

Federal Role in Pre-K-12 Education – Background Materials & Consensus Questions

1. Packet of summary background information plus consensus questions posted on LWVEA website - lwvea.org
2. LWWUS website for extended background material:
www.lwvus%20Education%Study%206-29011Federal
3. PDFs and Power Point Presentations also on LWWUS website and some links listed below:
- 4.

Common Core Standards

The History Of Federal Government In Public Education: Where Have We Been And How Did We Get Here?

Role Of The Federal Government In Public Education: Where Are We Now And The Impact Upon Early Childhood Education

The Role Of The Federal Government In Public Education: Equity And Funding

The Role Of The Federal Government In Public Education: Legislation And Funding For The Education Of Children With Special Needs

Common Core Standards and Assessments

In the 1970s

- ✓ A few states developed content standards for basic skills in core content areas (usually English language arts and mathematics)
- ✓ Some states developed high school exit exams to define minimum performance standards for high school graduation
- ✓ Performance standards varied from state to state
- ✓ In states without exit examinations, performance standards often varied from school to school within a single state
- ✓ Diploma requirements varied from state to state

In the 1980s

- ✓ 1983 “Nation at Risk” claimed that the US was slipping in its education achievements compared to other industrial countries.
- ✓ Publishers competed for largest markets (Texas & California)
- ✓ Textbooks often defined curriculum
- ✓ What students were expected to learn & how well students were expected to perform depended on where they lived
- ✓ National teaching organizations created voluntary subject-area content standards without performance standards

In the 1990s

- ✓ Some states wrote their own content standards
- ✓ Some states developed their own assessments to measure the content standards and set their own performance standards
- ✓ 1992 Early efforts at national standards funded by federal grants to professional subject-area organizations
- ✓ State education agencies modified subject area standards, so that resulting state standards continued to vary widely

In the 2000s

- ✓ 2001 ESEA was reauthorized as “No Child Left Behind”
- ✓ Federal law required state standards, assessments, & reporting of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- ✓ States created their own assessments and set their own performance standards
- ✓ States that had not already developed assessments set low performance standards to avoid sanctions
- ✓ US Dept. of Education conducted peer reviews and set regulatory limits
- ✓ AYP looked like a common measurement system, but state performance standards actually varied widely

Driving forces

- ✓ International comparisons (PISA, 2010) show that the US is slipping academically.
- ✓ “Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us.”

Blueprint for reauthorization of ESEA, (p. 1)

Driving Forces

- ✓ Krashen and Bracey caution against overly simplistic interpretations saying that the underlying problem is poverty in America.
- ✓ When data are examined closely, the US does as well as other developed countries when children of poverty are excluded from the reports.

CCS Question 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)

- a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
- b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding
- c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source.
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

National, not Federal

- ✓ The Common Core Standards are a national initiative, not federal. This means that national organizations have funded and developed these standards and not the federal government.
- ✓ Common Core Standards are currently not required for most federal monies.
- ✓ However, they are required for those states applying for the Race to the Top grants.

What are Common Core Standards?

- ✓ Cooperative effort of the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and endorsed by 41 states.
- ✓ Designed to bring alignment, rigor and consistency to student 'proficiency' and to foster improvement in college and career readiness across the nation.

Example for 7th grade writing:

- ✓ “Gather relevant information from multiple sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusion of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format of citation.”
- ✓ Standard W.7.8 found at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/writing-6-12/grade-7/>

Rigor of CCS compared to states

- ✓ Fordham Institute found only 3 of 102 comparisons where state standards were more rigorous than Common Core

Arguments favoring common educational standards

- ✓ To ensure that all children, no matter where they live in the U.S., are prepared and successful in postsecondary education: school to school and state to state.
- ✓ To ensure a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices both within and across states.
- ✓ To help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success.
- ✓ To provide a benchmark as a first step to ensuring students will be prepared for success in college and work.

