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## Education Professor Available To Discuss Obama's Proposed Overhaul To No Child Left Behind

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DURHAM, N.H. – Michael Middleton, associate professor of education at the University of New Hampshire, is available to discuss the sweeping changes proposed by the Obama Administration to the No Child Left Behind Act and the elements of the original act that educators have found problematic.

The administration proposes broad changes to how schools are evaluated and calls for the elimination of the law's 2014 deadline for bringing every child to academic proficiency.

According to Middleton, the proposed changes to the No Child Left Behind Act should be welcomed by educators and parents. However, in the crucial time of planning these changes, it is important to get broad input from groups representing parents, educators, and students.

"Currently the requirement that schools make 'adequate yearly progress' as measured by test scores and face harsh sanctions for missing targets is problematic in two ways. First, it does not acknowledge differences in schools and students. The current allocation of funding based solely on income levels does not seem to reflect the diversity in schools, and student characteristics that affect achievement. Placing schools in more complex categories may help schools that face an array of challenges more resources could address. In addition to socioeconomic status, other categories that could be considered are racial background of students, location of schools in rural/urban communities, parental educational background, and availability of community resources," Middleton says.

"Second, the current law is based on the assumption of a 'carrot and stick' approach to motivation. Research in motivation both for teachers and for students supports the notion that focusing on improving and developing competence rather than proving or demonstrating competence provides more lasting benefit and increased performance. By having student test scores be the only metric of teacher and student evaluation is a mistake. Instead, providing formative feedback across several areas – academic, behavioral, and social – and including them in goal setting for their community, school, and classroom would enhance motivation for teachers and students," he says.

"I applaud the Obama administration for acknowledging that a range of characteristics may contribute to school failure but am concerned that student test scores remain the primary focus of evaluation of students and teachers. This is a crucial time for federal and state policymakers to gather feedback from educators, parents, and educational researchers as the direction of our schools for the next decade is set," Middleton says. Middleton researches student motivation and learning, classroom and school environments, teacher education, social development of adolescents, school transitions, urban schools, and middle and secondary schools.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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