Exploring Education Policy for Children Birth to 8: A New Vision

Danielle Ewen, CLASP

Adele Robinson, NAEYC

Lindy Buch, NAECS-SDE

ESEA and Early Childhood Education

- Title I, Part A

- Title I, Part B

- Title II--Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals

- Title III — Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students

- Title V — Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs

Title I, Part A—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

- Serve children from birth through age at school entry
- Reach at-risk children in families with incomes above poverty
- Fund high-quality programs that meet Head Start educational standards
- Provide comprehensive services
- Serve children in community-based settings
- Fund teacher professional development

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

Title I Grants to States

- Title I is the largest federal funding source for low-income students, although a small portion is used for preschool.

  - In 2002, an estimated 2-3% of Title I funds nationwide, or $200 million, was used for preschool.

  - In 2003, Title I served more than 456,000 preschool aged children, 3% of all Title I participants.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

Title I Grants to States

- Title I funds are allocated to state education agencies (SEAs) who distribute funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) based on percentages of low-income children. Funds are then distributed to schools within Title I districts.

- Funding is based on the LEA's percent of low-income children ages 5 to 17.

  - LEA determines what measure of need to use from a composite of indicators
  - Most districts use the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price school lunches

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

How Can Title I be Used for Preschool?

- At the district level
  - Eligibility based on residence within district, or part of district, and assessment of risk for meeting state academic standards as determined by multiple, educationally-related, objective criteria determined by state.
    - Income is used to prioritize, not determine, eligibility.

- At the school level

  - **Schoolwide programs**: Eligibility based on residence within the attendance area of the school.

  - **Targeted-assistance programs**: Eligibility based on assessment of risk for meeting state's academic standards.

Title I Early Education Requirements

- Meet Head Start Education Performance Standards
- Include a parental involvement component
- Title I programs using an Even Start model must integrate ECE, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a family literacy program and must comply with Even Start requirements
- In some Title I preschools, teachers must meet the NCLB "highly qualified" standard

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

How Can Title I be Used for Preschool?

- In addition to direct educational services, Title I funds can be used to fund:
  - Teachers salaries, professional development, counseling services, minor remodeling, and leasing or renting space in private facilities
  - Comprehensive services if a needs assessment shows that a child needs health, nutrition, or other social services and they are not available from other sources
  - Screening to identify children at risk
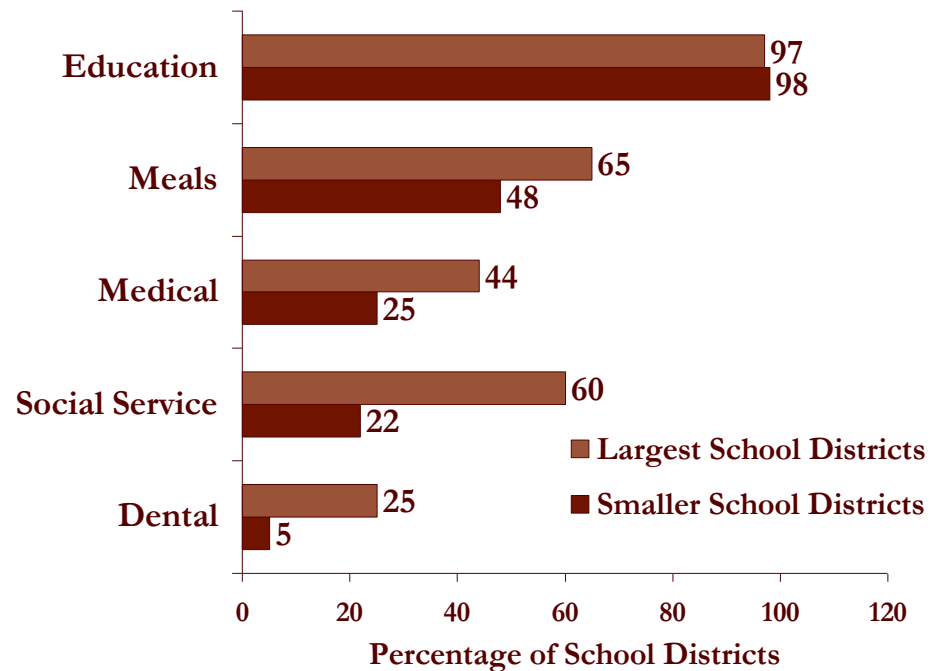
Source: U.S. General Accounting Office, *Title I Preschool Education: More Children Served, but Gauging Effect on School Readiness Difficult.*

Early Childhood Programs Can Receive Other Education Funds

- Title I, Part B
  - Even Start
  - Early Reading First

- Title II--Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals
  - Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program (not currently funded)

CLASP
policy solutions that work for low-income people

Early Childhood Programs Can Receive Other Education Funds

- Title III — Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students
- Title V — Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
  - Promotion Of School Readiness Through Early Childhood Emotional And Social Development

Looking to the Future

- Promote **partnerships** with school districts and early childhood programs

- Protect and expand **investments** in young children from birth to age of school entry

- Extend education interest and investment in **supports** across range of domains and for all children

- Expand **professional development** opportunities for those serving young children regardless of auspice

- Increase understanding of **where children are** and the services they receive, including funding sources

Current Themes

- U.S. Department of Education announced 4 reform themes for stimulus funds – Race to the Top (competitive grants to states) and Investing in Innovation Grants (competitive grants to school districts or school districts partnering with nonprofit organizations)

