ESEA Renewal Could Gain Momentum

As education gets the spotlight from Obama, key lawmakers say they’re ready to work with the president.

By Alanna Klein

Washington

Education leaders in Congress are signaling that they’re prepared to cooperate with the White House on a long-stalled reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which numerous observers have argued is in seri­ous need of revision. Its current version, the No Child Left Behind Act, because in 2001.

Key lawmakers acknowledged last week that en­acting legislation to reauthorize the NCLB was tricky, but they said they were ready to get going.

“I don’t want to make it sound like it’s going to be an easy 90 days or so to get this done,” said Alex­ander of Tennessee, a leading Republican on educa­tion, and in a conference call last week with reporters, he added, “I looked forward to coming to Congress, and now we’re at the point of the law’s failure.”

Last year, with Democratic controlling both chambers of Congress, little progress was made on a blueprint President Obama unveiled in March for overhauling the law. Now the president faces a decidedly different Congress, a Republican­controlled Senate and a more demo­cratic­majority in the Senate.

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Obama Touts ‘Race to Top,’ Calls It Model for ESEA Bill

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The Obama administration is proposing a sweeping reauthorization of federal education law — and it’s proposing a law that’s more streamlined, more focused, and more innovative.

The 2011 reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) would be the most significant new federal education law since 1965, when the Education Act of 1965 was passed.

Obama’s education plan, which he unveiled in his State of the Union address earlier this month, would replace the current law with a new, flexible, and more results-based approach to education.

The plan would require states to develop new, rigorous academic standards and assessments for students, and it would allow states to use their own funds to implement the new standards.

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