Arguments opposing common educational standards

- ✓ Cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments.
- ✓ Sovereignty of state in issues related to education.
- ✓ States may be prevented from developing their own far more rigorous standards. (Currently each state can increase the standards by 15%.)
- ✓ Standards are more oriented toward college than toward immediate entry into the workforce after high school.

Many researchers say:

- ✓ Common Core Standards should be federally mandated ONLY IF they are part of a whole program: high-quality common standards may affect student achievement only in a system in which there are also
 - aligned assessments,
 - aligned curriculum,
 - accountability for educators,
 - accountability for students,
 - aligned professional development,
 - managerial autonomy for school leaders,
 - teachers who are drawn from the best and brightest, and so on (Whitehurst)

CCS Question 5

Should there be a national assessment aligned with the common core standards?

Yes|No

Question 5-a

- a. If yes, should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated (Choose one)
 - 1. Voluntary
 - 2. Federally mandated
 - 3. Mandated, if fully funded

Assessments linked to CCS

- ✓ Two grant-funded (\$330 million dollars) consortia are currently creating assessments based on the Common Core standards.
- ✓ Both will enable cross-state comparisons.
- ✓ Both plan to track student progress toward the College and Career Readiness standards of the Common Core.
- ✓ Both plan to set cut scores to report whether students are ready for college or career work.

Question 5-b

- b. If no, what other accountability measures might you suggest (Choose one)
1. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments
 2. 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
 3. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

Portfolio assessments

May include:

- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Projects
- ✓ Student reflections about how a measure of performance addresses objectives
- ✓ Artistic performances, etc.

They should be evaluated by experts

- ✓ Some elements may be more subjective
- ✓ Expert evaluation of portfolios is more expensive than computer-based scoring

Question 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.

Should there be a national curriculum?

- ✓ Various educators have been debating whether national standards and national assessments would be enough to bring about desired improvements.
- ✓ Some think that a comprehensive system, including a national curriculum as well as common standards and assessment, is necessary to foster improvement.
- ✓ Some think that a national curriculum would bring unnecessary constraints that stifle creativity and innovation.

Should there be a national curriculum?

YES

- ✓ A curriculum specifies the topics and methods that students will use to master the standards, and often prescribes the sequence of instruction.
- ✓ Content standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should master.
- ✓ Performance standards are implemented through assessments that measure how well students have mastered the content standards.

Should there be a national curriculum?

NO

ESEA prohibits a national curriculum and it is not part of the President Obama Blueprint.

* The same reading skills can be taught by using many different texts.

* High school mathematics courses can be organized in a variety of ways.

Further discussion on Common Core Standards and National Curriculum

*At present, the Common Core includes only literacy standards for science and social studies. It would be difficult to reach consensus on a national curriculum in these subject areas.

*Legislators in some states continue to debate the science curriculum, arguing whether creationism should be taught as a scientific theory.

*With the exception of U.S. history and the Constitution, there is a lack of consensus about what topics should be taught in the social studies.

Question 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 the 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

Question 8

Determining Readiness

- Cut scores are set to provide information about whether or not students have mastered pre-specified criteria.
- To provide reliable cut scores, a test must include enough test items near any cut point to yield accurate data.
- The testing system with multiple cut scores must be more technically sophisticated, and therefore will probably be more expensive, than a testing system with fewer cut scores.

Question 8. Data from 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?

“Norm-referenced” refers to interpretation of scores for individuals. Norm-referenced scores rank students. It is possible, and not uncommon, to develop district-level norms, which rank only the students within each district without considering the total group.

