

**NATIONAL STUDY OF
THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION
CONSENSUS MEETING RESULTS SUBMITTED
BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WILMETTE**

Our League's Responses and Comments in **Bold**

(The National League's position will be made available in spring 2012)

General Consensus Questions

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is

Much too small

Too small

About right

Too large

Much too large

2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)

a. **1.** To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.

b. **4.** To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.

c. **2.** To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.

d. **3.** To monitor state efforts for funding

e. **5.** To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.

3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.

Strongly agree

Agree

No consensus

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please share any comments your League has concerning the topics covered in the General Consensus Questions (questions 1 – 3). (250 word maximum)

Question 1: Several members felt strongly that the role of the federal government in education was Much Too Small.

Common Core Standards Questions

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)

a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top

b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.

c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source

d. All of the above

e. None of the above

5. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common cores standards?

Yes

No

If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)

a. Voluntary

b. Mandated

c. Mandated, if fully funded

If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)

a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.

b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.

c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)

a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.

b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.

c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.

d. No national curriculum.

No consensus could be met for Question 6.

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)

a. **1.** Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.

b. **2.** Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.

c. **5.** Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.

d. **4.** Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.

e. **3.** Provide diagnostic information on each child.

8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)

a. Data should be "norm referenced" (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.

b. Data should be "criterion referenced" and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.

c. Data should be used to determine "cut" scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.

9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):

a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels

b. Reward schools that achieve high scores

c. Rank teachers based on student test score data

d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores

e. Inform districts how their population

compares to others similar to theirs.

Please share any comments your League has concerning the topics covered in the Common Core Standards Questions (questions 4 – 9). (250 word maximum):

Question 6: No consensus was reached among “a,” “b,” and “c.” No one spoke in favor of “d.”

Question 7: Members felt that “d” and “e” were equal.

Funding & Equity Questions

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds.

However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements

b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants

c. Competitive grants only

d. No federal funding

11. If the federal government’s role is the concern of the “common good” then: (choose one)

a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.

b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.

c. Funding should be provided through grants only.

d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.

e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)

a. **1.** high quality teaching/learning

b. **3.** adequate and current learning materials

c. **5.** clean and well maintained physical facilities

d. **2.** food and health care

e. **4.** safe and secure neighborhoods

f. **6.** secure housing

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered “categorical” rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

Strongly agree

Agree

No consensus

Disagree

Strongly disagree

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

Strongly agree

Agree

No consensus

Disagree

Strongly disagree

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g.Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other

supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

Strongly Agree

Agree

No consensus

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

This funding should be extended to :

All children

Only those with special needs

Special needs first

Please share any comments your League has concerning the

topics covered in the Funding and Equity Questions

(questions 10 – 15). (250 word maximum)

Question 12: Ranks 1 and 6 were easily assigned. The rest were difficult to rank. Members felt 2 through 5 were equally important.

OUR NEXT STUDY:

PRIVATIZATION

We hear a lot about privatization, but what's it's all about?

Who does it serve, what are the trade-offs, and which efficiencies are created or lost? Are there winners and losers, or is that question an oversimplification? At the heart of it, what policy issues should be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state, or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector?

Our League is about to begin a study on this important topic.

We have received a series of documents from LWVUS, and we plan to convene our first session in December. All members are strongly encouraged to join what promises to be a complex and fascinating study. We will let you know the meeting's date and time as soon as it becomes available.

Our national basis for democracy will inform our entire study.

We'll begin by researching transfers to the private sector, reviewing their stated goals and examining impacts on the communities they are meant to serve. Then we'll identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

This study will be demanding, enlightening, and it will remind us what our Founding Fathers expected from the body politic as America was an emerging nation.