

# All Students Can Achieve Act (ASCA)

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## Focusing on the achievements of all students:

- To ensure parents that all students are achieving, states must create **comprehensive data systems** that track students' academic progress and other factors that affect their success.
- One of the most important factors in school and student achievement is teachers. The quality of teachers should be determined by their effect on students' learning, not just their qualifications. All students should have **effective teachers**. Thus, these data systems must link student achievement data to teachers, allowing states to measure teacher effectiveness.
- States should be held accountable for student achievement. However, students do not progress at the same pace or start in the same place. Thus, states are allowed the flexibility to measure **student academic growth**, rather than looking at absolute test scores. States are also encouraged to look at merit pay including getting the best teachers to teach in the poorest schools.

## High expectations for all students:

- To ensure that all elementary through secondary school students, regardless of where they live, are prepared for success in college or the workplace, state must set high expectations for all students. Academic standards must be designed to prepare students to succeed and assessments must be effective tools to measure students' progress toward meeting these standards. Currently, states often weaken standards and assessments so that more schools and students appear to meet requirements.
- Voluntary **American standards** and assessments in reading, math and science would help raise the standards and assessments in states that have set their expectations too low. States will have the flexibility to adopt or adapt the American standards, thereby freeing up state resources for other educational needs, or keep their own standards, which the Secretary of Education would compare with the American standards.
- In order to ensure that high expectations are held for students from before they begin school to after they graduate, states must establish **P-16 Commissions** to ensure that state curriculum is aligned to standards that are at an optimum level. This will help to ensure that students graduating from high school succeed in college or the workplace.

## Closing the Achievement Gap

- States need to focus resources on closing the achievement gap. This includes directing their attention to **comprehensive interventions** where more than 50% of students are not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or **focused interventions** where less than 50% of students are not making AYP. Federal support for these interventions will increase.
- New approaches need to be taken to close the gap. Thus, incentive grants will be awarded for **innovative teacher and school programs**.
- To ensure that all students are properly measured, **current loopholes** in the law that allow states to avoid counting students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, or skew achievement data, are **closed**.
- Another important measure of academic achievement is **high school graduation rates**, which should be tracked and reported for all groups of students.