Normed vs. Criterion-based

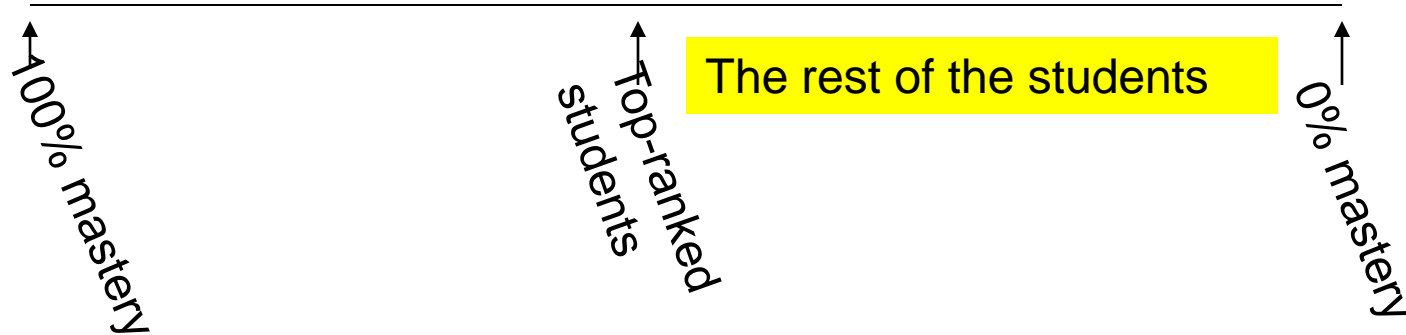
- ✓ Individual student scores can be interpreted
 - by rank ordering student scores (norm-referenced)
 - by reporting whether students meet predetermined standards (criterion-referenced)

Normed vs. Criterion Referenced

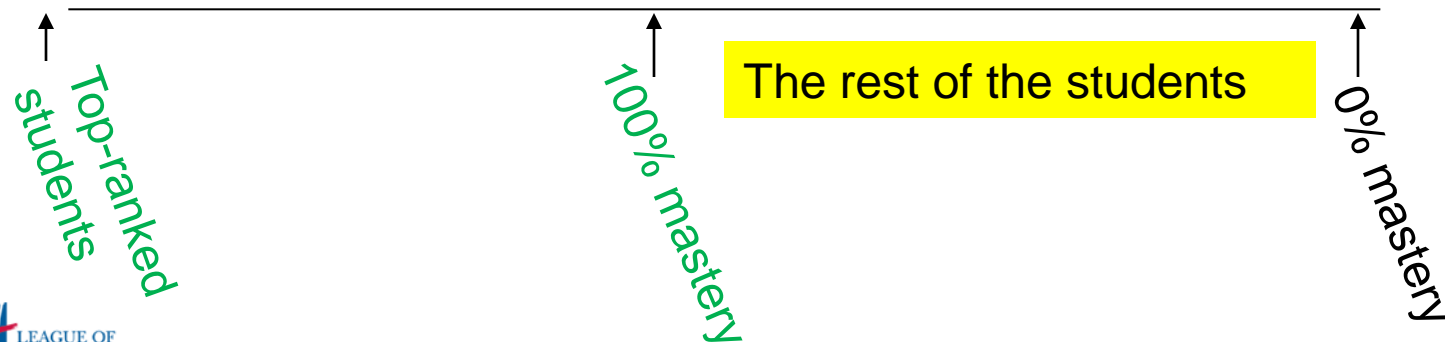
- ✓ Normed based – designed to rank individual students in comparison to a sample (which can be an international, national, state, or local sample).
- ✓ Criterion-based – designed to determine how well individual students have mastered objectives

Normed vs. Criterion Referenced

So, we could have this situation:



Many states have had this situation in the past:



How extensive should tests be?

- Overemphasis on accountability may lead to narrowing of the curriculum and inattention to knowledge and skills that are not tested.
- Longer, more comprehensive assessments are more likely to provide meaningful and specific feedback for individual students. A test that provides diagnostic information must be much longer than a test that is used only for accountability.

Question 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

Issues to consider if schools and teachers are compared based on student performance

- Is the proposed test designed to support the desired inference?
- What will be done about grades and subjects for which there are no appropriate standardized tests?
- Have the proposed statistical procedures been shown to produce accurate results?
- Can classes with very different demographic characteristics be expected to produce similar student scores, or should factors like poverty rates be considered?

