



Great Public Schools for Every Child

STATEMENT OF

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PRESIDENT

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

**BEFORE THE ASPEN INSTITUTE'S
COMMISSION ON NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

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Good morning Secretary Thompson, Governor Barnes, and Members of the Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to join you this morning and share the views of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association (NEA). We also appreciate the Commission previously inviting other educators, including several NEA members and leaders, to speak to you on issues including teacher quality, accountability, special education, rural education, and the impact of NCLB on high schools.

NEA is the largest professional association in the country, representing an array of public school educators—teachers and education support professionals, higher education faculty, educators teaching in Department of Defense schools, students in colleges of teacher education, and retired educators across the country. While our membership is diverse, we have a common mission and values based on our belief that a great public school is a basic right for every child.

Our members go into education for two reasons—because they love children and they appreciate the importance of education in our society. We want all students to succeed. Our members show up at school every day to nurture children, to help them reach their full potential, to be anchors in children’s lives, and to help prepare them for the 21st century world that awaits them. It is our members’ passion and dedication that informs and guides NEA’s work as we advocate for sound public policy that will help them achieve their goals.

You have asked me to share with you NEA’s views about the No Child Left Behind Act in terms of what we support and what changes need to be made as we approach the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. You have also asked me to comment on the implementation of the law to determine whether the reauthorization should amend any of the current regulations, guidance, or practices at the United States Department of Education (USED). I will attempt to address both questions in each of the following areas: Assessments, Accountability, and Teacher Quality.

NEA and its members have long supported the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). During the last reauthorization of ESEA, we supported the laudable goals of No Child Left Behind—closing achievement gaps, raising overall student achievement, and ensuring all students have a qualified teacher. We also supported a number of specific elements in the new law, including the targeting of Title I funds to the neediest schools and students; disaggregation of test data by subgroup; and programs for dropout prevention, after-school learning opportunities, and math and science education. We continue to support all of these elements.

NEA did not at any time oppose annual testing nor did we oppose passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. We did, however, make clear to Congress our objection to accountability systems based solely upon test scores. We also made clear that any tests used in an accountability system had to be valid and reliable, aligned with the curriculum, and designed to inform instruction. We also insisted that the system had to allow for accurate and fair measurement of test results.

During the debate on No Child Left Behind, we suggested two ways to craft a more workable, accurate, and fair accountability system. First, we suggested the use of multiple measures and methods to gauge student achievement and school quality to determine school effectiveness. Second, we suggested creating accountability systems that not only required certain proficiency levels but also measured growth in student achievement over time. We supported, and continue to support, these policies because while we know that all children can learn, we understand that not all children learn at the same rate or in the same way.

Our criticisms during initial debate and our continuing expressions of concern over implementation of the law are not rejections of the goals of No Child Left Behind. Nor do they reflect a desire to do away with the law. However, we do believe it's time for a change in ESEA.

In fact, I have made closing the achievement gaps one of NEA's highest priorities. It is not only something about which I care personally, it is also the right thing to do. As someone who taught for 30 years, I know that change doesn't happen overnight. But, I also know that if we are to achieve the change we seek, we cannot ignore the experiences of those working in our classrooms every day. Rather, we must translate the lessons we learn from our nation's educators into sound, workable policies that will help us meet our goals.

In July, NEA held its annual meeting where almost 9,000 delegates voted on NEA's priorities for ESEA reauthorization. They didn't vote to repeal or do away with NCLB. Instead, they voted on a comprehensive set of proposals designed to fix what's wrong with the law and add to it the kinds of initiatives that will make our common goals a reality. Our proposals address two main questions: What does it take to create a great public school in the 21st century? And what areas of No Child Left Behind should be amended to help create great public schools for every child? These two questions reflect our members' fundamental belief that education reform must include more than a measurement system and that it must include the essential programs, curriculum, and supports that students need so that they can in fact achieve and learn at higher levels. A copy of that report, NEA's Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization, is attached as Appendix I.

I. NEA Principles for Great Public Schools

NEA believes that the federal government should continue to be a partner to states and localities in the effort to build and enhance our nation's public schools, where 90 percent of school-aged children are educated. Our report spells out what we believe to be the seven key components of a great public school:

- Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that students come to school every day ready and able to learn;

- High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students;
- Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning;
- A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce;
- Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels;
- Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement; and
- Adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding.

