and assessment) for deans, department chairs and faculty.

- Assist State Boards in supporting collaborative university and school-based programs that produce African American Board-certified teachers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and its assessments complement initial teacher preparation, licensing, accreditation, and quality professional development. NBPTS is the greatest distinction for accomplished teachers in the U.S., with the standards and assessments serving as a model for nations worldwide. A congressionally mandated 3-year evaluation found that NBPTS exemplifies the characteristics of effective professional development and promotes student achievement and learning (Hakel, Koenig, & Elliot, 2008). Importantly, the data revealed that Board-certified teachers benefited African American and Hispanic students more than other students (Cavalluzzo, 2004). There are approximately 74,000 Board-certified teachers, of which 7,667 are African American and other teachers of color. More are needed to provide leadership in high-need schools and to contribute an important cultural lens and understanding to effective practice.
- Support and fund a demonstration program for partnerships between the HBCU and the school district where the HBCU or MIS is located. Such programs could include a laboratory school where future teacher recruitment is initiated.

## **PRIORITY 7**

### **Parent Engagement**

The administration's Blueprint does not adequately adhere to a vision for partnering with parents to ensure that America's children are college and career ready.

#### **ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

There must be a commitment to continue to support parent involvement by federal supplemental programs designed to help school districts involve parents more effectively.

The 1994 legislation provided a strong template for assuring expanded opportunities for parent-school collaborations. However, observations, findings by parent advocates, and reports show that, in Title I settings, partnerships with parents and the school community are not happening on a large scale.

The requirements from the 1994 legislation should remain strong with accompanying legislative language that will target a better dissemination means so that parents are aware of the basic requirements of parent



involvement. Moreover, appropriate technical assistance strategies for implementing parent involvement requirements currently in the law, and appropriate measures that assure that states provide guidance and direction to local districts as to the importance of complying with parent involvement requirements should be strengthened.

Finally, we need no other studies to inform us that parents and family inputs are critical education-relevant resources. It is our view that it is in the interest of national defense for the federal government to assist localities increasing the opportunities and level of critical parent input both of which continue to be illusive. To that end, we advocate a federal grant to support independent, locally based and culturally relevant family training centers that partner with local school districts to help parents identify, analyze and value the processes of education so that their children receive a high quality education.

# Addendum

## A Proposal From The National Alliance of Black School Educators and The American Association of School Administrators

111<sup>th</sup> Congress  
2nd Session

To establish a world language elementary enrichment program as part of **Title I** of ESEA ; (PL \_\_\_ To establish a demonstration world language enrichment program in the highest concentrated poverty schools within the ten federal regions of the nation

### FINDINGS

1. As demonstrated in a landmark study by Peal and Lambert (1962;2993), acquisition of a second language by young children has a measurable positive effect on children’s language and cognitive development. The study showed that students, who were bilingual, whether they learned English or a foreign language, had higher academic achievement than did those who were monolingual. Recent research continues to support the benefits of students learning a second language.
2. It is important to introduce a second language to children at the elementary level because children at this level are capable of learning a second language with native-like pronunciation. Experts note that physiological changes occur in the maturing brain as a child enters puberty (Marcos, 1998). According to Mantrel (1996), “Synapses or avenues in the brain are opened up by foreign language instruction when it is introduced at an early age. If languages are not introduced at an early age, these synapses are not accessed, and language learning is much more difficult to acquire in later years” (Foreign Language and Youth, 1996). It is also important for teachers to understand that bilingual students will account for about 40 percent of school-age population by the year 2030 (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).
3. The important issues concerning learning more than one language in early development concerns itself with the cognitive and educational outcomes. In reviewing the research Bialystok and Stafford (2005) found that bilingualism is a positive force that enhances children’s cognitive and linguistic development.
4. Therese Sullivan Caccavale, President of the National Network for Early Language Learning, states “to enhance children’s cognitive development. Children who learn a foreign language beginning in early childhood demonstrate certain cognitive advantages over children who do not. Research conducted in Canada with young children shows that those who are bilingual develop the concept of object permanence at an earlier age. Additionally, second language learning is much more a cognitive problem solving activity than a linguistic activity, overall. Studies have shown repeatedly that second language learning increases critical thinking skills, creativity, and