More issues to consider

- Should rewards or sanctions apply to the school as a whole or to individual teachers within each school?
- What unintended strategies might people employ in order to obtain rewards or avoid sanctions (e.g. encourage dropouts, avoid cheating etc.)
- Should poor performance lead to assistance (provision of support) or sanctions (withdrawal of support)?

Why student scores cannot provide a valid picture of a teacher's performance - Student scores are also affected by

- ✓ Other teachers—both previous teachers and current teachers of other subjects—as well as tutors or instructional specialists (consider collaborative methods such as pull-out, team-teaching, or block scheduling)
- ✓ These factors also include conditions such as
 - Quality of curriculum materials
 - Specialist or tutoring supports
 - Class size and mobility
 - Student attendance
 - Interaction with peers
 - Student readiness for learning (Tying teacher evaluation and sanctions to test score results can discourage teachers from wanting to work in schools with the neediest students.)

Opinion of Experts in 2010

- ✓ There is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians, and economists that student test scores alone are not sufficiently reliable and valid indicators of teacher effectiveness to be used in high-stakes personnel decisions, even when the most sophisticated statistical applications such as value-added modeling are employed.

Issues to consider about policy decisions in the future

- Is the proposed policy of common core standards and assessment consistent with support of quality public education?
- Has it been tried on a small scale and shown to be fair and effective?
- What unintended consequences could result from following this policy of the common core standards/assessment?
- If test scores are involved, do educational measurement experts agree that the proposed procedures are technically adequate?
- Does a proposed system of rewards or sanctions include enough measures, or should other indicators be included?
- If there are rewards and sanctions, do they apply to districts, schools, or individuals?

Role of the Federal Government in Public Education History



The New Republic

- ✓ Northwest Ordinance of 1785 – Education supported financially and thought to be a national concern.
- ✓ Constitution, Article 1, Section 8 Congress was granted the power to lay and collect taxes to provide for the general welfare.

Constitutional Amendment

- ✓ 10th Amendment – 1791- The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited it to the States are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.
- ✓ Because public education was not specifically granted to the federal government, it became a local and state responsibility to fund.

Constitutional Amendment

- ✓ 14th Amendment – 1868 – All persons born or naturalized in the U.S. are citizens and therefore have the rights and privileges of life, liberty or property, and are within the jurisdiction of equal protection under the law.

Land Grants

- ✓ 1862 and 1890 – First and Second Morrill Act granting public land to colleges across the country. Later called the Land Grant act.
- ✓ Donation of public lands to states to be used for the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college where the leading objective would be to teach agriculture and mechanic arts.

Court Cases for Education

- ✓ 1896 – Plessy v Ferguson – Ruled that “separate but equal” policies would be legal for public schools.
- ✓ 1954- Brown v Board of Education of Topeka- Ruled that “separate but equal” is not legal.

Vocational Education

- ✓ 1917 – Smith-Hughes Act
- ✓ 1946 – George-Barden Act
- ✓ These two acts focused upon support of agriculture, industrial and home economics training for high school students.

World War II

- ✓ Lanham Act of 1941 and Impact Aid Act of 1950 provided additional funding to communities/schools affected by the presence of military and federal employees.
- ✓ GI Bill, 1944 provided funds for returning veterans to attend college.

National Defense Education Act

- ✓ 1958- The Russians launched Sputnik and the space/science race was on.
- ✓ NDEA provided teachers with graduate fellowships to improve the teaching of science, mathematics, and foreign language instruction at both elementary and secondary levels.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ✓ 1965 – A Comprehensive set of programs including Title 1 program for federal aid to the disadvantaged that is periodically updated.
- ✓ ESEA explicitly prohibits a national curriculum and President Obama’s “Blueprint” does not mention a national curriculum.
- ✓ ESEA provided professional development, instructional materials, and resources to support parental involvement.
- ✓ Once called No Child Left Behind (2001), but now ESEA again.

