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PEN STATEMENT ON NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND COMMISSION FINDINGS

WASHINGTON – (February 13, 2007) – Public Education Network (PEN) is pleased that the bi-partisan Commission on No Child Left Behind has recommended much-needed improvements to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, many of which are consistent with research PEN has conducted concerning public views of NCLB. The following is a statement on the commission’s findings from PEN President and CEO Wendy D. Puriefoy:

“The commission’s recommendations are a starting point for making dramatic improvements to NCLB. PEN commends the commission for its focus on improving accountability systems based on individual student progress over time, on improving data systems and on increasing support for teachers and principals. We should invest in a new accountability system that tracks and recognizes the progress of all students and teachers so that we can target help where it is needed most.

The commission has recommended important steps, but we would ask that Congress do more. Congress should ensure that school improvement interventions focus on improving schools, not just punishing them for failure. Although we are pleased that the commission calls for putting more information and more rights in the hands of parents and communities, Congress should do more to make strong parent and community engagement a priority through increased monitoring, assistance and enforcement. Still, any recommendation to improve the law will not have the dramatic impact we expect if Congress does not put significant new resources behind it. Congress should act quickly to dramatically improve NCLB and fully fund it.”

PEN has a complete set of NCLB informational tools available at www.PublicEducation.org. In 2004, 2005, and 2006, PEN held a series of public hearings concerning NCLB and will soon announce a formal position on the act.

ABOUT PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK

Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to build public demand and mobilize resources for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN believes that public education is the cornerstone of our democratic way of life. PEN seeks to strengthen public education, and opposes policies and practices that detract from high academic achievement for all children. PEN and its 79 members work in 33 states and the District of Columbia, in nearly 1,600 school districts serving more than 11 million children or approximately 22 percent of the nation’s public school population. PEN recently launched a national campaign entitled “Give Kids Good Schools” (<http://www.GiveKidsGoodSchools.org>) to guarantee a quality public education for every child in the U.S. The campaign urges Americans to use their voices and their votes on behalf of public education. For more information about the campaign and PEN, visit: www.PublicEducation.org.

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