

In July 2015, the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives each passed a bill to replace the current Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Through ESEA, the federal government sends more than \$22 billion each year to states local school districts in an effort to improve the education of disadvantaged students. The legislation is re-written, or reauthorized, periodically and during that process changes are made to how federal K-12 funding is allocated. There is one more step in the legislative process before the ESEA reauthorization bill goes to President Obama for his signature or veto: lawmakers will meet in [conference committee](#) to find common ground between the House and Senate version of the bills.¹

WHAT'S IN THE CURRENT FEDERAL LAW?

The current version of ESEA includes \$2.5 billion per year to improve teacher quality. States and local school districts can use these dollars to carry out a broad array of programs, such as:

- Teacher and principal induction programs for new educators
- Programs to establish or improve alternative routes to certification
- Systems to assist districts in recruiting and retaining highly-qualified teachers
- A broad range of professional development activities

The current law does not explicitly offer opportunities for excellent teachers to take on leadership roles while staying in the classroom.

WHAT'S ON THE TABLE NOW?

Teach Plus helped write an amendment, sponsored by Sen. Bennet (D-CO) and Sen. Collins (R-ME), that requires all 50 states to determine how well its districts and schools are doing in providing leadership opportunities to effective teachers and principals, including identifying which schools have the most acute needs. Once the state has identified such schools, it can use a portion of its share of the \$2.5 billion in the ESEA Title II funding to do the following:

- Provide opportunities for a cadre of effective teachers to lead evidence-based professional development for their peers
- Expand career opportunities for teachers to advance in the profession and grow as leaders – such as through hybrid roles that allow teachers to serve as mentors or coaches to their peers – while remaining in the classroom
- Provide training and support for teacher leaders and school leaders who are part of instructional leadership teams

While the teacher leadership provisions were added to the Senate bill, they were not included in the House bill, so Congress will have to decide during the conference committee process whether or not to include it in the bill it sends to the President.

HOW WOULD IT IMPACT YOUR CLASSROOM?

The inclusion of the teacher leadership amendment in ESEA could impact you and your classroom in several ways:

- It could improve the quality of professional development in your district and would expand your access to teacher-led professional development that would help inform your practice and help you best meet the needs of your students



Teach Plus teachers and staff meet with Senator Patty Murray's (D-WA) HELP Committee staff as part of Teach Plus' Teachers on the Hill Day.



- It could enable you to be part of a cadre of effective teachers who would lead evidence-based professional development for your peers
- You could have new opportunities to advance in the profession and grow as a leader – such as through hybrid roles that allow teachers to serve as mentors or coaches to their peers – while remaining in the classroom
- If you are part of your school’s instructional leadership team, you could have access to additional training and support

WHAT ARE TEACHERS IN TEACH PLUS SAYING?

Teach Plus strongly supports the teacher leadership provisions. (We helped write them at the request of Senator Bennet.) We sent [this letter](#) asking Senators to support the amendment and recruited other organizations to sign it as a show of their support. We were pleased when the Senate education committee passed it unanimously. We also asked Senators to support teacher-led professional development in [this letter](#) that we sent to lawmakers in January 2015. We will encourage Senators and House members to include these provisions in their next version of the bill – the one that will go to the President. Teach Plus teachers have also written about the importance of teacher leadership. For example, Megan Dunne, an alumna of the Teaching Policy Fellowship, shared the valuable connection between teacher leadership opportunities and teacher retention in this [op-ed](#).

WHAT’S NEXT?

If the new education bill moves forward beyond the conference committee and the President signs it, the new law will take effect during the 2016-17 school year and will continue to impact schools for at least another five years. For information on other key issues that are being discussed, [click here](#).

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Share your thoughts and opinions with us! Contact Teach Plus at TeachPlusPolicy@teachplus.org.



Teacher leaders share their insights on assessment and other ESEA issues with U.S. Senate staff at Teach Plus’ Congressional briefing

¹ Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Summary and Background Information:

