

## **Consensus Recommendations for a Well-Rounded Education**

The Obama administration's FY11 budget request and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) blueprint propose to consolidate eight grant programs that support teaching and learning in the areas of the arts, foreign languages, civics, history, geography, and economics into a single competitive grant—the Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education program. This program would be available to high-need school districts, a high-need district in partnership with a state education agency, or a high-need district in partnership with other entities. However, the proposal puts content areas in competition with one another for funding and recognition and, thereby, further reduces the likelihood that students in high-need schools receive a truly comprehensive, well-rounded education.

We believe each student must receive equal access to a credible, comprehensive, and well-rounded education that includes instruction in all core academic subjects delivered at appropriate times throughout the school experience. “Core academic subjects” are defined as those listed in ESEA—English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. We believe, moreover, that credible and comprehensive instruction should also apply to physical education and health education.

Each of these subjects is crucial to a student's learning in its own right, and no single subject should be considered more important than another. Indeed, the combination of the subjects and the interrelationship between disciplines enhances learning and understanding for each student. Moreover, a well-rounded education provides students with the academic preparation and knowledge to succeed in the increasingly global marketplace and in our own complex and ever changing society.

A well-rounded education is an absolute necessity for any graduate to be considered college, career, and citizenship ready. Delivery of a well-rounded education must be reflected in standards, assessments, accountability systems, and public reporting of achievement and must take into account the needs of students and the expectations of educators, employers and public officials in the global environment of the 21st century. In addition, flexibility for schools, local districts, and communities to customize education to meet their unique circumstances is essential.

To achieve these goals, the undersigned organizations call upon the Obama administration and Congress to

1. Include all elements of a well-rounded education in any definition of college, career, and citizenship ready standards.
2. Maintain discrete funding streams for each of these worthy subject areas to ensure that each retains federal support individually and that all receive a minimum level of resources reflecting collective support for a well-rounded education.
3. Promote grant competitions within disciplines, not between them, which prioritizes underserved or high-need schools and students and emphasize best practices, scalability, and cross-subject collaboration and integration.

4. Develop a rigorous evaluation process, including significant input from professional educators, to measure the effectiveness of the funded activities and to propose improvements in the respective grant programs.
5. Establish meaningful public reporting and accountability requirements regarding student achievement in each of these disciplines at the school, district, and state level.

American Association for State and Local History  
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)  
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages  
American Historical Association  
American School Health Association  
ASCD  
Association for Documentary Editing  
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools  
Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago  
Educational Theatre Association  
Facing History and Ourselves  
Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History  
History Channel  
Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and  
International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS)  
National Art Education Association (NAEA)  
National Association for Music Education (MENC)  
National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)  
National Coalition for History  
National Council for the Social Studies  
National Council on Public History  
National Dance Education Organization  
Organization of American Historians  
School Social Work Association of America  
State Education Agency Service Learning Network (SEA-Net)