

## Module 4: The U.S. Public Education System

**Lesson One:** The Structure of the U.S. Public Education System

**Lesson Two:** Overview of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

**Lesson Three:** Current Trends in Education

**Module Overview:** Welcome to Module 4: The U.S. Public Education System. This module will explore the organization of the U.S. public education system; provide information about Federal laws that provide assistance and establish some requirements for this system, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); and consider current trends and prospective policy changes that could impact military-connected children. The information in this module is intended to provide School Liaisons with a basic understanding of K–12 education in the U.S. from which the School Liaison can build more tailored knowledge that is specific to local context.

**Learning Objectives:** Through this module, School Liaisons will be able to:

- Describe the structure of the U.S. public education system, including governance structures.
- Describe the structure and sources of funding for education in the U.S.
- Explain how Federal policy addresses special student populations such as special needs students and English learners.
- Describe the major components of ESEA.
- Explain current trends in education policy.

## Lesson One: The Structure of the U.S. Public Education System

**Lesson Overview:** The U.S. education system is made up of various complex governance and accountability structures at Federal, state, local, and district levels. Within these, there are significant laws and policies that impact how education is funded and how the needs of special student populations are to be addressed. A basic understanding of the U.S. public education system and relevant policy will provide School Liaisons with information needed to support military-connected students and their families.

### Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this lesson, School Liaisons will be able to:

- Describe the structure of the U.S. public education system, including governance structures.
- Describe the nature of funding for public education in the U.S.
- Explain how Federal policy addresses special student populations such as special needs students and English learners.
- Describe the policies and provisions for support of military-connected student education abroad.

## Key Facts About The U.S. Public Education System

Public education in the United States is primarily a state and local responsibility. States set policies for the operation of schools, such as graduation requirements and teacher-certification rules. Local school districts operate schools and in many cases set policies over curriculum and instruction. The Federal government provides support for special populations, such as students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English learners; conducts research; and enforces civil rights laws in schools. Overall, the Federal Government provides about 9 percent of the funding for K–12 education; districts provide 36 percent, and states provide 44 percent. About 9 percent comes from other sources. Recent boosts in Federal investments are causing a slight increase in that pattern, with early estimates indicating a bump in Federal contributions to roughly 10.5 percent. It is unclear whether those increases will remain constant in the future.

Although the U.S. Constitution does not mention education, virtually all state constitutions establish education as a basic right. To carry out that charge, each state has established its own education system. State education agencies (SEAs) distribute Federal funds to school districts and implement state and Federal policies. The authority and reach of the SEA varies depending on state law. The state education system is operated through local education agencies (LEAs), more commonly referred to as school districts, counties, or divisions, to operate schools and set policies for their operations. Subsequently, in this module the term “school district”, or simply, “district” will be used. Currently, there are roughly 14,000 districts, many of which have their own authority to raise and spend funds.

Resources and instruction vary within school districts. Many districts have established special programs in particular schools, and the level of teachers’ experience and knowledge varies from school to school. As a result of this dispersal of authority and differences in the level of resources available in a community, there are substantial variations in schooling from school to school, from district to district, and from state to state. The curriculum that is taught, how learning is assessed, and the materials and teaching resources available to students can vary widely. Military families experience this perhaps more than most other families, moving from one school district to another, often in different states.

## Governance Structures

School governance in the United States involves a myriad of players across Federal, state, and local levels of government. At the Federal level, Congress sets broad policy for education and funds education programs that support special populations, such as English learners and students with disabilities, education research, and the protection of civil rights. The Federal Government contributes roughly nine percent of the total funding for public education in the United States, and the U.S. Department of Education implements most of these programs and policies, developing specific guidance and regulations. State and Federal courts also influence school policy for schools by interpreting statutory and constitutional boundaries on district, state, and Federal policy.

State policy is set by governors, state legislatures, and, in every state except Minnesota and Wisconsin, state boards of education. State policies are implemented by SEAs, which are led by a chief state school officer, usually called a state superintendent or commissioner. In 14 states, the state chief is elected; in the rest, the state board or the governor appoints the chief.