Where are we now?

- ✓ Discussions of reauthorization of ESEA (currently called NCLB).
- ✓ Issues include: Role and Purpose of the federal government in public education and funding.
- ✓ Currently federal funding averages about 10% of local education budget revenue.
- ✓ Discussions of national standards and possible assessments.

Equity and Funding



Historical Timeline

1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson

1954 Brown vs. Bd.
of Education-

1965 Elementary &
Secondary Ed. Act

1980' s shift in
focus of ESEA

1975 PL 94-142

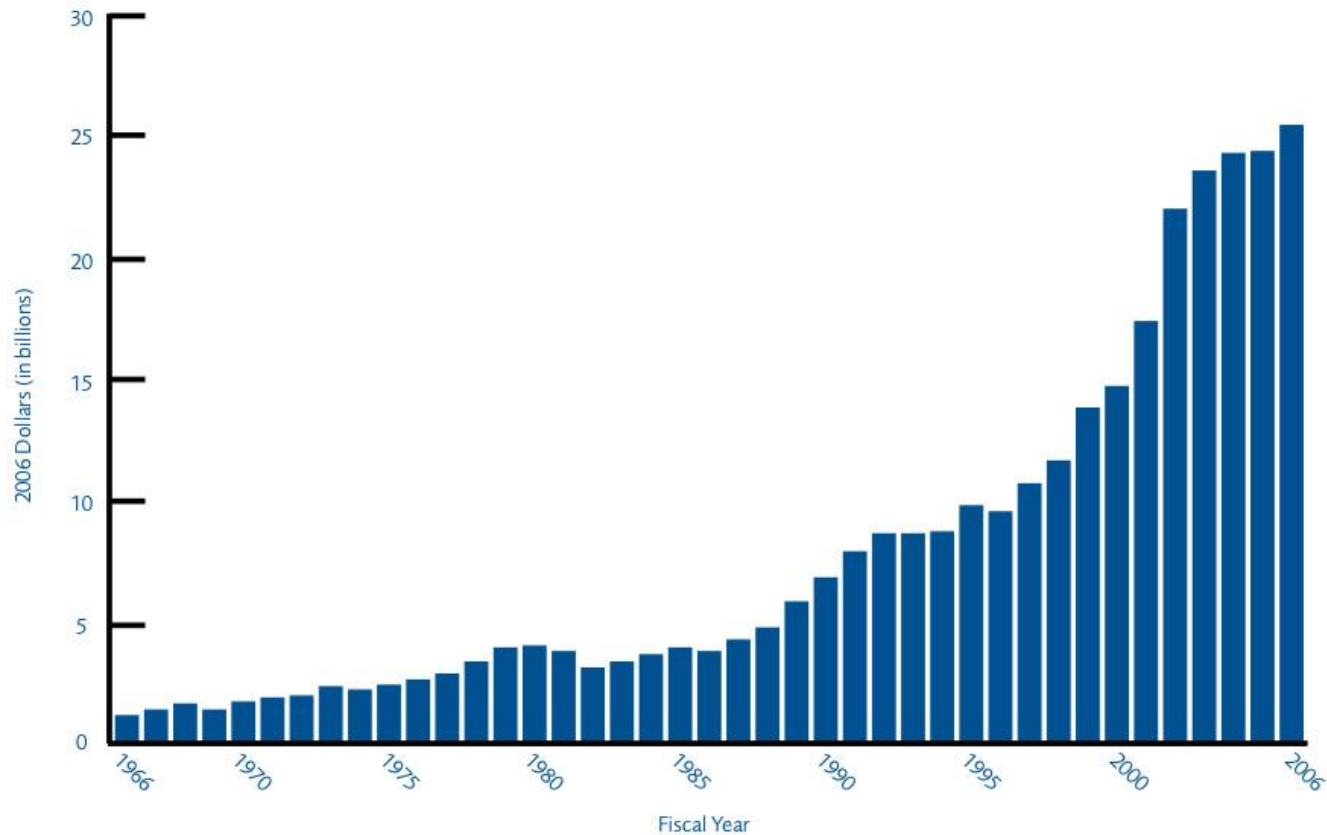
2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

