

LWVUS STUDY
“THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION”

Here is some additional information on this study. Please refer to last month’s bulletin for previous information. (We’ll review.)

Our date for this consensus is November 17th. Only League members can actually “vote” on the final wording on the form that goes to the National League, but input is always welcome and Membership Chair, Helen Hoyt, is always encouraging everyone to join our League.

The first section of the consensus details with some history and we can cover that very quickly. Last month’s bulletin spelled out questions 1 through 3.

Questions 4 through 12 deal mainly with the topic of “Common Core Standards.” These are national standards developed by the National Governor’s Association (NFA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and are not a federal mandate.

Still, acceptance of the standards was a requirement to quality for “Race to the Top” funding.

Our discussion is not the place for a discussion of “our state math standards are better than these.”

Question 4 asks – Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding?

You get to choose one of the following

- a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
- b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
- c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source.
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above.

Following questions deal with should there be a national assessment, should they be mandated, other accountability measures.

A potential logical next step could be to develop a national curriculum that would meet the standards and be aligned with the assessment tools.

Question 7 concerns the current 2 consortia who have won \$3.5 million to develop assessments that follow the Common Core State Standards by 2014. Here things get mixed since they have received a federal grant to prepare assessments based on national

standards. So we are asked what we believe the role of this consortia should play in student evaluation. This is a rank order question.

Question 8 focuses on the purpose of a national assessment program.

The purpose of any mandated test is much debated. How do you evaluate teachers, what about merit pay?

Data from national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. The discussion here is what information is most important to be reported.

Question 9 – How is the data to be used? Sanctions, rewards, teacher rank, etc.

Question 10 deals more with the traditional involvement in public education. How should mandates & funding be related. Or should they?

And mandates are not always a bad thing. Integration was a mandate & so was Title IX.

Question 12 deals with the word “Equity.” We need to decide what that means. (Fortunately this is a rank order question.)

Question 13 questions whether funding should be “categorical” or for general use.

Question 14 – Should the federal government have a role in early childhood education?

Question 15 – Should support include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, health, nutrition, access to supportive services such as mental health?

We’ll have Discussion Leaders and a recorder for the evening.

As League members know, studies are part of League program and we do not take a position without conducting a study with participation of all Leagues. As each local League reports its consensus (or lack thereof) the reports are consolidated and based on this information the National League formulates the position which is then used for action. We will use this position for lobbying the federal government on issues from this study.

We urge you to help us formulate what our local League believes the role of the Federal Government should be in public education. We will use this position for action at the national, state and local level.