

Joint Organizational Statement on *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*

List of signers updated January 30, 2007

The undersigned education, civil rights, children's, disability, and citizens' organizations are committed to the No Child Left Behind Act's objectives of strong academic achievement for all children and closing the achievement gap. We believe that the federal government has a critical role to play in attaining these goals. We endorse the use of an accountability system that helps ensure all children, including children of color, from low-income families, with disabilities, and of limited English proficiency, are prepared to be successful, participating members of our democracy.

While we all have different positions on various aspects of the law, based on concerns raised during the implementation of NCLB, we believe the following significant, constructive corrections are among those necessary to make the Act fair and effective. Among these concerns are: over-emphasizing standardized testing, narrowing curriculum and instruction to focus on test preparation rather than richer academic learning; over-identifying schools in need of improvement; using sanctions that do not help improve schools; inappropriately excluding low-scoring children in order to boost test results; and inadequate funding. *Overall, the law's emphasis needs to shift from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement.*

Recommended Changes in NCLB

Progress Measurement

1. Replace the law's arbitrary proficiency targets with ambitious achievement targets based on rates of success actually achieved by the most effective public schools.
2. Allow states to measure progress by using students' growth in achievement as well as their performance in relation to pre-determined levels of academic proficiency.
3. Ensure that states and school districts regularly report to the government and the public their progress in implementing systemic changes to enhance educator, family, and community capacity to improve student learning.
4. Provide a comprehensive picture of students' and schools' performance by moving from an overwhelming reliance on standardized tests to using multiple indicators of student achievement in addition to these tests.
5. Fund research and development of more effective accountability systems that better meet the goal of high academic achievement for all children

Assessments

6. Help states develop assessment systems that include district and school-based measures in order to provide better, more timely information about student learning.
7. Strengthen enforcement of NCLB provisions requiring that assessments must:
 - Be aligned with state content and achievement standards;
 - Be used for purposes for which they are valid and reliable;
 - Be consistent with nationally recognized professional and technical standards;
 - Be of adequate technical quality for each purpose required under the Act;
 - Provide multiple, up-to-date measures of student performance including measures that assess higher order thinking skills and understanding; and
 - Provide useful diagnostic information to improve teaching and learning.
8. Decrease the testing burden on states, schools and districts by allowing states to assess students annually in selected grades in elementary, middle schools, and high schools.

Building Capacity

9. Ensure changes in teacher and administrator preparation and continuing professional development that research evidence and experience indicate improve educational quality and student achievement.
10. Enhance state and local capacity to effectively implement the comprehensive changes required to increase the knowledge and skills of administrators, teachers, families, and communities to support high student achievement.

Sanctions

11. Ensure that improvement plans are allowed sufficient time to take hold before applying sanctions; sanctions should not be applied if they undermine existing effective reform efforts.
12. Replace sanctions that do not have a consistent record of success with interventions that enable schools to make changes that result in improved student achievement.

Funding

13. Raise authorized levels of NCLB funding to cover a substantial percentage of the costs that states and districts will incur to carry out these recommendations, and fully fund the law at those levels without reducing expenditures for other education programs.
14. Fully fund Title I to ensure that 100 percent of eligible children are served.

We, the undersigned, will work for the adoption of these recommendations as central structural changes needed to NCLB at the same time that we advance our individual organization's proposals.

1. Advancement Project
2. American Association of School Administrators
3. American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA)
4. American Association of University Women
5. American Baptist Women's Ministries
6. American Counseling Association
7. American Dance Therapy Association
8. American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)
9. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
10. American Humanist Association
11. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
12. Americans for the Arts
13. Annenberg Institute for School Reform
14. Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
15. ASPIRA
16. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
17. Association of Education Publishers
18. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
19. Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
20. Big Picture Company
21. Center for Community Change
22. Center for Expansion of Language and Thinking
23. Center for Parent Leadership
24. Children's Defense Fund
25. Church Women United
26. Coalition for Community Schools
27. Citizens for Effective Schools
28. Coalition of Essential Schools
29. Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
30. Communities for Quality Education
31. Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
32. Council for Exceptional Children
33. Council for Hispanic Ministries of the United Church of Christ
34. Council for Learning Disabilities
35. Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc.
36. Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
37. Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
38. Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ)
39. Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children (DLD/CEC)
40. Education Action!
41. Every Child Matters

42. FairTest: The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
43. Forum for Education and Democracy
44. Hmong National Development
45. International Reading Association
46. International Technology Education Association
47. Institute for Language and Education Policy
48. Japanese American Citizens League
49. Learning Disabilities Association of America
50. League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
51. Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice of the United Church of Christ
52. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
53. NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF)
54. National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education (NAAPAE)
55. National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
56. National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA)
57. National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities
58. National Alliance of Black School Educators
59. National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
60. National Association of School Psychologists
61. National Association of Social Workers
62. National Baptist Convention, USA (NBCUSA)
63. National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
64. National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
65. National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)
66. National Conference of Black Mayors
67. National Council for the Social Studies
68. National Council of Churches
69. National Council of Jewish Women
70. National Council of Teachers of English
71. National Education Association
72. National Federation of Filipino American Associations
73. National Indian Education Association
74. National Indian School Board Association
75. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
76. National Mental Health Association
77. National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA
78. National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
79. National Reading Conference
80. National Rural Education Association
81. National School Boards Association
82. National School Supply and Equipment Association
83. National Urban League
84. Native Hawaiian Education Association
85. People for the American Way
86. Presbyterian Church (USA)

87. Progressive National Baptist Convention
88. Protestants for the Common Good
89. Rural School and Community Trust
90. Service Employees International Union
91. School Social Work Association of America
92. Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
93. Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations
94. Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
95. Stand for Children
96. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
97. The Children's Aid Society
98. The Episcopal Church
99. United Black Christians of the United Church of Christ
100. United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
101. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
102. USAction
103. Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church
104. Women of Reform Judaism