School boards usually set school district policy. The superintendent is either selected by the board or is elected; the superintendent implements board policies. In some large cities, including Boston, Chicago, New York City, and Washington, DC, the mayor has authority over the school system and appoints the superintendent. Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia allow charter schools, which are publicly funded and are generally provided more autonomy than regular public schools, but can be closed down for not meeting the terms or objective of their charter. There are currently more than 5,400 charter schools, which educate 1.7 million students.

## State and Local Control

Because public education is primarily a state and local responsibility, there is significant variation in curriculum, assessment, teacher quality, school funding, and other aspects of education. Students moving from one district to another may experience curriculum that they were already taught or that is more advanced, and may have to adapt to new ways of assessing their progress.

States generally have authority over state curriculum and graduation standards, testing programs, teacher-certification rules, and accreditation standards for school districts and teacher-preparation institutions.

Local school boards generally have authority over curriculum, teacher hiring and salary structures, and principal selection. There are more than 95,000 local school board members nationwide. Local school board members are generally elected and, as a result, tend to be accessible to parents, military leaders, and school leaders. Families can directly contact their local school board member with questions, they can testify before the board, and they can run for election to the board, among other things. Additionally, each school has a principal and, depending on the size, a range of other staff, which might include assistant principals, counselors, mental health providers, a nurse, curriculum specialists, and security and administrative staff.

## School Choice

States and districts also have the authority to approve and implement various types of schools and programs, including:

- Alternative schools
- Charter schools
- Homeschooling
- Magnet schools
- Private schools
- Virtual schools
- Dual enrollment programs
- Gifted programs
- Special education programs
- Open enrollment

Each of these options is addressed in Module 6: School Choice.

## Funding for U.S. Public Education

In 2007–08, the United States spent \$477 billion on elementary and secondary education. This amounts to about \$9,683 per pupil. The amount spent per pupil varies widely from state to state and from district to district within states. Each state has established formulas for distributing funds to local districts to supplement locally derived funds. The criteria for these formulas are unique to each state.

Generally, schools are funded through a combination of income taxes, corporate taxes, sales taxes, and local property taxes. The Federal Government contributes about nine percent of school funding according to the most recent figures.

### Sources of Funding

Overall, states provide most of the funding for schools, but the proportion of school revenue from states varies widely from state to state. Hawaii, which has a single school district, provides the greatest share (90 percent), while Nebraska provides the smallest (32 percent). The Federal share of school funding also varies, depending on the number of low-income students in a state and other factors. The Federal share ranges from 4.4 percent (New Jersey) to 17 percent (Louisiana). Under the Federal Title I program, the largest source of Federal aid to districts, Federal funds must supplement, not supplant, local and state funds.

Schools or school districts may also receive funding through private grant awards or philanthropic donations to supplement funds received through government sources. Schools sometimes use these funds to help with school equipment, facilities, and activity programs for students. Private individuals, local businesses, and corporations may also donate funds. Some districts have developed policies on private donations to help cover the widening gap between funding and expenditures and have established nonprofit organizations to administer the funds, called local education funds. Most charter schools are able to leverage private funds because the laws under which they were created provide them more autonomy.

### Sources of Federal Funding

There are a number of large Federal funding streams that support learning, including Title I and Impact Aid, as well as Perkins, described below, and the Individuals With Disabilities Act, discussed in more detail in Module 9: Supporting Students With Special Needs. There have also been recent investments targeted at innovative improvement efforts that are not directly tied to specific legislation.

#### Title I

Title I is one of the key components of ESEA and its goal is to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. The basic function of Title I is to distribute Federal funds through SEAs to school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families and hold schools accountable for improving academic results. The program is administered through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Funding reaches more than 17 million children nationwide, roughly 60 percent from the elementary grades (kindergarten through grade 5), 21 percent in the middle grades, and 16 percent in high school. Roughly 500,000 children are served prior to kindergarten entry. Title I funds help students who are behind academically, or at risk of falling behind, by providing supplemental services such as hiring additional teachers, tutoring, parental involvement activities, professional development, purchase of materials and supplies, preschool programs, and hiring teacher assistants, among others.

