
PUBLIC EDUCATION STUDY
CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

GENERAL 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. **To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.**
 - b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - d. To monitor state efforts for funding
 - e. 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. (250 word maximum)

The Las Vegas Valley League of Women Voters wholeheartedly endorses the notion that quality public education is vital to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy. A literate citizenry, capable of critical thinking and problem solving, is paramount to continuing to build a nation of opportunity and freedom. We believe that it is the responsibility of every legislator, elected official, educator, business and institution, parent, and adult citizen to work together to promote quality education for all children. This social mandate falls heaviest on the state and local government and populations to provide a quality education and to meet the special needs of all children.

With consensus, the LVVLWV believes that the principal role of the federal government in education is to ensure the **equity and adequacy** of the public education afforded to every child, pre-K through 12th grade by providing **oversight** of state programs. We agree that decisions about education are best made at the school, district, and state levels by those closest to the children in our classrooms and most acutely familiar with their needs.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

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?
 - 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.**
7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)
- a. **Provide an OPTIONAL assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.**
 - b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
 - c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
 - d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
 - e. 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.**

This copy of the LWV Public Education Study Consensus Questions is a working copy for your reference . Only Consensus responses submitted through the online response form will be accepted.

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

Because Nevada had already endorsed and begun implementation of the Common Core standards, our discussions did not revolve around the adequacy and wisdom behind the new guidelines, nor how they were tied to applications for Race To The Top funding. We did consider questions stemming from Common Core as to whether or not a national assessment, national curriculum, or national data should be mandated. Although there is always curiosity about how students across the nation compare, we believe that every state should maintain its role in determining the curriculum and assessments. The federal government may offer nationally common assessments and curriculum on a voluntary basis, but that decision should remain at the state level.

We believe that any national assessment should be voluntary and the data provided as “criterion referenced” to clearly inform parents, educators, and policymakers of the outcomes of instruction at every level as well as the growth and mastery of each individual child. We oppose all unfunded mandates from the federal level. No other high-performing nation mandates common assessments until graduation and none use this data to punish, rank, or reward schools. We see a danger in continuing down this mandated “No Child Left Behind” path.

With consensus, we welcome federal dissemination of research, “white papers,” best practices, grant opportunities, and curriculum and assessments used by states offered in collaboration. We do not believe that any of these instructional tools should be mandated, nor should any “strings” be attached, nor sanctions imposed for sharing or utilizing these federal options.

FUNDING AND EQUITY

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. 2) adequate and current learning materials
 - c. 3) clean and well maintained physical facilities
 - d. 4) safety on campus
 - e. 5) food and health care
 - f. 6) safe and secure neighborhoods
 - f. 7) secure housing

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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.

a. Strongly Agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly Disagree

b. 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. (250 word maximum)

The input and discussion of our Education Study included a wide variety of local and state board members, educators at the both the classroom and administrative levels, parents, grandparents, school volunteers, local activists and concerned citizens. Each and every member agreed that poverty, family, and individual factors weighed heavily in the success of each child and while there is an overwhelming desire to provide the food, housing, neighborhood safety and nurturing out of school, we recognize the reality which is that the schools cannot parent students. We believe that departments of education can do their best to partner with social service and law enforcement agencies to improve the learning environment for each child but that it is not feasible, with present funding to require that schools provide more than referrals, resources, and supportive adults for issues related to food, health care, neighborhood safety, and secure housing. We believe that it is only reasonable to expect that schools provide equity in the high quality teaching and learning materials/resources offered, along with clean, safe, well-maintained physical facilities, a positive learning environment, and the opportunity and expectation that every child can be successful.

The federal government must provide adequate and equitable funding for special needs such as Special Education and English Language Learners but not through competitive funding. Every child should have the right to become a winner, without losers due to grant-writing and lobbying.

-----submitted by Jane Newton, Education Study leader and Sandra Metcalf, League President

Las Vegas Valley League of Women Voters, November 2011

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