

education as other children. In 1990, the program was amended to include direct services to homeless children. In 1987, before creation of the program, over 50 percent of homeless children were not attending school. An evaluation completed in 1995 showed that over 86 percent of homeless children in districts that received funding were attending school (Anderson, 1995). The McKinney Act was reauthorized in 2002 as part of the No Child Left Behind Act. In 2015 the education portion of EHCY was reauthorized and expanded to include public preschools.

Serious barriers to the education of homeless children remain. The 2008 recession and foreclosure crisis caused an increase in the number of people, including children, who are homeless. School districts from around the country reported an increase in the number of homeless children beginning in the fall of 2008. As more people lost their homes, it is reasonable to assume this trend has continued. For example, the number of homeless children increased 8 percent between 2012 and 2013, reaching a peak in 2014 when it was reported that there were 1,301,239 homeless children in US schools (National Center for Homeless Education, 2017). Although need for the program's services has increased, funding has not kept pace with this need. School social workers have to continue advocating for full funding of the EHCY program and increased attention to the needs of homeless students as well as preschoolers.



EP 5a

The **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** of 1965 was the largest source of federal assistance to poor schools, communities, and children for 30 years. President Bill Clinton reauthorized ESEA when he signed the **Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)** into law in 1994. The new law supports schools in their efforts to move all children toward high academic standards. Title I, previously known as Chapter I, supports local educational agencies in helping disadvantaged students meet high academic standards by:

- Improving teaching by promoting effective instruction for at-risk children and for enriched and accelerated programs
- Catalyzing sweeping changes in the poorest communities, including providing new textbooks and more support for teachers and curriculum development
- Promoting effective parental participation
- Supporting coordination with health and social services agencies
- Focusing resources on schools with the highest percentage of students in poverty

The **Migrant Education Program (MEP)** is also authorized under Title I of IASA to ensure that migrant workers' children have access to the same free and appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as other children. Title IX supports local school districts' efforts to meet the educational and related cultural needs of First Nations children so that they can achieve the same academic standards expected of all students. This legislation is critical because First Nations students are at risk for school failure due to a 31 percent poverty rate, health problems, and high unemployment on reservations.

In 2001, President George W. Bush signed into law the **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act**, which required that every child must learn to read, write, multiply and subtract at grade level (Fisher, 2013). Every state was required to set standards, which applied to all schools that received Title I funding, and demonstrate whether they achieved those standards. Schools with consistently low-performing scores were to get extra federal funding to enhance outcomes. However, schools that did not improve faced the loss of federal funds and a loss of students because parents of low-income children in poor-performing schools were theoretically able to send their children to other public schools and get federal funds for private tutoring.

However, NCLB was controversial and was never fully funded (Klein, 2008; Kolderie, 2008). One of the primary concerns was that the focus was on test taking and not helping students learn to think critically or creatively. The number of failing schools nationwide continued to increase. The lack of flexibility and the complexity of the legislation also proved problematic. The law's tangled rules have mystified and demoralized many . . . Schools should be rewarded for elevating achievement levels by some degree, rather than penalized for not meeting an absolute, unrealistic standard" (Fuller, 2004, p. 23). In 2015 the Obama administration passed bipartisan legislation fundamentally replacing NCLB with the **Every Student Succeeds Act**. The main emphasis of the law was to remove the mandate that "one size fits all" allowing local districts and states more flexibility in how to achieve and measure success.



EP 5

Diversity

At the beginning of the twentieth century, 1 of every 10 students was a member of a nondominant group. By the end of the twentieth century, the number was one of every four. The ranks of Latino and Asian American students, in particular, have grown enormously due to immigration trends over the last 20 years. This dramatic change in the demographics of American communities and schools has had a profound effect on education.

The US educational system has long been based on a dominant-culture, middle-class value structure. African American, Asian American, Latino, Islamic, Jewish, and First Nation students are especially vulnerable to discrimination because their cultures, values, and interaction patterns have often been discounted or rejected in the educational structure and curriculum (Andreoli, Howarth, & Sonn, 2014). As a result, students from many nondominant groups have often been overrepresented in remedial programs.



EP 2

Multicultural Education 104

One way to address discrimination and teaching styles or curricula that ignore the cultural characteristics of students is to raise the awareness of school administrators, parents, and teachers about the benefits of **multicultural education**. This is easier said than done. Many parents and educators still think of diversity as a burden and do not realize that current curricula and teaching approaches are biased.