### The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins)

This 1984 act supports research, evaluation, information dissemination, technical assistance to states, and other activities aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of career and technical education (CTE). Federal funding levers provide direction and funding to states and local communities as well. These levers are focused on rewarding states, schools, and partnering groups for innovative reform efforts.

### The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

This 2009 act provides funds to schools and school districts through competitive grants. The jump in the Federal contribution for education funding mentioned earlier is largely a result of ARRA investments. The 21 ARRA programs include several that relate specifically to education, including Race to the Top (RttT). RttT is a competitive grant program that awarded \$4.35 billion to states—\$4 billion for statewide education reform grants and \$350 million to improve student assessments.

### The Investing in Innovation Fund (I3)

The fund provided \$650 million in competitive grant funding to 49 school districts and partnering nonprofit organizations with a record of using innovative approaches to improve student achievement or growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates.

### Impact Aid

Impact Aid, a program administered through the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education, is a Federal formula grant program designed to relieve the financial burden of school districts in educating significant numbers of federally connected students—those who reside on military bases, low-rent housing properties, Indian lands or other Federal properties, and/or those with parents in the uniformed services or employed on eligible Federal properties.

Additionally, the Department of Defense administers three Department of Education Impact Aid programs, which are much smaller than the Department of Education Impact Aid Program:

- **Impact Aid Supplement** offers Federal aid to school districts where military-connected children make up at least 20 percent of the enrollment.
- **Impact Aid for Children With Severe Disabilities** aims to support schools serving two or more military-connected children with severe disabilities that meet certain special education cost criteria.
- **Impact Aid for Large Scale Rebasing** (though not always funded by Congress) provides financial assistance to districts that are heavily impacted by the increase or reduction in military-dependent students when funds are appropriated.

## Special Populations

Federal law makes provisions for students that make up special populations, such as English learners and students with special needs. School Liaisons need to be informed about these laws and provisions to best serve the needs of certain military-connected children and their families.

### English Learners

The number of students who are English learners, or ELs, in the United States has sharply increased in recent years. According to the National Center for Bilingual Education, this population will make up over 40 percent of all students in elementary and secondary education in the United States by 2030. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) has been interpreted to require schools to establish programs for ELs when necessary and to provide equal educational opportunities for language-minority students. The Office for Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Education enforces Title VI through proactive compliance reviews and investigations of complaints of discrimination, including in the provision of services to ELs and their parents to ensure that those students are given access to equal educational services as mandated by Federal law.

The 1994 and 2002 reauthorizations of ESEA required states to include ELs in state assessment programs. Under ESEA and Title VI, schools must identify students as potential ELs, assess students' need for EL services; develop a program that, in the view of experts in the field, has a reasonable chance for success; ensure that necessary staff, curricular materials, and facilities are in place and used properly; develop appropriate evaluation standards, including program exit criteria, for measuring the progress of students; and assess the success of the program and modify it where needed. In the 2002 reauthorization of ESEA, states, local school districts, and schools must also assess the English language proficiency of English language learners annually in reading and math. ESEA also requires states to develop English language proficiency (ELP) standards for English learners. Districts and schools are responsible for providing required language instruction educational programs for ELs, and states and local educational agencies and schools are accountable for ensuring ELs meet the state established performance targets.

