

To: LWVJoCo board
 From: Education Study Committee
 Subject: Recommendations to go to LWVUS--APPROVED
 Date: 11/5/2011

Committee. In alphabetical order, the Education Study Committee consisted of Candy Birch, Diane Kuhn, Gwynne Lee, Anne Malin, Ellen Miller (chair), Jill Quigley, Tana Schroeder, Carol Snyder, Polly Swafford and Nan Wilson. Janis McMillen provided invaluable advice and counsel.

Heartfelt thanks go to all of them for taking time out of hectic schedules to lead the four consensus meetings!

Process. In June 2011, the board approved participating in National’s study on “The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education.” With very helpful advice from Janis McMillen, the process included:

- *The Voter* --five summaries of LWVUS website documents appeared in the July/August through October issues plus an invitation to comment via the email address
- Website- the above Voters with their document summaries; all 15 consensus questions plus hot links to LWVUS websites
- Meeting announcements – information about the upcoming 4 consensus meetings was given at the September and October general meetings
- Four consensus meetings – All meetings were at Central Resource Library, 7:00 p.m. Small groups of 3-4 people discussed the appropriate questions after hearing summaries of the relevant *Voter* papers and getting instructions from the discussion leader. Comments and questions were put on a “Parking Lot” list (see below).
- Calling tree – After the first meeting on 10/4, the calling tree was activated to remind members of the final three meetings.
- Synthesis – On 10/29, Gwynne Lee, Polly Swafford, Jill Quigley and Ellen Miller met to review outcomes of the four meetings.
- Report to the membership—a PowerPoint report was made on the consensus synthesis and presented at the 11/5 general meeting. Attendees had cards to write down any additional questions or comments. Those wanting detailed information were invited to see the next *Voter* and the website.

Participation. In all, 36 persons participated in the four sessions. 12 attended both Qs1-9 and Qs10-15 sessions.

Qs1-9, 10/4	Qs1-9, 10/24 repeat	Qs10-15, 10/26	Qs10-15, 10/27
12 in 3 groups	10 in 3 groups	7 in two groups	7 in two groups
TOTAL Qs 1-9	= 22	TOTAL Qs 10-15	=14

Reaching consensus. Several of the 15 LWVUS questions had sub-parts.

Consensus was reached on: Qs 1, 2, 3, 5a, 7cde, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15a.

No consensus was reached on: Qs 4, 5b, 6, 7a and b, 10, 14 and 15b.

See the Appendix for the raw data from all four meetings.

Small group questions and comments. Following are the comments from the small groups.

- Q1. The group reached consensus but one member felt that government was much too large, too much paperwork. One person didn’t like No Child Left Behind, two did like Headstart and Race to the Top.
- Q4. Poorly worded question. It’s a Yes or No question but instead have to choose a response. 1 person chose “None of the above.”
- Q4. Needed more information on common core standards from LWVUS.
- Q5a and b. 1 person said “Yes” for voluntary (5a), but the group said “No” (5b). There was disagreement about the methods.
- Q13. There is some feeling special education costs have become excessive and take too much funding. Did “birth” mean starting at the hospital?
- Q14. Concerns about “all” children; rather it should be only children in need. Also, what is the definition of “role” in this question?
- Q15b. “All children” is unclear. If this means every child, not just those eligible for these programs, we disagree if there is no means-testing.

Recommendations. The Committee proposes that the board completes by 11/31 the online LWVUS “Public Education Consensus Response Form.”

General Questions

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
 Much too small too small about right too large much too large
2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
 1_a. To ensure that all students pre-K-12 receive a quality education.
 2_b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 3_c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 4_d. To monitor state efforts for funding
 5_e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.
 Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Common Core Standards

4. 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? (Choose one)
 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

COMMENT: No consensus. It's a Yes or No question but instead have to choose a response. Needed more information on common core standards from LWVUS.

5. Should there be a national assessment aligned with the common cores standards?
 Yes No

If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)

- a. Voluntary b. Mandated c. Mandated, if fully funded

COMMENT: No consensus; disagreed on methods.

If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)

- a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
 b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.
 c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)

- a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
 b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
 c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
 d. No national curriculum.

COMMENT: No consensus.

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)

- a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
 b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
 4_c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
 1_d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
 2_e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.

COMMENT: No consensus on how to rank a and b.

8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)

- a. Data should be "norm referenced" (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
 b. Data should be "criterion referenced" and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
 c. Data should be used to determine "cut" scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.

9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):

- a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels

- b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
- c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
- d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
- e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

Funding and Equity

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

- a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
- b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
- c. Competitive grants only
- d. No federal funding

COMMENT: No consensus about a and b. C and d were not selected at all.

11. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)

- a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
- b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
- c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
- d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
- e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)

- 1_a. high quality teaching/learning
- 2_b. adequate and current learning materials
- 4_c. clean and well maintained physical facilities
- 3_d. food and health care
- 5_e. safe and secure neighborhoods
- 6_f. secure housing

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered "categorical" rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

- Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

COMMENT: Did "birth" mean starting at the hospital?

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

- Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

COMMENTS: There were concerns about "all" children; rather it should be only children in need. Also, what is the definition of "role"?

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g.Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

- a. Strongly Agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly Disagree
- b. This funding should be extended to: All children only those with special needs special needs first

COMMENT: No consensus. "All children" is unclear. If this means every child, not just those eligible for these programs, we disagree if there is no means-testing.