The Future of No Child Left Behind: 
Is accountability being left behind?

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Session Overview

- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the latest federal legislation that enacts the theories of standards-based education reform, which is based on the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education.

- The effectiveness of NCLB is hotly debated and many have called for a new accountability system.

- The purpose of this session will be to discuss some of the more favorable claims and criticisms of NCLB.

- The session will also examine proposals to reform NCLB most notably the US Department of Education’s Blueprint for Reform, Race to the Top, and School Improvement Grant (SIG).

- Topics including the use of growth models, linking teachers to student performance, and key elements for educational accountability models in transition.
Where are we?
Where are we going?
Are we there yet?
Accountability in the Year 2010 (and beyond?)
No Child Left Behind

Congress [the House education committee] plans to kick-start the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this week with the first in a series of hearings in a key House committee . . . Yet, the chances for a full reauthorization . . . still appear uncertain.

_Eighteen hearings were held (March 2010)_

“I look forward to working with the Congress to reauthorize the [ESEA] so that it will help to provide America’s students with the world-class education they need and deserve.”

USDE Secretary Duncan: “to reward teachers for improving student achievement . . . [and] to support teachers and principals who are ‘accelerating student learning’ rather than assessing teachers based on test scores.”
Blueprint for Reform

- College- and career-ready standards and assessments
- Complete education
- Diverse learners
- Early Learning
- Public School Choice
- Rewarding excellence and promoting innovation
- Supporting families and communities
- Supporting teachers
- Turning around low-performing schools
Race to the Top

Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace.

Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction.

Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most.

Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.
School Improvement Grant

Turning around the nation’s 5,000 lowest-performing schools, Secretary Duncan has said, is “part of our overall strategy for dramatically reducing the drop-out rate, improving high school graduation rates and increasing the number of students who graduate prepared for success in college and the workplace.”

The U.S. Department of Education is providing $4 billion for this effort. To qualify for this funding under the Title I School Improvement Grant program, states must identify their lowest-performing schools in economically challenged communities and transform those schools using one of the four following intervention models.
School Improvement Grant

**Turnaround**
- Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the staff
- New Principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting)

**Restart**
- Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization

**School Closure**
- Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving

**Transformation**
- Replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness
- Institute comprehensive instructional reforms
- Increase learning time and create community-oriented schools
- Provide operational flexibility and sustained support
School Improvement Grant

Which schools can receive SIG funds?

**Tier I**
State’s lowest 5% performing Title I schools

**Tier II**
State’s eligible Title I High Schools with equivalent poor performance

**Tier III**
Remaining 6-10% bottom performing Title I schools
School Improvement Grant

States have flexibility regarding:

• Defining lack of progress
• Determining the number of years constitutes a lack of progress
• Including only those students who attend school for a full academic year
• Applying an extended-year graduation rate
• Weighting elements of the definition (lack of progress)
CT Education Reform

• The new law imposes stricter requirements for graduation and focuses attention on core subjects such as math, history, biology and English;

• Increase parental involvement and better track student and teacher performance;

• The law empowers the state Board of Education to replace local school boards in low-achieving schools;

• Converting schools to “innovation schools,” triggering greater flexibility in curriculum, schedule, budgeting and staffing; and

• Removes barriers for expansion of charter schools, requiring schools to offer Advanced Placement courses, allowing students to get credit toward graduation for online course work, and requiring schools with a dropout rate of 8 percent or higher to establish an online credit recovery program.
Current State of ESEA Reform

“Policy Complexity, Political Calculus Cloud ESEA Reauthorization Outlook.”
(May 19, 2010—Education Week)

Numerous hurdles—including a crowded legislative calendar, the tensions of an election year, and a lack of agreement about where to take what is likely to be a very complicated bill—have many observers doubting that Congress will complete work on NCLB.

The administration is aiming to pass a bill this year, even though no formal piece of legislation has yet been introduced. *The House and Senate education committees are working on bill drafts including the rumor that the House may even begin marking up a bill in the summer.*

Senator Harkin aims to get a bill out of the Senate by the end of the summer. (But, opined an un-named Senate aide, ‘There’s no way we’re going to mark up a bill this summer.’) *Harkin’s education aide recently stated that the “timeline is a moving target; bipartisan support is the goal.”*

Rep. George Miller hasn’t committed to finishing the measure this year.
No Child Left Behind (Part II)

• Common assessments with achievement standards
• Common Standards
• Teacher quality
• District-level evaluation systems
  • “differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness” as called for in the Blueprint?
  • There are many who feel that evaluating teacher and principal effectiveness will be THE biggest issue.
• RT³ defines effective as one year’s growth and highly effective as 1.5 year’s growth in terms of student achievement.
Other NCLB Reform Items

• **English Language Learners**
  - Blueprint (p. 20) calls for states to implement evaluation systems on the effectiveness of their programs for this student group and to standardize criteria for identification and readiness to leave special programs. (see also *Education Week*, April 7, 2010, p. 24)
  - How might the recent ED-commissioned study where few states are meeting the NCLB goals for this group influence reauthorization provisions? (see *Education Week*, May 19, 2010, p. 10)

• **Social issues** such as health and other needs (support services advocates), homeschooling, military recruitment, and school prayer.

• **Closing Title I ‘loopholes’**
  - “‘Egregious inequities’ among states in Title I funding allocations, which flies in the face of [the] administration’s pledge to focus on educational equity.” (Senator Burr, NC)
Final Thoughts and Questions

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