### Students With Special Needs

Three Federal laws provide the legal foundation for the education of children with disabilities, as well as providing funding. The primary laws in this area are as follows: (See Module 9 on students with special needs for more information)

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Under this law, the Federal Government provides grants to states for services to children with disabilities. First enacted by Congress in 1975, IDEA governs how states, school districts, and other public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth to age 2 and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Under IDEA Part B, States must make available to all children and youth with disabilities ranging in age from 3 to 21 a free appropriate public education, including special education and related services. One of the key components of IDEA Part B for schools, families, and students is the Individualized Education Program (IEP), which provides a blueprint for the specific education and related services a child receives.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)** – This Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. The U.S. Department of Education provides financial assistance to schools, colleges, and certain other entities, such

as vocational rehabilitation programs. Examples of prohibited discrimination include denial of access to educational programs and activities and denial of a free appropriate public education for elementary and secondary students with disabilities. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Department of Education enforces Section 504. OCR acts on complaints it receives from individuals or groups, including parents, students, and advocates; conducts agency-initiated compliance reviews; and provides technical assistance to school districts, parents, and advocates. OCR often enters into resolution agreements with school districts or other entities; however, ultimately recipients risk loss of Federal financial assistance if they fail to meet the requirements of Section 504.

**The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)** – Title II of the ADA (Title II) prohibits disability discrimination in the full range of state and local government services, programs, and activities (including public schools), regardless of whether they receive any Federal financial assistance. In general, Section 504 and Title II requirements are similar.

**Title II and Section 504** protect qualified students with disabilities. To have a disability under Title II and Section 504, a student must (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or (2) have a record of such an impairment or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Some examples of major life activities are caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Generally in the elementary and secondary context, a student with a disability is a “qualified” student with a disability if she or he is of school age. The Section 504 regulations, and by interpretation Title II, require that school districts provide a free appropriate public education to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The provision of an appropriate education under Section 504 includes regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of a student with a disability to the same level as the needs of students without disabilities are met. A student who is not eligible for services under IDEA may nonetheless be an individual with a disability under Section 504 and Title II and thus entitled to the protections against discrimination, including the right to a free appropriate public education under Section 504 and Title II.

**ESEA** requires states to assess the achievement of students with disabilities as part of their state assessment programs and to hold schools accountable for those students’ annual progress toward proficiency. Students with severe disabilities who cannot participate in regular assessments can take alternate assessments with alternate achievement standards.

## Lesson One Summary

### Key Points

- School governance in the U.S. involves policy and players at Federal, state, local, and district levels. While broad policies and funding for special programs are set at the Federal level, states provide the majority of both education policy and funding for districts.
- Because education policy is set at state and district levels, there is significant variation in curriculum, assessment, teacher quality, school funding, and other aspects of education.
- States and districts have the authority to provide various types of schools and programs, including charter schools, which are publicly funded.
- States provide most of the funding for schools through a combination of income, corporate, sales, and local property taxes; however, the proportion of school revenue from states varies widely.
- Significant Federal funding streams exist to support learning such as Title I, whose goal is to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students; Perkins, aimed at improving career and technical education; and Impact Aid.
- Special populations such as English learners and students with special needs are supported by Federal laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ESEA, IDEA, and others. These laws protect the rights of special populations of students and ensure funding for their education.

**Looking Forward:** Learn about the ultimate goal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and how school districts are held accountable for student progress.

## Lesson Two: Overview of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

**Lesson Overview:** One of the core laws influencing school performance measures is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA. ESEA was first enacted in 1965 to provide compensatory funds to elementary and secondary schools with high percentages of low-income students. ESEA is periodically reauthorized. The most recent reauthorization was passed by Congress in 2001 and is known as the No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002. See also Module 7: How School Performance Is Determined for more detailed information on ESEA.

### Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this lesson School Liaisons will be able to

- Describe the major components of ESEA.

## The Ultimate Goal of ESEA

The primary goal of the current ESEA is to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged groups of students and their peers and to ensure that 100 percent of students are proficient on state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013–14.

To assess progress towards this goal, states are required to test all students annually in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and mathematics and to set annual targets toward the 100 percent proficiency goal. Schools that attain the targets are said to have made “adequate yearly progress” (AYP).

ESEA requires each state to develop standards and assessments in math and reading/language arts and to define what “proficiency” means according to the assessments. However, the school improvement provisions that are tied to school performance apply only to schools that receive funds under the Federal Title I program, which is provided to schools with high concentrations of students from low-income families. Title I schools that fail to meet AYP are subject to sanctions and interventions, which increase in severity the longer a school does not meet AYP. School districts are required to provide disaggregated data by subgroup (e.g. Hispanic, white, low-income, special education) about student performance at the district and school level.

