

Education Policy for Action Series

Racing to the Top after Leaving No Child Behind: A Bottom Up View of the Federal Role in Urban Education

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Presentation Goals

- Describe evolving set of assumptions and theories of action undergirding “standards-based reform” and recent reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
- Glean perspectives on the impact of federal policies from Goals 2000 and NCLB to RTTT on urban education from the state, district, and school perspectives in New York
- Discuss major themes and strategies local activists might pursue to inform ESEA reauthorization

Presenters / Discussants

- Beverly Donohue, New Visions for Public Schools
- Pedro Noguera, Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, New York University
- Warren Simmons, Annenberg Institute
- Lester Young, New York State Board of Regents

“Title I tried to combat the educational effects of race and class inequality, but in a society and school system that were solidly built on that inequality.”

Cohen, D.K. & Moffitt, S.L. (2009). The Ordeal of Equality: Did Federal Regulation Fix the Schools?

Origins of Standards-Based Reform

1983

A Nation at Risk

- Shifts focus of reform from equity to excellence
- Ties education to economic well-being
- Emphasizes need for national perspective and action.

1989

National Education Summit

1994

Goals 2000: Educate America Act

- Established 8 National Education Goals
- National Education Goals Panel
- Supports voluntary national standards aligned with assessments and professional development
- Provides resources to states and national organizations to build infrastructure for SBR

Origins of Standards-Based Reform

1994

Improving America's Schools Act

ESEA Reauthorization

- Links ESEA supports to Goals 2000
- Shifts focus from programs to school-wide systemic reform
- Encourages use of research-based school designs
- Fosters teacher quality through PD

2001

No Child Left Behind

ESEA Reauthorization

- Stronger accountability for schools and districts
- Greater flexibility in use of funds
- Emphasis on methods proven by rigorous, scientific research
- Choice options for students in struggling schools
- Strengthens accountability for TQ

2009–2010

Race-To-The- Top

- Improving educator quality
- Common core standards and aligned assessments
- Building data systems
- Turning around low-performing schools

Shifting Values and Assumptions

FROM	TO
Equity	Excellence
Education Prevents Poverty	Education Advances the Economy
Improvement of Programs and Services through Pull-Out Strategy	School- and District-wide Improvement
Alignment of Standards, Assessment, and OTL	Accountability reduced to Standardized Test Results with Negative Consequences for Teachers and Students
School and Educator Improvement	Choice and Alternative Routes to Teaching as major levers
Formula-Driven Allocations	Competition-Driven Allocations
Local Concerns Voiced by Civil Rights Groups	National Concern Expressed by Business and Civic Elites

Policy Shifts and Local Impacts

- What are some of the pluses and minuses associated with these shifts and their impacts on local efforts?
- How have these policies helped and/or hindered state, district, and school reform efforts?
- What, in your view, are some of the most egregious failings of federal policy-making over this period?
- As Congress and the Administration move to reauthorize ESEA, what important lessons would you want them to consider, and what are the implications of these lessons for how the law should be reshaped?

Policy Shifts and Local Impacts

- How can local communities ensure that their perspectives and voices are weighed in the reauthorization process?
- What levers should local communities use to be heard?

Student Voices

- Lack of clarity about what it takes to succeed: *grades, complete work, behave well*
- Many feel not much is expected of them
- Curriculum is repetitious and not challenging
- Little support for grappling with issues of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, class, sexual orientation
- Little support for college preparation, many feel “written off.”

Teacher Voices

- Lack of clarity about what good instruction looks like
- Lack of support for providing differentiated instruction for English language learners, students with disabilities, and students with major gaps in achievement
- Lack of system support for identifying and sharing local expertise and promising practice
- Punitive test-based accountability systems reinforce narrowing the curriculum to emphasize test-prep.

Annenberg Resources Related to the Topic: see Annenberginstitute.org

- Ascher, C. & Maguire, C. *Beating The Odds: How Thirteen NYC Schools Bring Low-Performing Ninth-Graders to Timely Graduation and College Enrollment.*
- Garvey, J. *Are New York City's Public Schools Preparing Students for Success in College?*
- Mediratta, K.; Shah, S.; & McAlister, S. *Community Organizing for Stronger Schools: Strategies for Success*
- Simmons, W. (Summer 2009). *Urban Education Reform: Recalibrating the Federal Role.* In R. Rothman (Ed.), *Voices in Urban Education* (No. 24).

Additional Resources

- Bryk, A.S.; Sebring, P.B.; Allensworth, E.; Luppescu, S.; & Easton, J. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cohen, D.K. & Moffitt, S. L. (2009). *The Ordeal of Equality: Did Federal Regulation Fix the Schools?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*. New York: Teachers College Press.