2009 Race To the Top

(RTtT)

Federal Spending under ESEA

FIGURE 1: FEDERAL SPENDING UNDER THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT



Source: 2006 U.S. Budget, Historical Tables.

Study Question Funding & Equity 1, For Competitive funding

Competition:

- ✓ leads to innovation, efficiency, and accountability,
- ✓ requires school districts to analyze current organizational models and enhance transparency in use of funds,
- ✓ provides a direct link between accountability for the use of funds and student achievement
- ✓ gives the Secretary of Education clear authority to guide and redirect as necessary, the Department of Education's approach to state and local funding

Study Question Funding & Equity 1 Against Competitive Funding

- ✓ There are winners and losers in any competition
- ✓ Grant writing requires the use of state and local education funds, that may adversely impact small and rural areas
- ✓ If education is a moral obligation and a social justice, adequate funding should be provided
- ✓ There is incomplete data to support competitive funding and its impact upon schools, districts or state education agencies
- ✓ Competitive funding opportunities may be inconsistent and driven by a particular agenda

Study Question Funding & Equity 2

For Federal Mandates

Mandates:

- ✓ provide guidance and accountability to ensure equity
- ✓ reflect a commitment from the federal government
- ✓ encourage needed innovation, reform, and school improvement
- ✓ ensure national, state and local consistency
- ✓ call for a greater federal investment in research based programs to help states and districts respond to the needs of schools

Study Question Funding & Equity 2

Against Some Mandates

- ✓ Mandates restrict flexibility of state education agencies and school districts
- ✓ Mandates' accountability measures may be viewed as unrealistic and therefore not implemented
- ✓ Mandates' sanctions may adversely impact schools that need the most assistance because the federal financial assistance is not enough to support the mandate.

Unfunded Mandates

- ✓ The federal government says there are no unfunded federal mandates because they explain that districts do not have to comply with their mandates, therefore accepting no funding.
- ✓ However, the funding for accepting the federal restrictions does not cover the total cost of complying with that mandate (only 17% coverage as of last reporting)

Special Education Funding

- ✓ Federal funding under IDEA, (in 2004 called IDEIA) was projected to provide up to 40% of expenses but was never higher than the current level (17%)
- ✓ State receives federal funding and passes on to Local Education Agency (LEAs)
- ✓ Local: allotments based on:
 - Number of students on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
 - Excess costs to LEAs

Study Question Funding & Equity 3

- ✓ The anti-poverty and civil rights laws of the 1960s and 1970s brought about an emergence of the Department of Education's equal access mission.
- ✓ Despite the growth of the federal role in education, the Department never strayed from its official mission: to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Study Question Funding & Equity 4

Categorical funding, which is targeted at providing access and quality educational programming for special education, low-income, early childhood, etc. is a threat to local control.

Local Control versus Privatization

- Individualism is central to American identity
- Local districts should know best how to meet the needs of the community

Reasons for continuing local funding and local control vs. federal funding

- ✓ Tradition of local funding
- ✓ Educational efficiency
- ✓ Conviction that the level of funding does not affect education

Reasons for stronger federal role

- ✓ Funding model which prohibits sharing resources among communities
- ✓ Varying levels of funding are required to provide equal educational opportunities to children with different needs
- ✓ A sufficient overall level of funding is crucial

Study Question Funding & Equity 5-6.

