

University of Northern Iowa

College of Education White Paper: No Child Left Behind

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The rapidly changing world demands an educational system prepared to meet the dynamic, diverse needs of the 21st century learner. Educational initiatives must focus on the “whole child” so that Each Learner Achieves (ELA). The current focus on a deficit model of standards-based instruction with student learning measured by a standardized test is not producing the results needed for each student to acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviors necessary to lead a satisfying life in the 21st Century. Comments are offered as part of the Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Several key issues must be considered as part of the reauthorization process, including high school reform; multiple measures of assessment, including growth models, formative assessments, student exhibitions, and portfolio assessments; and, core curriculum educating the whole child.

For a student to achieve his/her full potential, consideration must be given to the whole child as described by Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The needs of safety and security must be achieved before moving on to exploring, learning, and understanding new concepts. In *The Learning Compact Redefined: A Call to Action*, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) references the significance of educating the whole child, “When students’ basic physiological and psychological needs are satisfied, they are more likely to

- become engaged in school,
- act in accord with school goals and values,
- develop social skills and understanding,
- contribute to the school and community
- achieve academically”

Creating student focused learning environments based on student needs, student choice, and student voice will support enhanced engagement in learning and achievement.

High school reform has received strong support at the national, state, and local levels. The National Governor’s Association, National High School Alliance, Achieve Inc., and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are a few entities that have all expressed support for the reinvention of America’s high schools. The Getting Retention and Diplomas Up Among Today’s Enrolled Students (GRADUATES) Act was introduced and would offer support for educating the whole student and contributing to high school reform initiatives. The GRADUATES Act supports business-education partnerships, community-based learning opportunities, multiple assessments, flexible school days, accountability options, and ongoing professional development activities for educators. The GRADUATES Act would support and encourage reinvention of America’s high schools.

To assure a strong foundation for each Iowa high school graduate, the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) has identified the Iowa Core Curriculum (ICC) in mathematics, science, and literacy for grades 9 – 12. Work is currently proceeding for the ICC in the following areas: mathematics, science, and literacy for grades k – 8; social studies for grades k – 12; and, 21st century skills to include health literacy, civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, and employability skills. This core curriculum incorporates essential skills sets to educate the whole child. Iowa schools would have the flexibility to develop specific courses that incorporate these identified essential skills identified in the ICC.

The University of Northern Iowa’s Price Laboratory School (PLS) in the College of Education is taking a leadership role in the design, development, and implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum (ICC) and High School Reform initiatives. PLS faculty serve on the ICC writing committees in the areas of mathematics, science, literacy, and 21st Century skills. The PLS faculty develop sample units aligned with the ICC and provide professional development for practicing Iowa educators that model higher order thinking with real world relevance. PLS is recognized by ASCD as a model program reflecting the five key elements of the new compact for education of the whole child. Outreach activities include providing professional development with Iowa’s educators on citizenship, advisory, and anti-bullying programming.