The priorities detailed in the report are very consistent with the views of our general membership. In fact, our recent member poll found:

- 57 percent of our members want major changes to No Child Left Behind, 21 percent want minor changes, 17 percent favor repeal, and just 4 percent want to keep the law as it is;
- 95 percent of our members want the Association to be active in working to change the law, while only 4 percent disagree;
- 85 percent of our members believe there is too much reliance on standardized testing.

Our members rated highest the following proposals to improve NCLB:

- Use multiple measures instead of just tests (71 percent strongly favor);
- Measure student achievement over time instead of just the day of the test (70 percent strongly favor);
- Ensure that employee rights under contracts and laws are respected (65 percent strongly favor);
- Fully fund mandates (64 percent strongly favor);
- Restore the class size reduction program (63 percent strongly favor).

Let me add here that our members are very concerned about the unintended consequences of testing. A member from San Bernadino, California, says:

“Since the inception of NCLB, more children are being referred for tutoring because they do not read fast enough and are subsequently receiving lower grades

in reading.... It seems that NCLB has created an environment of quantification of reading with little regard to the quality of understanding of a piece of text.”

The views of the public about NCLB are quite consistent with the views of NEA members. The 38th Annual Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward Public Schools conducted by Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) and Gallup found that nearly six in 10 Americans who are familiar with the so-called No Child Left Behind Act believe it has had no effect on schools or has actually harmed them. More important, the public also agrees with NEA’s substantive concerns about the assessment and accountability provisions of NCLB:

- Two out of three respondents (69 percent) this year and a similar proportion in 2005 say that the use of a single state test as NCLB requires cannot provide a fair picture of whether or not a school needs improvement.
- NCLB bases performance on testing in English/language arts and math only. Four out of five respondents (81 percent) say that this will not give a fair picture of a school and that other subjects should be included.
- Nearly four out of five respondents (78 percent) say they are concerned that the focus on English/language arts and math will mean less emphasis on art, music, history, and other subjects.
- Four-fifths of respondents (81 percent) say the proper measure of performance is the improvement [or growth] made by students during the school year.

One of the main conclusions of the PDK/Gallup poll was that “[b]ecause the effort to comply with NCLB is driving instruction in most schools and dominating efforts to improve achievement, the concerns of such a large proportion of the public need to be addressed.”¹

Let me also add our concerns, as shared by the public, about the narrowing of the curriculum as an unintended consequence of NCLB. Indeed, we recently signed onto a statement, “ARTS EDUCATION: Creating Student Success In School, Work, and Life,” along with some 50 other education and arts organizations that noted that “access to arts education in our schools is eroding” and stated that the “federal commitment to arts education must be strengthened so that the arts are implemented as a part of the core curriculum of our nation’s schools and are an integral part of every child’s development.”

II. Assessments

We believe there are several areas of change needed to No Child Left Behind’s assessment provisions. While there is positive statutory language which requires assessments to be aligned with content standards, to be valid and reliable and consistent

¹ “38th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools,” August 22, 2006, <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0609pol.htm#nclb>.

with nationally recognized testing standards, the quality of statewide assessments generally does not meet the aspirations of the statutory language.

NEA strongly believes that there should be a much greater emphasis on examining the breadth and appropriateness of content standards, as well as reviewing whether statewide assessments are completely aligned—not just adequately aligned—with those content standards. In NCLB regulations, the USED decided that states could continue to use norm-referenced tests, so long as they were “augmented” with test items designed to ensure alignment with content standards. This early decision by the Department, we believe, put the cart before the horse. The Department should have focused first on reviewing and approving the states’ standards and assessment systems in order to ensure that the assessments were of the quality described by the actual statutory language. We are dismayed that five school years into the implementation of the law, only 10 states have received final approval from USED for their standards and assessment systems (Arizona, Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia). Proper construction of content standards and assessment systems is an essential prerequisite to any accountability system. This seems to have been lost because of the initial decisions made by USED not to review the states’ Title I plans in depth.

NEA members are frustrated by the fact that states—due to the lack of resources and the pressure to quickly comply with NCLB’s testing mandates—utilize tests which mainly emphasize students’ regurgitation of facts. We believe that in order to provide the greatest education possible for all students, public schools must offer a broad and rich curriculum, including arts, music, vocational education, and other subjects designed to engage students and promote enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

Our members recognize that the world has changed, and they want to be a part of delivering an educational experience that is relevant and meaningful. For America to remain competitive in a global economy, our students must be taught the 21st century skills that will allow them to compete in the workforce. NEA has been actively engaged in the Partnership for 21st Century Skills—a partnership of education organizations and leading businesses—to produce a series of recommendations about the types of skills students should learn in a 21st century school. The Partnership has also issued a set of recommendations regarding NCLB’s reauthorization, which we support and have attached for you as Appendix II.