Reasons for universal early childhood education:

- ✓ Long-term economic impact results in more people employed, paying taxes and social security
- ✓ Long-term results supported by strong research
- ✓ Stronger health in long-term
- ✓ Stronger social, emotional and cognitive skills
- ✓ Early preparedness leads to subsequent school achievement
- ✓ Stronger citizenry

Study Question Funding & Equity 6, Cont.

Reasons against quality early childhood education

- ✓ High cost of high quality early childhood education
- ✓ Fear that it will take away from funding at K-12 levels

Why not national standards or assessments?

The most common arguments against adopting the Common Core Standards for K-12 center on two issues: 1) the cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments and (2) the sovereignty of states in issues related to education and local control. Governor Rick Perry of Texas stated that the Race to the Top funding would only generate a one-time amount of \$75 per student, yet cost Texas taxpayers an additional \$3 million. A third argument is that the individual state standards might be more rigorous. However, states that adopt the Common Core are permitted to add 15 percent more in content.

Another concern is the potential to use scores from the student assessments as a major component of teacher evaluations and merit pay plans, an idea that has popular appeal. In August 2010, ten of the nation's premier educational co-authored a report that cautioned against relying on student test scores as a major indicator for evaluating teachers, citing the technical problems associated with using scores from standardized student assessments in value-added statistical models.

Does the United States need a national curriculum?

The U.S. Department of Education presents the view that, since the developers of the Common Core Standards and the proposed assessments have been groups with state representation rather than the federal government, neither program is a federal initiative. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, March 13). In March 2011, the Albert Shanker Institute issued a call for common curriculum guidelines. This document voices the concern that common assessments are being developed from the common standards with no curriculum in between. In May 2011, another group published an article with a different view: "Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum is Bad for America" (2011), discussed by Gewertz. The article also cites the prohibition against a federal curriculum contained in the 1965 ESEA.

Role Of Federal Government In Public Education: Historical Perspectives

By Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins and Margaret Hawkins Hill

Defining League Positions in Public Education

The League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS), through its positions on equality of opportunity, supports public education and a range of federal education programs. Areas where specific positions were developed are: integration, quality education, tuition tax credits, federal programs and education financing. Some programs are designed to meet the needs of special education students as well as the economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority students. The League worked for the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutes that receive federal aid. Historically, many state Leagues have their own positions that speak to equality, to funding, and to assessments and standards at the state level. Additionally the League, under its position on early intervention for children at-risk addresses issues related to the federal role in public education. To understand and reach consensus on the present and future role of the federal government in public education, it is important that we have some understanding of the history of the federal government's role in education activities. This paper and the links provided on the LWVUS website (www.lwv.org) delineate the materials that support this study.

Where Have We Been?

From the very beginning of our Republic, a well-educated citizenry was thought to be essential to protect liberty and the general welfare of the people. Even before the Constitution of the United States was established, the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 included responsibilities of the nation for an education system. Education has long been considered a national concern by the federal government. Through federal action, education has been encouraged and financially supported from the first Northwest Ordinance in 1787 to the present. Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution granted Congress the power to lay and collect taxes to provide for the general welfare of the United States. It is under this "general welfare" clause that the federal government has assumed the power to initiate educational activity in its own right and to participate jointly with states, agencies and individuals in educational activities.

During the first century of the new nation, Congress granted more than 77 million acres of the public domain as an endowment for the support of schools through tracts ceded to the states for the support of public schools. In 1841, Congress passed an act that granted 500,000 acres to eight states and later increased grants to a total of 19 states. The federal government also granted money to states, such as distributions of surplus federal revenue and reimbursements for war expenses. Though Congress rarely prescribed that such funds be used only for schools, education continued to be one of the largest expenses for state and local governments, so the states used federal funds whenever possible.

Two Constitutional Amendments played an important role in public education. In 1791, the 10th

Amendment stated, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Public education was not mentioned as one of those federal powers, and so historically has been delegated to the local and state governments.

In 1868, the 14th Amendment guaranteed rights to all citizens by stating “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens in the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.”