## Lesson Two Summary

### Key Points:

- The primary goal of the current ESEA is to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged groups of students and their peers and to ensure that 100 percent of students are proficient on state assessments in reading/language arts and math by 2013–14.
- State progress toward meeting the primary goal of ESEA is assessed by state testing of students in grades 3–8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and math and by the setting of annual targets to move toward 100 percent proficiency. Schools that attain the targets meet “adequate yearly progress” (AYP).
- Schools that receive Title I funding for having a high low-income student population are subject to sanctions and interventions if they do not meet AYP.

**Looking Forward:** Learn about current trends in education policy that are impacting the future of education in the United States.

## Lesson Three: Current Trends in Education

### Lesson Overview:

Advocates have been pushing for changes to the education system and its governing policy to address flaws and inequalities, improve student achievement, and close achievement gaps between groups of students. It is important for School Liaisons to have an understanding of current trends and potential changes and how they may impact military families with school-age children.

### Objectives:

Upon completing this lesson School Liaisons will be able to

- Explain current trends in education.

## Current Trends in Education

Current trends in education are dictated by many factors, including research and policy. School Liaisons need to know what emerging trends in education are and how they can potentially impact the support and services available to military-connected children. The following issues are key to this understanding.

### Reauthorization of ESEA

The current iteration of ESEA is slated to be revised. While the exact timing of the reauthorization is unknown, the Obama administration has released its “blueprint” for reform. This plan includes

- requiring that state standards are based on college and career readiness;
- focusing accountability on turning around low-performing schools;
- providing flexibility and encouraging innovation; and
- encouraging a complete education, rather than a focus solely on reading and mathematics.

### Common Core Standards

An important movement is to standardize content standards across states so that the expectations for what students learn in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics and when they learn it do not vary by state. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers have led this movement, called the Common Core State Standards Initiative. K–12 standards in ELA and math were released in June 2010, and as of January 2011, 43 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the standards.

The U.S. Department of Education in 2010 awarded funds to two of three consortia of states to develop assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards. States were permitted to join more than one consortium, and 45 states are currently part of one or both. The assessments are expected to be implemented in 2014–15. States that have adopted the Common Core State Standards are developing plans for implementing them. These plans include changes in professional development, in teacher education, and in curriculum.

### College and Career Readiness

Many students who graduate from high school are not prepared to enter higher education or join the workforce. They need to take remedial coursework in college or additional training for work. Many are not prepared to enter the armed services. The Common Core State Standards are intended to help ensure that students graduate from high school ready for college and careers by aligning end-of-high-school expectations with the requirements for entry to postsecondary education and entry-level careers. The assessments currently under development are expected to show students’ progress toward college and career readiness.

### **Extended/Expanded Learning**

Extended/expanded learning opportunities (ELO), learning options outside of the traditional classroom environment, include a variety of after-school programs, apprenticeships, service learning, and private instruction that complement classroom learning. ELOs can be more engaging to many students than traditional instruction. As the educational impact of ELOs becomes clearer, policy makers are finding ways to fund and offer academic credit for participation in these programs. There is also a push among advocates to extend the school day and school year, particularly for students who are behind academically. Many high-performing nations and school programs have longer school days and years, which provide students with more time for learning and teachers with time for planning and professional development. Extending the calendar is expensive, however, because teachers must be paid for additional time in the classroom.

### **Global Competence/21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills**

Changes in the economy and society associated with globalization and an increasingly interconnected world have led to demands for students to develop the ability to think critically and solve problems, to communicate effectively, and to work collaboratively, in addition to developing a deep understanding of core content. These “21<sup>st</sup>-century skills,” as they are often known, require shifts in teaching away from rote memorization and toward the use of projects that ask students to use their knowledge to approach the kinds of problems they would encounter outside of school.

