

*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)