



Joint Organizational Statement on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act October 21, 2004 (*list of 149 signers updated November 17, 2008*)

The undersigned education, civil rights, religious, children's, disability, civic, and labor 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 Colleges for Teacher Education
3. American Association of School Administrators
4. American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA)
5. American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA)



6. American Association of University Women
7. American Baptist Women's Ministries
8. American Civil Liberties Union
9. American Counseling Association
10. American Dance Therapy Association
11. American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
12. American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)
13. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
14. American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
15. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
16. American Humanist Association
17. American Music Therapy Association
18. American Occupational Therapy Association
19. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
20. American School Counselor Association
21. Americans for the Arts
22. Annenberg Institute for School Reform
23. Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
24. Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
25. ASPIRA
26. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
27. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
28. Association of Education Publishers
29. Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
30. Association of Teacher Educators
31. Big Picture Company
32. Business and Professional Women/USA
33. Center for Community Change
34. Center for Expansion of Language and Thinking
35. Center for Parent Leadership
36. Center for Policy Alternatives
37. Change to Win
38. Children's Aid Society
39. Children's Defense Fund
40. Christians for Justice Action--UCC
41. Church Women United
42. Citizens for Effective Schools
43. Coalition for Community Schools
44. Consortium for School Networking
45. Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc.
46. Coalition of Essential Schools
47. Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
48. Communities for Quality Education
49. Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
50. Council for Exceptional Children



51. Council for Hispanic Ministries of the United Church of Christ
52. Council for Learning Disabilities
53. Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
54. Disciples Center for Public Witness
55. Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
56. Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ)
57. Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children (DLD/CEC)
58. Education Action!
59. Education Law Center
60. Educate Not Incarcerate
61. Episcopal Church
62. Equal Partners in Faith
63. *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*
64. Every Child Matters
65. FairTest: The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
66. Forum for Education and Democracy
67. Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
68. Gender Public Advocacy Coalition
69. Hmong National Development
70. Holmes Partnership
71. Indigenous Women's Network
72. Institute for Language and Education Policy
73. International Reading Association
74. International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
75. International Technology Education Association
76. Japanese American Citizens League
77. Jobs with Justice
78. Learning Disabilities Association of America
79. League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
80. Mental Health America
81. Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic justice of the United Church of Christ
82. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
83. NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF)
84. National Alliance of Black School Educators
85. National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education (NAAPAE)
86. National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
87. National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA)
88. National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities (NAEAACLD)



89. National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)
90. National Association of Pupil Service Administrators
91. National Association of School Nurses
92. National Association of School Psychologists
93. National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
94. National Association of Social Workers
95. National Baptist Convention, USA (NBCUSA)
96. National Coalition of ESEA Title I Parents
97. National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community
Development
98. National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
(NCPPIE)
99. National Conference of Black Mayors
100. National
Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)
101. National Council for the Social Studies
102. National Council of Churches
103. National Council of Jewish Women
104. National Council of Teachers of English
105. National Education Association
106. National Education Taskforce
107. National Federation of Filipino
American Associations
108. National Indian Education
Association
109. National Indian School
Board Association
110. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
111. National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA
112. National Pacific Islander Educator Network
113. National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
114. National People's Action
115. National Reading Conference
116. National Rural Education Association
117. National School Boards Association
118. National School Supply and Equipment Association
119. National Science Teachers Association
120. National Superintendents Roundtable
121. National Training & Information Center
122. National Urban League
123. Native Hawaiian Education Association
124. Network of Spiritual Progressives
125. Organization of Chinese Americans
126. People for the American Way
127. PFLAG National (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians
and Gays)



128. Presbyterian Church (USA)
129. Promise the Children
130. Progressive National
Baptist Convention
131. Protestants for the Common Good
132. Protestant Justice Action
133. Public Education Network
134. Rural School and Community Trust
135. Service Employees International Union
136. School Social Work Association of America
137. Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations
138. Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
139. Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
140. Stand for Children
141. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)
142. United Black Christians of the United Church of Christ
143. United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual
& Transgender Concerns
144. United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
145. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
146. USAction
147. Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United
Methodist Church
148. Women of Reform Judaism
149. Young Men's Empowerment Network

(List of 149 signers updated November 17, 2008)

We encourage national organizations to sign the Joint Statement.

Email the endorsement to monty [at] fairtest [dot] org. Send your organization's name along with contact person and that person's email, phone and address, as well as organization's website.

We also encourage state and local organizations to endorse and use the Joint Statement, although we are not adding such groups to the list of signers.