

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

Request:

- Encourage school districts to take advantage of museums as unique educational resources and to facilitate museum visits to help teach the curriculum.
- Retain a set of core academic subjects that includes the many subject areas in which museums help teach the curriculum – including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.
- Expand connections among museums and teachers to ensure schools are able to take full advantage of museums' unique human and material resources.
- Continue to expressly include museums in applicable sections of ESEA Title I, and Title II and other subject-specific programs where appropriate and justified.
- Recognize holders of advanced degrees in museum education as qualified to work directly with students.
- Allow nonprofits (including museums) to directly compete for teacher professional development funds.
- Implement reauthorization language (similar to "Interagency Collaboration" language in P.L. 111-340) to require greater collaboration between the Department of Education and the Institute of Museum and Library services on initiatives, materials, research or technology supporting educational, cultural, historical, scientific, environmental and other museum activities.

Introduction:

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was the name given to the law that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the principal federal education policy for kindergarten through high school. While due for reauthorization, this legislation is not expected to be completed this year. NCLB was designed to re-focus federal policy on reading and math, with strong accountability provisions, including annual standardized testing (developed by each state) for all students in certain grades. Schools that do not achieve test scores showing "Adequate Yearly Progress" in tests focused on reading and math are subject to a host of sanctions. Almost immediately after NCLB took effect in 2002, school districts began devoting more time to reading and math at the expense of other subjects.

Unintended Consequences of No Child Left Behind

- More than one third (36 percent) of all school districts have cut elementary social studies instruction – by an average of 76 minutes a week. Science instruction is down at 28 percent of the schools, and arts education is down at 16 percent of the schools.
- As a result, museum visits and instruction related to art, science and history education (among other subject areas) have decreased.

Museums are Critical Partners in Education

- Each year, museums spend more than \$2.2 billion on educational programming and provide more than 18 million instructional hours to students and teachers, including the following:
 - Educational programming for students
 - Museum staff visits to schools
 - Traveling exhibits in schools
 - Professional development for teachers
 - More than 90 million visits each year from school students
- The typical museum devotes three-quarters of its education budget specifically to K-12 students. In 2010, despite a year of economic stress, 78% of museums maintained or expanded the resources devoted to K-12 education (AAM study).
- Museums design educational programs in coordination with state, local and common core curriculum standards in math, science, art, literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, geography, and social studies.
- Educational museum visits reach students in ways that textbooks and classroom instruction cannot. Experiential learning in museums activates students' curiosity and imagination.
- In recognition of the strong role museums play in the education of children, museums are expressly included in several sections of ESEA/NCLB – including Arts in Education, Teaching American History, Technology, and Professional Development.

The Partnership between Museums and Schools Should Be Strengthened

- The partnership between museums and schools has served and benefited students, teachers and communities immensely.
- Many museums already participate in 21st Century Community Learning Centers and magnet and charter school programs (under the rubric of “community-based organizations”). However, museums should be expressly included as eligible entities in these programs for clear association and recognition to be drawn by state and local education agencies and other key stakeholders in education.
- Positions that have been established within school districts with the responsibility of ensuring that museum resources are well utilized by students and educators have proven extremely successful.
- Teachers report a desire to continue and expand upon educational visits to museums, but are under increased pressure to focus on standardized tests.
- Budgetary constraints, fuel costs and other factors are leading school officials to approve fewer educational visits to museums, to the detriment of both students and teachers.

Status:

- In March 2010, the Obama administration released its blueprint for revising the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The blueprint provides incentives for states to adopt academic standards that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and create accountability systems that measure student growth toward meeting the goal that all children graduate and succeed in college.
- Both the House of Representatives and the Senate have held hearings focused on ESEA reauthorization. On October 20, 2011, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed a comprehensive reauthorization bill, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act of 2011* by a vote of 15-7. The House Committee on Education and the Workforce does not plan to pass a comprehensive reauthorization bill. The Committee has been considering a series of bills seeking to rewrite portions of the No Child Left Behind law, and on February 9, 2012, Committee Chairman John Kline introduced two ESEA reauthorization bills, the Student Success Act (H.R. 3989) and the Encouraging Innovation and Effective Teachers Act (H.R. 3990), and held a hearing on the bills on February 16.