The increasing global interdependence has also placed a premium on global competence. Schools have been instituting programs that develop international awareness, respect for cultural diversity, and foreign language proficiency. As funders and policymakers prioritize global skills, opportunities for military-connected students to learn a foreign language and learn about other cultures and societies will become more commonplace.

### **Early Childhood Education**

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman and others has shown that high-quality preschool can pay lasting dividends in improved academic achievement and attainment. Bolstered by such research, advocates have pushed for making preschool available to all children, regardless of income. Several states, notably Florida, Georgia and Oklahoma, have established a goal of implementing voluntary universal pre-K programs.

The primary challenge that most states face in offering universal preschool is raising the funding for these programs, which cost local, state and national governments about \$4,600 annually per student. States have drawn from lottery ticket sales and other public revenue streams in order to pay for universal preschool measures. As public funding for preschool programs grows on a state-by-state basis, military families with young children may become increasingly eligible for government programs that fund their child’s preschool education.

The Federal government currently provides funding for early childhood programs through Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant, which are administered by the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services, and through Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education. School districts may also use their ESEA Title I funds to fund early childhood programs.

## Lesson Three Summary

### Key Points:

- The current iteration of ESEA is slated to be revised based on a blueprint for reform provided by the Obama administration that includes a focus on turning around low-performing schools, encourages innovation, and mandates requirements for state standards based on college and career readiness,
- Common Core Standards is an important movement to standardize content standards across states and has been adopted by 43 states.
- The topics of college and career readiness and extended/expanded learning are important because many students who graduate from high school are not prepared for higher education or the workforce.
- Bolstered by research proving that a high-quality preschool education can pay lasting dividends in student achievement, public funding for preschool programs is growing on a state-by-state basis.

**Looking Forward:** Next, learn about Impact Aid and how school districts receive support to educate military-connected students.

## Module Summary

**Module Overview:** This module explores the organization of the U.S. public education system; provides information about Federal laws that provide assistance and establish some requirements for this system, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); and considers current trends and prospective policy changes that could impact military-connected children. The information in this module is intended to provide School Liaisons with a basic understanding of K–12 education in the U.S., from which the School Liaison can build more tailored knowledge that is specific to local context.

### Key Points:

- School governance in the U.S. involves policy and players at Federal, state, local, and district levels. While broad policies and funding for special programs are set at the Federal level, states provide the majority of both education policy and funding for districts.
- Because education is primarily a state and local responsibility, there is significant variation in curriculum, assessment, teacher quality, school funding, and other aspects of education.
- States and districts have the authority to provide various types of schools and programs, including charter schools, which are publically funded.
- The proportion of school revenue from states varies widely.
- The Federal government provides funding for specific educational programs such as Title I, whose goal is to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students; Perkins, aimed at improving career and technical education; and Impact Aid.
- Special populations, such as English learners and students with special needs, are supported by Federal laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ESEA, IDEA, and others. These laws protect the rights of special populations of students and ensure funding for their education.
- The primary goal of the current ESEA is to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged groups of students and their peers and to ensure that 100 percent of students are proficient on state assessments in reading/language arts and math by 2013–14.
- State progress toward meeting the primary goal of ESEA is assessed by state testing of students in grades 3–8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and math and by the setting of annual targets to move toward 100 percent proficiency. Schools that attain the targets meet “adequate yearly progress” (AYP).
- Schools that receive Title I funding for having a high number of low-income students are subject to sanctions and interventions if they do not meet AYP.
- The current iteration of ESEA is slated to be revised based on a blueprint for reform provided by the Obama administration that includes focusing on turning around low-performing schools, encouraging innovation, and requiring state standards to be based on college and career readiness.
- Common Core Standards is an important movement to standardize content standards across states and has been adopted in 43 states.
- The topics of college and career readiness and extended/expanded learning are important because many students who graduate from high school are not prepared for higher education or the workforce.
- Bolstered by research proving that a high quality preschool education can pay lasting dividends in student achievement, public funding for preschool programs is growing on a state-by-state basis.

**Looking Forward:** Next, learn about what School Liaisons need to know about Impact Aid to support families and districts.