- Expanding Title I use for children below kindergarten

naeyc®

Four Reform Areas

- Adopting internationally benchmarked **standards and assessments** that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding **effective teachers and principals**;
- Building **P-20 data systems** that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices; and
- **Turning around** our lowest-performing schools

naeyc®

Standards & Assessments

Common core standards initiative – National Governor's Association and Council of Chief State School Officers

-- research and evidence-based, internationally benchmarked, aligned with college and work expectations and include rigorous content and skills

-- starting with high school, releasing K-12 in December 2009

-- U.S. Dept of Education will award $350 million of stimulus funds to states to develop or adopt assessments aligned to the common core standards

naeyc®

Teacher Effectiveness

- ESEA uses the term "highly qualified teacher"
  - Race to the Top and Investing In Innovation called for comments on a new definition of "highly effective teacher"

  Highly effective teacher means a teacher whose students achieve high rates (e.g., more than one grade level in an academic year) of student growth. Applicants may supplement this definition as they see fit so long as teacher effectiveness is judged, in significant measure, by student growth.

Data Systems

- Unique identifier for every student that does not permit a student to be individually identified
- School enrollment history, demographic characteristics, and program participation record of every student;
- Information on when a student enrolls, transfers, drops out, or graduates from a school;
- Students scores on tests required by the ESEA;
- Information on students who are not tested, by grade and subject;
- Students scores on tests measuring whether they're ready for college;
- A way to identify teachers and to match teachers to their students;
- Information from students' transcripts,
- Data on students' success in college
- Data on whether K-12 students are prepared to succeed in college;
- A system of auditing data for quality, validity, and reliability; and
- The ability to share data from P-20

Struggling Schools

- Staff selection
- New structures or formats for school day or year
- Controlling school budget
- Comprehensive services such as adult mentors, local partnerships with community organizations
- School climate and culture
- Engaging families and communities

Race to The Top & Investing in Innovation

- RTT 4 themes are absolutes for state applications; includes optional priority for Prek-3 practices, strategies or programs that improve educational outcomes with focus on school readiness and transition between P and K

- I3 grants to districts/districts partnering with community organizations includes optional priority for early childhood practices, strategies, and programs B-3rd grade – comments period just closed; waiting for final applications

State(s) Perspective on ESEA: Connecting Early Childhood to ESEA

- Big Picture: 4 reform areas apply to 0-8
- Detail: Big ideas play out differently for young children; there are many ANDs

1. Standards = Expectations for children AND program standards
   Assessment = Child assessment AND program assessment
   Horizontal AND vertical alignment
2. Highly effective teacher = measure teacher performance directly AND use child outcomes in research and evaluation
3. Data = education data AND other systems' data
4. Struggling schools = quality improvement AND system infrastructure improvement

State(s) Perspective: Standards

- Early Learning Standards/ Program Standards
  - NAEYC and NAECS-SDE position statements; Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Horizontal Alignment/Vertical Alignment
- Infant/toddler standards (about ½ of states)
  - Most organized around developmental domains
- Preschool or PreK standards
  - Goal I domains; some include academic areas
- K-3: Common Core
  - Language, literacy and math
  - Where's the rest?

National Association of
Early Childhood Specialists in
State Departments of Education

State(s) Perspective: Assessment

- Child assessment/program assessment: need R&D
- Horizontal alignment: with the standards they are supposed to measure
- Horizontal alignment: does the higher scoring program result in greater developmental gains for children?
- Are there optimal levels of development?
- Can we decrease the achievement gap by decreasing the opportunity gap?

If we (the states) could advise the secretary…..

- We'd focus on program quality/improvement
  - Measured directly with better tools
  - With research and evaluation strategies to link child progress to higher quality programs
  - And ask for funding to develop better child assessments
- We'd recall that experimental programs that have focused on all domains of development, and have been intentional in helping children become learners as well as learn, have promoted those children's success in school and in life

State(s) Perspective:
Highly Effective Teacher

- OSEP model, states' experiences with child outcomes for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education
  - Growth
  - Multi-domain
- Measure teacher performance directly
- Use research and evaluation to link teacher qualities to child growth outcomes
- Measuring learning: Infant development vs. specific content

If we (the states) could advise the secretary…..

- Measure teacher effectiveness directly
    - Newer instruments
    - Comprehensiveness
- Invest in research to tie teacher characteristics to child growth and longitudinal impact

State(s) Perspective: Data Systems

- Unique identifiers
- Cross-system input
- Longitudinal tracking capabilities
- Issues:
  - Multiple enrollments
  - Need continuous data entry; staff turnover and frequent changes of program
  - Non-standard assessment data

If we (the states) could advise the secretary…..

- Data from all public systems, not just education, to truly link 0-5 to K-12

- Conversation needed about private programs

- Require data entry from federally-funded non-education programs

State(s) Perspective: Struggling Schools

Struggling early childhood settings

- – Low funding
- – Low wages
- – Teacher preparation; professional development
- – Teacher turnover
- – Inadequate space and materials
- – Segregation by risk status
- – Reflection of family struggles

If we (the states) could advise the secretary…..

- Close the achievement gap by closing the opportunity gap
- Increase opportunity by increasing quality
  - Focus on program standards that are aligned with early learning expectations/guidelines
  - Assess programs and teachers for performance; implement quality improvement systems
  - Align professional preparation and development 0-8
  - Use child assessment to inform program assessment, but not as the only assessment of quality

National Association of
Early Childhood Specialists in
State Departments of Education

Suggestions for ESEA Reauthorization

- Vertically align expectations for children's learning and development 0-8

- Horizontally align expectations for children and standards for programs

- Require assessments of children that are comprehensive in all domains

- Improve program assessment instruments

- Collect demographic and program participation data on children in AT LEAST all publicly-funded programs