

AAUW remains committed to ensuring strong academic principles and bias-free public education that closes the achievement gap for all children—objectives at the heart of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

As Congress contemplates the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), AAUW urges support for the following:

Use multiple measures and growth models. AAUW supports using multiple measures of student achievement such as achievement and growth in English, math, science, and, if states chose, other subjects. At the high school level, schools should also be evaluated on graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and rates of college enrollment without remediation.

Improve school accountability measures. Schools should be held accountable for demonstrating that they are meeting educational goals. The federal government should offer incentives and assistance to struggling schools rather than punishment, which only further harms students and hamstring educators from making progress in the schools most in need of improvement.

Require annual, statewide assessments. These assessments would be given to all students (in grades 3–8 or at least once in high school) and would measure each student's progress toward meeting the state's college and career-ready standards. This data would provide significant civil rights indicators important to ensuring that all children are benefiting from quality education.

Require schools to disaggregate and cross-tabulate data. 1) Sex must be added to the group of categories for which the disaggregation of graduation rate data is required. 2) Graduation rate and academic assessment data reported by districts should be broken down by sex within race/ethnicity (i.e. cross-tabulated). 3) The system must hold districts accountable for the performance of all subgroups of students and cross-

tabulate that data by sex.

Promote public school choice. It is in students' best interests to be offered public school choice and flexibility. Such flexibility and innovation, however, must be consistent with civil rights laws, including Title IX. Public funds should only be used for public education — not private school vouchers that benefit only a few. Additionally, AAUW opposes attempts to pass or include any provisions that support Title I public school portability in legislation — even if such a position limits the funds to public schools. These provisions are designed to make it easier to implement private school vouchers as a next step.

Improve school climate. AAUW supports legislation to improve school and campus safety. AAUW's report *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*¹ shows that our country is dealing with a pervasive problem: Nearly half of all 7th–12th grade students said that they have encountered some form of sexual harassment. Hostile school environments can lead to disastrous outcomes, especially for students who are targeted for failing to conform to gender stereotypes.²

Strengthen STEM education. AAUW supports promoting and strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, especially for girls and other underrepresented populations. AAUW's 2010 report, *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*, found that environmental and social barriers continue to block women's full participation in these nontraditional STEM fields.³ Congress should direct and provide adequate funding for federal, state, and local agencies to establish outreach and retention programs for girls in STEM activities, courses, and career development. AAUW supports legislation to

encourage states to allow computer science classes taught in secondary education to count toward graduation requirements and funding teacher training to include recognition and avoidance of implicit gender bias.

Save the Women’s Educational Equity Act. WEEA was designed to give educators tools to eliminate barriers — such as sex stereotypes in classroom materials and curricula — that keep students from full participation and success in all areas of education. Such technical assistance is critical to Title IX compliance and should be included in ESEA reauthorization.

Enhance Title IX compliance by passing the High School Data Transparency Act. This legislation would require that high schools publicly report basic data on the number of female and male students participating in their athletic programs and the expenditures made for their sports teams.

Expand training in gender-fair teaching. Professional development for teachers should cover topics such as eliminating gender and racial bias in the classroom, sensitivity to gender and racial differences, and engaging students in the face of gender-based and racial peer pressure and parental expectations.

Oppose programs that rely on unproven sex stereotypes. AAUW does not oppose the idea of public single-sex education per se, so long as it is appropriate, necessary, and done in a manner consistent with constitutional requirements and antidiscrimination laws. Unfortunately, the current federal regulations governing single-sex education allow for such programs without appropriate oversight or accountability, or even proof that such programs improve educational outcomes—something AAUW simply cannot support when precious tax dollars are at stake. C11).

Invest in after-school programs. After-school programs should be expanded to enrich the school experience and improve educational outcomes.

Support early childhood education. Providing a foundation of early childhood education will help improve and sustain achievement in later years and save precious taxpayer dollars down the road.⁴ AAUW supports access to high-quality and affordable child care as well as funding increases for Head Start and Early Head Start to ensure all children are prepared for school.

Additional Resources

AAUW’s Position on Single Sex Education
American Association of University Women
www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/position-on-single-sex-education-112.pdf

AAUW’s Position on Title IX
American Association of University Women
www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/aauw-issues/title-ix

Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School
American Association of University Women
www.aauw.org/research/crossing-the-line

Letters on Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization
American Association of University Women
www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/ESEA-letters.pdf

Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
American Association of University Women
www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Since 1881, AAUW has been one of the nation’s leading voices promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW has a nationwide network of more than 170,000 members and supporters across the United States, as well as 1,000 local branches and 800 college and university partners.

¹ AAUW. (2011). *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from www.aauw.org/research/crossing-the-line.

² GLSEN. (September 5, 2012). *2011 National School Climate Survey: LGBT Youth Face Pervasive, But Decreasing Levels of Harassment*. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/2897.html?state=research&type=research.

³ AAUW (2010). *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few.

⁴ HighScope. (2005). *Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*. Retrieved May 13, 2013, from www.highscope.org/content.asp?contentid=219.