From colonial times through the early 19th century, before common schools became an established part of society, children were educated in an assortment of institutions and arrangements mostly supported by local entities.

During the 19th century the federal government involvement in education included vocational training, land grants, and the establishment in 1867 of the Office of Education. The purpose of this office was to collect information on schools and teaching that would help states establish effective school systems.

The passage of the Second Morrill Act in 1890 gave the Office of Education responsibility for administering support for the original system of land-grant colleges and universities. Vocational education became the next major area of federal aid to schools with the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act followed by the 1946 George-Barden Act focusing on agriculture, industrial arts and home economics training for high school students.

World War II led to a significant expansion of federal support for education. The Lanham Act of 1941 and the Impact Aid laws of 1950 eased the burden on communities affected by the presence of military and other federal installations by making payments to school districts. In 1944 the GI Bill authorized postsecondary education assistance that would ultimately send nearly 8 million WWII veterans to college.

The Supreme Court handed down the landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, declaring state laws that established separate public schools based on race unconstitutional. In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik. This legislation included support to teachers through graduate fellowships to improve the teaching of science, mathematics and foreign languages.

The anti-poverty and civil rights laws of the 1960s and 1970s dramatically increased the role of the federal government in public education. Laws passed included Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex and disability.

How Did We Get Here?

In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA Pub.I.89-1- Stat 27, 20 U.S.C. ch 70) launched a comprehensive set of programs including Title I program of federal aid to the disadvantaged. The Act funds primary and secondary education, while explicitly forbidding the establishment of a national curriculum. As mandated in the Act, the funds are authorized for professional development, instructional materials and resources to support educational programs and parental involvement promotion. The Act was originally authorized through 1970; however, the government has authorized the Act every five to ten years since its enactment. The current reauthorization of ESEA is called the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). NCLB also allows military recruiters to access 11th and 12th grade students' names, addresses and telephone listings when requested.

In 1980, Congress established the Department of Education as a Cabinet level agency. Then, for the next 12 years under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, education was a priority issue. The religious and private sectors were involved as well, with introductions of tax credits, parental involvement and vouchers. Additionally, in 1982, twenty-five bills were introduced to improve math and science instruction, but all failed in Congress. The tuition tax-credit was proposed for mainly religious schools but broadened to private school tuition in 1983. This too, failed. In 1983, the publication of *A Nation At Risk* brought the competitive nature of education to the forefront, warning that the United States no longer held the education edge when compared to the rest of the world.

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush signaled public school choice to be a "high priority." He also formed a task force to study Hispanic education and called for an "Indian education bill of rights" to help improve education for Native Americans. Drug education also came to the forefront during his Administration. In 1991, President Bush formed the National Education Goals Panel to create a national assessment system to measure progress toward the national education goals for 2000. In that same year, Congress passed a bill to create a national council on education standards and testing, the purpose of which would be to study the feasibility and desirability of creating national standards and a national examination system for students.

During President Bill Clinton's administration, education achievement focused on the Goals 2000 competitive grants. School districts realized significant gains by using these funds. However, the grants were only awarded to those districts that had the resources to write the grants and study their implication.

President George W. Bush made education issues a priority. NCLB, as described above, was one of the first bills passed by Congress during his Administration.

Where Are We Now?

The United States has changed dramatically since the early debates on the role of public schools and the role of the federal government in supporting and sustaining them. The importance of education for the common good has shifted from primarily local control to state and national control, with national attention from the Federal government and national organizations.

Congress is currently embroiled in a debate and stalemate over the reauthorization of ESEA, the 2001 NCLB. Major issues include the purpose and role of the federal government in education, funding, and the extent to which the federal government should play a role in public education. Areas for national debate involve school choice, accountability, teacher quality, goals, standards and above all, funding. Federal funding currently averages about 10 percent of local school budgets.

During the coming year, local and state Leagues across the United States will discuss the role of the federal government in public education with the goal of coming to consensus on a number of questions.

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