



# A Well-Rounded Education for All

BY GENE R. CARTER, *Executive Director, ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)*

For more than eight years, U.S. federal education policies have prioritized reading and math over other subjects. Indeed, the No Child Left Behind Act's singular focus on student performance in reading and math has led to an alarming narrowing of the curriculum, hampering our ability to prepare students for success in the increasingly global marketplace and in our own complex, ever-changing society.

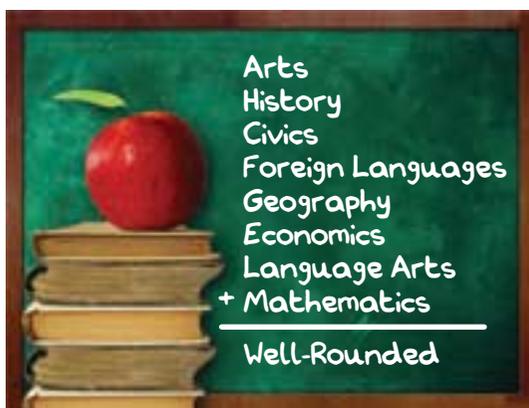
The Obama administration has expressed support for a more comprehensive approach to education, and its FY 11 budget request includes a \$38.9 million (or 17%) increase in funding to support teaching and learning in the arts, history, civics, foreign languages, geography, and economics. However, the budget request proposes to combine eight subject-specific grant programs into a single competitive grant program that would pit these subjects against one another for resources. Furthermore, President Obama's blueprint for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) equates college and career readiness with mastery of English language arts and mathematics standards, continuing to prioritize these two subjects at the expense of all others.

Recognizing the need for a collective response, ASCD assembled a diverse group of organizations representing a wide array of subject areas to develop consensus recommendations for how the federal government can better support a well-rounded education for each child. MENC was an integral part of this process and helped shape the recommendations, which call upon the Obama administration and Congress to

- Include all elements of a well-rounded education in

any definition of college-, career-, and citizenship-ready standards.

- Maintain discrete funding streams for each subject area to ensure that each retains federal support individually and that all receive a minimum level of resources reflecting collective support for a well-rounded education.
- Promote grant competitions within disciplines, not among them, that prioritize underserved or high-need schools and students and emphasize best practices, scalability, and cross-subject collaboration and integration.
- Develop a rigorous evaluation process, including significant input from professional educators, to measure the effectiveness of the funded activities and to propose improvements in the respective grant programs.
- Establish meaningful public reporting and accountability requirements regarding student achievement in each of these disciplines at the school, district, and state levels.



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MENC Senior Deputy Executive Director and COO Michael Blakeslee helped introduce these recommendations during a policy briefing on Capitol Hill this past summer where he emphasized that “a credible, comprehensive, well-round-

ed education is not only practical, but essential.”

To date, more than 30 organizations have endorsed the recommendations, and ASCD, MENC, and other partners are sharing them with members of Congress as they develop ESEA legislation. Our hope is that by harmonizing our message to legislators, we can build support on Capitol Hill for the crucial importance of each core discipline in providing a comprehensive education for each and every child.

*Learn more about ASCD's work in support of well-rounded education at [ascd.org/wellrounded](http://ascd.org/wellrounded).*