

# The Four Pillars of Conservative Education Policy



For years Conservatives have pushed for more local control of education, and now they have it thanks to ESSA. Republicans currently control more state legislatures than at any time in modern history. ESSA presents us with a unique window in time to weigh in and shape education policies in a way that leaves a lasting and meaningful imprint.



Conservative Leaders  
for Education

# Conservative Principles Essential to U.S. Education

## *Helping Guide the Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act*

**#1 Local Control** Reaffirm that educating students is predominately **the responsibility of states and localities**, especially in the areas of funding, personnel, and reviving poorly performing schools.

- The federal government has been too active in developing education policy.
- Local and state leaders have a responsibility in rigorously selecting policies that best serve their students, rather than blindly following administrators or boards with a preference for perpetuating the status quo.
- Give freedom to principals (the site manager) and teachers to get results and hold them responsible if they fail. Reward both with additional compensation if their performance is worthy.
- Teacher instruction (including at college) must provide practical, not theoretical, training and weak teachers must be encouraged to find another profession.
- Poor school performance should be addressed first by providing local leaders an opportunity to implement their own turnaround plan. Only when that has failed, should alternative measures be invoked, including state takeover and expanded use of public charter schools with consideration provided to hiring a qualified private contractor.

**#2 Parent Choice** Advance **educational choice and innovation** for parents and students by trusting that parents will do what is best for their children, while not absolving lawmakers from providing oversight.

- Expanding career/technical schools, public magnet schools, and charter schools, are all favored, with additional consideration for private school tax credits/vouchers and Online schools.
- Encourage healthy competition among schools so that parents know that they have options.

**#3 Accountability** Demand that states, local districts, and individual schools be **transparent through the provision of information to parents** that is accessible, timely, comparable, and easy to understand.

- Parent information is the foundation for choices and better educational outcomes. If a parent knows their local school is underperforming they will demand change or leave the school.
- Disaggregated data is necessary in order to ensure that at-risk students are well served.
- Any data collected must protect the identity of individual students.
- Testing data must be returned to parents and teachers as quickly as possible in order to address deficiency areas.

**#4 Quality Content** Assert that high academic standards and aligned tests — both chosen by the state — are crucial because they evaluate what a student is learning.

- Annual assessments help parents and teachers support their children's educational needs and should play some role in evaluating the performance of teachers and administrators. However, unnecessary tests should be eliminated.
- There are certain bedrock ideas, concepts, names, notions and events that every student should learn in history, math, science, and English.
- An additional educational goal is to equip students to become civically-minded.

