

In the fall of 2004, approximately two dozen educational organizations joined together to begin exploring serious concerns about the No Child Left Behind Act. By November 2008 the number of signers had grown to 150. Representatives of these organizations are in ongoing conversation about constructive corrections to the law which will make it fairer and more effective.

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

The undersigned education, civil rights, children's, disability, labor, religious, 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.

Advancement Project
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
American Association of School Administrators
American Association of School Librarians (AASL)
American Association of School Personnel Administrators

American Association of University Women
American Baptist Women's Ministries
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Counseling Association
American DanceTherapy Association

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
 American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)
 American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
 American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
 American Friends Service Committee
 American Humanist Association
 American Music Therapy Association
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 American School Counselor Association
 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
 Americans for the Arts
 Annenberg Institute for School Reform
 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
 Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)
 ASPIRA
 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
 Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
 Association of Education Publishers
 Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
 Association of Teacher Educators
 Big Picture Company
 Business and Professional Women/USA
 Center for Community Change
 Center for Expansion of Language and Thinking
 Center for Parent Leadership
 Center for Policy Alternatives
 Change to Win
 Children's Aid Society
 Children's Defense Fund
 Christians for Justice Action-UCC
 Church Women United
 Citizens for Effective Schools
 Coalition for Community Schools
 Coalition of Essential Schools
 Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
 Communities for Quality Education
 Consortium for School Networking (COSN)
 Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
 Council for Exceptional Children
 Council for Hispanic Ministries of the United Church of Christ
 Council for Learning Disabilities
 Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc.
 Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
 Disciples Center for Public Witness
 Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
 Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ)
 Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children (DLD/CEC)
 Education Action!
 Education Justice at the Education Law Center
 Education Not Incarceration
 The Episcopal Church
 Equal Partners in Faith
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Every Child Matters
 FairTest: The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
 Forum for Education and Democracy
 Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
 Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GPAC)
 Hmong National Development
 The Holmes Partnership
 Indigenous Women's Network
 Institute for Language and Education Policy
 International Reading Association
 International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
 International Technology Education Association
 Japanese American Citizens League
 Jobs with Justice
 Learning Disabilities Association of America
 League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
 Ministers for Racial, Social & Economic Justice of the UCC
 National Alliance of Black School Educators
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
 NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF)
 National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education
 National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
 National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA)
 National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities (NAEAACLD)
 National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)
 National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
 National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
 National Association of School Nurses
 National Association of School Psychologists
 National Association of Social Workers
 National Baptist Convention, USA
 National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
 National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
 National Conference of Black Mayors
 National Council for the Social Studies
 National Council for Community & Education Partnerships
 National Council of Churches
 National Coalition of ESEA Title I Parents
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Council of Teachers of English
 National Education Association
 National Education Taskforce
 National Federation of Filipino American Association
 National Indian Education Association
 National Indian School Board Association
 National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
 National Mental Health Association
 National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA
 National Pacific Islander Educator Network
 National People's Action
 National PTA
 National Reading Conference
 National Rural Education Association
 National School Boards Association
 National School Supply and Equipment Association
 National Science Teachers Association
 National Superintendents Roundtable
 National Training & Information Center
 National Urban League
 Native Hawaiian Education Association
 Network of Spiritual Progressives
 Organization of Chinese Americans
 Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG National)
 People for the American Way
 Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Progressive National Baptist Convention
 Promise the Children
 Protestant Justice Action
 Protestants for the Common Good
 Public Education Network (PEN)
 Rethinking Schools
 Rural School and Community Trust
 Service Employees International Union
 School Social Work Association of America
 Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
 Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations
 Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
 Stand for Children
 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
 United Black Christians of the United Church of Christ
 United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Concerns
 United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
 United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
 USAction
 Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church
 Women of Reform Judaism
 Young Men's Empowerment Network

(List of signers updated 4/09)