The assessment systems also should better accommodate the diverse needs of students taking the statewide assessments. For example, large-scale test makers have been slow to enhance their testing protocols to include the various types of assessments and accommodations which are permissible under NCLB and necessary to ensure appropriate assessment of students with disabilities and English Language Learners. When a teacher reads a math test to a blind student—a permissible accommodation—the score of that student should not be invalidated or counted as a zero for purposes of “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) simply because the test maker has failed to include that accommodation in the testing protocols.

NEA also strongly believes that assessment systems should measure growth in individual student achievement. Assessments should not simply report how a student performs on a test one day out of the year. Assessments should be tools used to track whether there has been growth in an individual's mastery of skills and content. We applaud Secretary Spellings' decision to pilot a growth model project. Her decision signaled that she heard what our members have had to say, and we thank her for that. We also applaud her decision to allow states to propose their own growth models for peer review rather than prescribing a certain type of model. This flexibility was particularly welcome given that all states were testing prior to enactment of NCLB, and 15 states were already testing annually in grades three through eight. We have recently completed a policy brief on the growth model pilot program and the process used by the Department of Education to approve proposals by two states (North Carolina and Tennessee). This policy brief is attached as Appendix III.

Our members believe that measuring student growth over time will be more helpful than the current snapshot approach, which measures student achievement on one day out of the year. A growth model approach will more accurately reflect student learning and will help inform instruction.

In order for educators to make use of the assessment results, they must get them in a timely fashion. Current NCLB regulations do not require that test results be given to teachers in time for them to analyze the results and use the data to inform their choice of instructional methods or strategies in the classroom. This needs to be corrected in the reauthorization of ESEA.

Assessment data should be easy to understand and use. While NCLB requires that assessments be designed to yield "individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports," few states and districts have the capacity and resources necessary to produce meaningful reports that help parents and educators address students' needs. The federal government should pay much more attention to building the capacity of states and local education agencies (LEAs) to deliver these types of reports, as they are at the heart of using data to inform instruction and improve learning. This effort requires both increased financial assistance, as well as technical assistance, from the federal government.

States and localities also need enhanced data systems to accommodate growth model data. Data systems should make running a school easier, not more complicated. States and localities should have data systems which are not only compatible and able to comply with the basic requirements of NCLB but are also designed to assign students individual identifiers to track individual student growth, to house individual education programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities, to house information about the types of accommodations or other linguistic supports necessary for English Language Learners, and to produce the kinds of data reports required by law and needed to improve the delivery of education services to our students.

III. Accountability that Emphasizes Supporting Students and Educators

We believe that accountability systems should be based upon multiple measures and methods, including local assessments, teacher-designed classroom assessments collected over time, portfolios and other measures of student learning, graduation/dropout rates, in-grade retention, percentage of students taking honors/advanced classes and Advanced Placement exams, and college enrollment rates. We strongly believe that the current one-size-fits-all system is unacceptable and that states need the flexibility to design systems that produce results, including deciding in which grades to administer annual statewide tests.

Accountability systems should reward success and support educators to help students learn. Toward this end, any improved accountability system should allow for use of growth models and other measures that assess student learning over time and recognize improvement on all points of the achievement scale. These measures should then be used as a guide to revise instructional practices and curricula, provide individual assistance to students, and tailor appropriate professional development for teachers and other school professionals. They should not be used to penalize teachers or schools.

I taught middle school science. As a veteran classroom teacher, I would welcome the opportunity to use my students' test results to guide my instructional practices. But I seriously question the logic of any system that mandates tests, but does not also mandate that the results of those tests be given in time to make any instructional adjustments. And if someone had then told me that my class the next year would be tested in the spring and that their scores would be compared to my students from last year, I would have said there was something inherently wrong with the system.

An accountability system designed to measure performance cannot compare apples and oranges. As a science teacher, I know that such a system will not yield any meaningful data. The implementation phase of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has highlighted a critical void in assessing student progress, measuring student progress over time, and providing the resources and tools that educators need to get the job done. In our opinion, it does not recognize that children are human beings, not cardboard cut-outs, and that teaching them is both an art AND a science.

