

Key Remarks From ESEA Reauthorization Hearings: March–May 2010

April 29, 2010

Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

Selected statements of each speaker are presented to help you identify which testimony you may wish to read in its entirety.

Michael Hinojosa

Superintendent, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas

“Please also be reminded that academic language acquisition takes multiple years to accomplish. Students who are literate in one language can acquire literacy more readily in a second language. Schools should be given credit for students who have gained proficiency and literacy under their instructional program. Thus, limited English proficient students should be part of a larger student group that includes English language learners.”

Carmen Medina

Chief, Division of Student Services and Migrant Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

“The average migrant family moves three to five times annually. Such mobility is particularly difficult on the children of migrant families and detrimental to their educational achievement. Mobility as a risk factor for academic achievement is combined with the fact that many migrant children are not native English speakers and need instruction in English as a second language. Evidence shows that migrant children are usually three to five years behind non-migrant students in grade level and are at an increased risk of dropping out of school.”

Lucinda Hundley

Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services, Littleton Public Schools, Littleton, Colorado

“To be effective, state accountability systems must include all students, and be held accountable for the achievement of all students. Using progress monitoring data related to IEP goals is not a valid assessment of the success of the system to promote high levels of achievement for students with disabilities on state standards. The IEP is an individualized guarantee for special education and related services based on assessed student needs. IEP goals are related to a student’s specific individual needs, including, for example, services and supports—but these alone are not always a sufficient gauge of a student’s educational achievement. Special education must also provide specially designed instruction and services for students with disabilities that facilitate high expectations and high achievement. The system is not held accountable if progress on meeting IEP goals is used as the sole accountability measure.”

Denise Ross

Supervisor, Homeless Education Office, Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland

“The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is an anchor for homeless students in many ways. It allows these vulnerable youngsters to have immediate school access and school stability during their time of transition. ... Our program provides homeless students with vouchers or gift cards for clothing, uniforms, shoes, school supplies, personal hygiene items, eye exams and glasses, if prescribed. We also provide afterschool academic support services with McKinney-Vento grant funds in a local elementary school and at a homeless shelter for women and children. We know that if you equip the students with these necessities, it will enhance their desire to attend school, and improve their academic performance.”

Kayla VanDyke

Student, Eagan, Minnesota

“I’m not an expert on policy but I have been affected by child welfare policies and I hope my experiences can help you make choices that will improve the system.”