



The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): An Opportunity to Unlock Educational Opportunity for African American Girls

The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) presents the opportunity to take action to ensure equal educational opportunity for African-American girls, and for all students.

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) and the National Women’s Law Center urge Congress to consider the recommendations outlined in our report to expand educational access and opportunity and improve outcomes for African-American girls.

Key Recommendations for ESEA Reauthorization include:

- **Expand access to affordable, high-quality early childhood learning opportunities**—to help ensure that African-American girls and all students have a strong start;
- **Retain the federal role in education**—especially oversight and enforcement of compliance with federal civil rights laws like, Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;
- **Hold states accountable for equitably distributing school resources**—Ensure that ESEA holds states accountable for fair distribution of resources –including equitable access to qualified teachers, access to college-and-career-ready courses, like offerings in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), access to technology, and access to other needed supports and services;
- **Ensure the comprehensive and transparent collection of data by schools**, disaggregated by student sub-groups—and cross-tabulated by gender—including data on school discipline and school climate, such as reductions in suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests or referrals to law enforcement;
- **Provide support for professional development opportunities for educators** that addresses race and gender stereotypes that fuel discipline disparities among African-American girls;
- Ensure that schools and districts are equipped to provide students with services and supports, such as school counselors, particularly for those with a history of trauma, and access to **culturally-appropriate social and emotional learning programs** that teach skills for responding to conflict.