One of our members from Rockford, Illinois has noted the illogical consequences of the current system:

“Jackson Elementary School teachers worked tirelessly in the first year of corrective action to bring up scores to the level set by NCLB. The students made incredible gains, unfortunately they missed AYP by less than one percent. This translates to one or two students that made gains, but not enough to bring them to the prescribed level. Therefore, they are in their second year of corrective action and labeled as a failing school.”

The current system simply fails to provide useful, timely data for diagnosing learning problems and facilitating instructional changes. Rather, students who are tested in one grade move on to the next grade, and their new teacher receives their test results—results that have virtually no relevance to the choices that new teacher will make in instructional strategies.

Not only is the current underlying system flawed, but implementation is also troubling. NCLB requires assessments to be built upon states' content standards, which in turn are to be aligned with statewide assessments. Yet, four and a half years into the law, only ten states have received full approval from the Department of Education for their content standards and assessment systems. To educators, this translates as a lack of interest in what is tested and whether the test content has actually been taught in the classroom. It appears that the goal is simply to administer tests and assign accountability labels. This is demoralizing to educators and contradictory to sound educational practice.

NEA is not alone in supporting an improved accountability system that allows for use of more accurate measures. We have led an effort to develop consensus on a broad set of principles for ESEA reauthorization. To date, 89 organizations have endorsed these principles, one of which calls for use of growth models as part of an accountability framework (See Appendix IV for the complete Joint Organizational Statement on NCLB with the list of signatories). In addition, nine bills that would allow use of growth models are currently pending in Congress.

Governors and state legislators have also called on a bipartisan basis for more flexibility to use growth models. The National Governors Association's (NGA) proposals for the ESEA reauthorization, issued in March 2006, state that, "Maximum flexibility in designing state accountability systems, including testing, is critical to preserve the amalgamation of federal funding, local control of education, and state responsibility for system-wide reform."

Similarly, the National Conference of State Legislatures issued a report in February 2005 calling on Congress to make substantial changes to the law. The report states:

"Administrators at the state, local and school levels are overwhelmed by AYP because it holds schools to overly prescriptive expectations, does not acknowledge differences in individual performance, does not recognize significant academic progress because it relies on absolute achievement targets, and inappropriately increases the likelihood of failure for diverse schools."

Allowing inclusion of growth models in NCLB's accountability system does not require abandoning the requirement that all students read and complete math problems on grade level. Quite the opposite is true. We believe that growth models hold greater promise to demonstrate whether a student is learning. They would provide a more accurate measure by giving schools credit both for moving a child from below basic to basic as well as moving a child from proficient to advanced. They would also offer a way to recognize highly effective schools that have an influx of students who are not performing at grade level.

Growth models will also help overcome the all-or-nothing approach of measuring Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Currently, a typical school has to meet 37 criteria to make AYP. A school that falls short on just one of the 37 is treated in the same manner as a school that fails all 37 criteria. (See tables below) Growth models that offer more common sense ways to measure student achievement, in particular for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL), will ameliorate this problem.

Current AYP Failure School: Miss 1 of 37

	Reading	95%	Math	95%	Other indicator
All Students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Black/African American	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hispanic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Native American	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Asian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
White	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
ELL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Poverty	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Disability	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

AYP Failure School: Miss All

	Reading	95%	Math	95%	Other Indicator
All Students	No	No	No	No	No
Black/African American	No	No	No	No	
Hispanic	No	No	No	No	
Native American	No	No	No	No	
Asian	No	No	No	No	
White	No	No	No	No	
LEP	No	No	No	No	
Poverty	No	No	No	No	
Disability	No	No	No	No	

However, the use of growth models will not completely eliminate this problem. If one subgroup makes AYP using a growth model, while another subgroup in the school does not make AYP (even using the growth model), the school will still be designated as failing AYP. In this instance, the use of the growth model doesn't eliminate the "all or nothing" approach.

There are differences among growth models, however, each with varying levels of complexity. Some states, like North Carolina, have had to implement a different growth formula for students not already proficient than for students who are proficient. This was necessary because of the federal requirement that proficiency be the end result of any growth trajectory. Obviously, such a model does not work for students who already are proficient.

We are also concerned that students entering the public school system in school year 2012-2013, for example, may not have enough time in the system to receive the kind of support or intervention necessary to allow all of them to be proficient by 2013-2014. Proficiency at any given moment in time is as much a reflection of what students actually know as it is the extent and degree to which they've been exposed to supports and programs designed to enable them to improve.

