



National Headquarters  
4156 Library Road  
Suite 1  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15234  
PHONE 412-341-1515  
FAX 412-344-0224  
E-MAIL [info@LDAAmerica.org](mailto:info@LDAAmerica.org)

## **Recommendations: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) strongly supports the stated purpose of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): to afford all children an opportunity to meet challenging academic standards and, in doing so, to close the achievement gap for all students, including students with disabilities. LDA – a national volunteer organization representing individuals with learning disabilities, their families, and the professionals who serve them – has worked for more than 40 years to ensure that children with learning disabilities are properly identified and receive the services they need to be successful in school and to meet their postsecondary goals.

*As Congress moves to reauthorize the ESEA, LDA urges consideration of the following principles:*

- I. Provide students with learning disabilities access to the general education curriculum.
- II. Maintain "students with disabilities" as a specific subgroup for accountability purposes.
- III. Continue to include students with disabilities in the general accountability system.
- IV. Allow use of out-of-level assessments for *all* students, as appropriate.
- V. Identify students with learning and behavioral challenges early and provide targeted instruction before referral for special education services.
- VI. Allow the use of a growth-based accountability model to measure student progress.
- VII. Ensure teachers deemed "highly qualified" have the skills and knowledge to address the academic and behavioral needs of the students they teach.
- VIII. Empower family members and students to be effective advocates through specific training and technical assistance.
- IX. Ensure all students are afforded graduation pathways that provide quality educational programming directed toward their interests, talents, and career goals.
- X. Include a definition of "universal design for learning" and incorporate these principles in the law.
- XI. Require schools to determine and assure the availability of social/emotional and mental health services for students as part of their school improvement plans.