

Primary and Secondary Education: ESEA Reauthorization

Iowans place a very high value on education. The 112th Congress is expected to take action to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, named No Child Left Behind. While controversial, No Child Left Behind has called the question on disparities in student achievement and identified many “low-performing” schools where children are at particular risk.

Meanwhile, while historically Iowa has been a leader among states in overall fourth and eighth grade student reading and mathematics scores, Iowa today ranks in the bottom half of states on these measures. Students preparing for the 21st century economy require much higher skills than in the past, and this requires a world class educational system, with the federal government playing a significant role in funding services to those most in need under Title I.

As U.S. Senator, what changes, if any, will you make in ESEA and to support actions that can ensure Iowa students acquire the skills needed for the 21st century economy?



GRASSLEY: No Child Left Behind promised increased flexibility for educators and local school districts who know best how to meet the educational needs of their students in return

for accountability for results. Unfortunately, the final product resulted in a very detailed and rigid federal testing and accountability system while the proposed flexibility was watered down. I am cosponsoring a bill to maintain a flexible accountability system that gives parents useful information about their child’s education while returning key decisions about how to meet a child’s educational needs to states and local school districts closer to the parents.



CONLIN: We must work to improve education by fixing No Child Left Behind and setting new standards for schools. No Child Left Behind had some of the right goals, such as

measuring the success of students to close achievement gaps, but without adequate funding the program is simply another unfunded federal mandate. The program takes a rigid, narrow approach in measuring student achievement and paradoxically punishes the schools most in need of assistance. We must create a new program that is flexible, provides support for educators, establishes a system that rewards student progress, and is fully funded by the federal government.