



The Education Trust

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AMENDMENT #2241

TO THE EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

JULY 2015

Amendment #2241, introduced by U.S. Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), strengthens the accountability provisions of the Every Child Achieves Act by setting the expectation that schools, districts, and states take action when schools are chronically low performing or consistently missing state-set goals for any group of students. If Every Child Achieves is to move our country forward, rather than backward, this is a critical change from the base bill.

What's in the amendment?

States set improvement goals for students overall and each group of students based on a range of indicators, including:

- 1) performance or growth on statewide assessments;
- 2) high school graduation rates;
- 3) an additional statewide academic indicator of student performance for elementary and middle schools, such as measures of early literacy or on-track rates;
- 4) English-language acquisition for English learners;
- 5) at least one statewide indicator of postsecondary readiness, such as AP, IB, or dual enrollment; and
- 6) at least one additional statewide indicator of school quality, student success, or student support.

To maintain a focus on academic outcomes in state goal setting, indicators one through four must weigh more heavily than indicators in categories five and six combined.

School ratings are based on the performance of students overall and each group of students against these goals. To ensure that a school can't be highly rated if any group is not making progress, ratings must differentiate schools that miss goals for any group of students for two consecutive years.

To prompt action when students aren't making progress, states identify two different types of Title I schools for supports and interventions: schools that chronically fail all of their students (the lowest performing 5 percent and dropout factories) and schools that miss goals for any group of students for two consecutive years. Districts serve as the first line of defense for these schools by crafting supports and interventions that are targeted to their needs. But to ensure that students are getting the help they need, states have a responsibility to step in if these local supports and interventions aren't effective within three years.

What does this mean for schools?

Under the amendment, schools will be evaluated not just on test scores, but on a broader range of measures. Ratings will reflect their performance on these multiple measures, with special attention to how groups of students are doing.

Schools that are low-performing overall or missing state goals for a group of students will work with their districts to implement supports and interventions that reflect their needs. A school that's low performing overall may do a comprehensive intervention like overhauling the curriculum or implementing extended learning time. Or, a school that's missing goals for one group may bring in a specialist to support instruction for that group. If those interventions do not work to raise achievement, then the state will work to ensure that the district adopts a more effective set of supports or interventions.

What does this mean for students and their parents?

This amendment will ensure the performance of all students matters in school ratings. Schools doing "C" work for low-income students or students of color, for example, won't be able to get "A" ratings unless they direct real energy to improving outcomes for those students. Wherever any group of students is struggling, adults in the system will have a clear obligation to act.

How is the amendment different from AYP?

This amendment puts all the critical decisions for making sure all groups of students are making progress in state and local hands. There are five key ways Amendment #2241 is different from AYP:

1. Accountability is based not just on tests, but on a broader range of measures.
2. States set their own improvement goals.
3. States choose their ratings system.
4. There is a distinction between schools that fail all of their students and those that miss goals for one group of students.
5. And there is no "one size fits all" fix for schools that miss goals.