- flexibility of mind in young children. Students who are learning a second language out-score their non-second language learning peers in both the verbal and math sections of standardized tests.
5. It is clear that in the global economy, knowledge of foreign languages and other cultures has become an extremely valuable skill set in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
  6. While popular perception is that only large corporations need to operate on a global scale, the Committee on Economic Development (CED) has found that most small and medium sized businesses find it necessary to participate in the world market.
  7. Furthermore, despite the fact that English is the international language of commerce, many employees in businesses must be able to speak languages other than English and operate within other cultures.
  8. There are a limited number of potential employees who speak more than one language and large corporations are more likely than small and medium size businesses to be able to recruit and hire employees who speak a language in addition to English.
  9. Even with a growing immigrant population in the United States, many businesses and professionals are finding they need foreign language and culture competency skills. Hospitals, law enforcement agencies, the hospitality industry, service occupations, government, and many others deal with diverse languages and cultures and need the tools to operate within them. Without these skills, many workers will be seriously limited in their ability to do their jobs effectively and gain upward mobility within their profession. (From Policy Update Vol. 16, No. 2, January 2008, a publication of NASBE)
  10. Many occupations will not be available to children of poverty because the schools they attend, particularly the elementary schools they attend, do not provide the opportunity for students to learn a world language. It is precisely this lack of opportunity that the Office for Civil Rights is attempting to address in its recent initiative. The inability to speak a second language acts as a barrier to access for all too many children of poverty.
  11. A national census shows a significant number and growing number of poor children throughout the country, including those living in Appalachia, those in the Hollaws of Kentucky, children of recently-arrived immigrants from Haiti and Mexico, and those from of the Eastern block.
  12. A child living in poverty is deprived of an equitable opportunity to understand the racial, ethnic and linguistic fabric of our country when he or she does not have access to learning other languages and cultures. Globalization requires individuals to work with others who are from different linguistic cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds. Thus, our increasingly complex world necessitates the mastery and competence of multilingual skills as a cornerstone of education. It is most important that we not continue the generational poverty due to lack of access and that we use this opportunity to combat the last vestiges of segregation by opening up children's worlds.
  13. Models already exist for teaching elementary school another language. These include, for example, the dual language model. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, there are more than 330 similar programs around the country. Students are taught in English while also learning a range of languages, such as Spanish, Japanese, Navajo, Chinese, French and Korean.
  14. Few world language programs are offered in schools and school districts with high concentrations of poverty. World language programs are most often offered in schools and school districts that have predominately middle class or upper middle class students.



## World Language Demonstration Grants

**Purpose:** To pilot world language demonstration programs in high poverty elementary schools in order to promote equitable educational opportunities for poor students who historically have not had access to the study of languages and cultures. Native English-speaking children of poverty attending schools where a majority of students come from low income homes have not had the same opportunities to access language and culture studies as children in working middle class communities, wealthy communities and communities of children who come to the United States speaking another language.

**Program to be authorized:** The secretary is authorized to award up to four programs per federal region in the poorest Title I counties in their poorest schools where there are both mono language students and native speakers of other languages. If the poorest Title 1 school is completely monolingual and the poverty level is at 90% to 100% of the district the secretary may authorize a world language enrichment program in a monolingual school. One such program should identify a cohort where there are Native People students (American Indian).

**Definition:** We define world language enrichment programs as follows: An enrichment bilingual/multicultural education program in which language equity is structurally defined as equal time exposure to two languages. It promotes enhanced awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, and high levels of academic achievement through instruction in two languages.

### Models

1. Two-way immersion programs. These enroll a balance of native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language.
2. Heritage language programs. These mainly enroll students who are dominant in English but whose parents, grandparents or other ancestors spoke the partner language.
3. Fles Program (Foreign Language Enrichment Programs)

**Authorized Activities-** The Secretary may use funds made available under this section for each fiscal year to —

- (1) conduct research related to effective approaches for the world language enrichment pilot projects for low income students in schools serving concentrations of high poverty students;
- (2) Collect and analyze information estimating the educational status and world language needs of low income students in high poverty elementary schools; and
- (3) Carry out other activities that are consistent with the purpose of this part.

**Eligibility-** The Secretary may carry out any of the activities described directly or through grants to, or contracts or cooperative agreements to local education agencies in partnership with nonprofit organizations, state education agencies, or IHE's.

**Coordination-** Research activities supported under this section--



Shall be carried out in consultation with the Institute of Educational Sciences to ensure that such activities are coordinated with and enhance the research and development activities supported by the Office of Elementary and Secondary education

**Dissemination of Best Practices**

Awardees will be required to disseminate their best practice through THE WHAT WORKS Clearing House

**Award and Eligibility**

Not less than twenty grants within the ten Federal Regions

We recommend that with funds made available under this grant, that the secretary of Education be authorized to award not less than 20 grants in the amount of \$100,000,000 to fund local school districts to mount demonstration world language enrichment programs in those districts with both high poverty counts and are eligible for “turn around” school consideration.

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