There is one important caution we would like to offer. Including a growth model as part of the AYP process is an improvement, but it will not be a panacea. Getting certain students on track to proficiency within a four-year timeline, as is required under North Carolina's approved model, will still be a challenge for many schools. In addition, complexities will continue to arise for some ELL students or certain students with disabilities who take alternate assessments. We will also continue to need much more research about growth models as well as technical assistance to states, local districts, and educators to evaluate and use data, evaluate the models themselves, and replicate successful efforts. The ultimate goal should be to help classroom educators use data to inform instruction.

We have additional concerns about supplemental services and school choice, which are referenced in Appendix I, our Positive Agenda for ESEA Reauthorization. Similarly, we have strong concerns about the lack of resources for and state capacity to deliver significant school improvement assistance. For example, NCLB created a \$500 million program specifically dedicated to school improvement efforts. To date, the Congress has not allocated any funding to this essential initiative. In fact, the President's fiscal year 2007 budget requests—for the first time since NCLB's passage in late 2001—any funds at all for the program.

IV. Teacher Quality: Quality Educators in Every Classroom

We could not agree more with the requirement that every child be taught by a qualified, certified, caring teacher. While we support the requirement that all students be taught by a highly qualified teacher, the implementation of this definition has created a maze of rules and guidance that are almost impossible to understand or navigate. To that end, NEA has produced and distributed approximately 50,000 "highly qualified" charts to help

our members understand how to comply with the law's requirements. (Attached as Appendix V.) The chart demonstrates the complexity of what happens when Congress tries to craft a federal definition to overlay 50 different state systems for licensing educators and determining whether they are highly qualified. We have and will continue to believe that a teacher who is fully licensed or certified by his or her state in a particular subject or area IS highly qualified. We, therefore, continue to be troubled by the loophole created by both the statute and the guidance from USED that holds some charter school teachers and some individuals going through an alternative certification program to a lesser standard than the "highly qualified" definition in the law.

One of the aspects of implementation that has been most troubling again involves an early decision made by USED not to review states' "highly qualified" definitions, but rather to conduct those reviews now as a function of their oversight and compliance responsibility. The result has been that states have received Title II Teacher Quality funding for four years, but many have been told recently that their definitions do not comply with NCLB. This is another example of putting the cart before the horse that has caused major disruption and high levels of anxiety among our members. For four years, our members were told by their states to comply with a set of requirements, only to be told—as the time for full compliance had almost elapsed—that they may have to meet a different set of requirements. This has been an unfortunate by-product of USED's poor implementation decisions made in the first year of implementing the statute.

We are supportive of efforts to strengthen teacher preparation, professional development, and licensing standards so that our nation's public school students are taught by professionals who have a firm rooting in both pedagogy and the content they are expected to teach. But those efforts ought to take place in states working in coordination with higher education institutions, licensing boards, and educators' associations. NEA helped establish the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education because we wanted to ensure that teachers entering the profession were well qualified and had the professional skills necessary to be outstanding teachers.

V. Funding

For the first five years after NCLB took effect, the law was underfunded by more than \$40 billion, 25 percent below the authorized funding levels Congress set after considerable discussion and negotiation. Title I, perhaps the most important resource in helping to level the playing field of funding inequities across the country, has been underfunded by \$74 billion compared to the amounts needed to fully fund the statutory formula. Given the fact that states and localities already spend on average \$1,437 less on lower-income students than their more affluent peers, the underfunding by the federal government significantly exacerbates existing inequities. Children and educators need resources and tools to produce the kind of results all of us want. For a more detailed examination of the funding shortfalls, see Appendix VI.

VI. NEA's Work to Close Achievement Gaps

It has been a major priority of mine to marshal NEA resources to assist our state and local affiliates in seeking policy changes at the state and local level to help close achievement gaps. Our work has included:

Committing more than \$6 million through NEA Foundation grants to close achievement gaps in urban school districts. Those grants fund programs with clear goals of improving literacy and math and science achievement; helping stabilize quality staff; and involving families and communities involved in the learning process. In two of the grant sites, Hamilton County, Tennessee, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, school faculties use growth data to assess progress in reading and mathematics and determine appropriate interventions for instructional improvement. Reaching ambitious growth targets provides confidence and positive reinforcement to teachers and students who have large gaps to overcome. It also helps teachers and administrators set continuous benchmarks for progress and observe what works in changing instructional practice. For example, last year in Hamilton County, Tennessee, the five schools targeted under the NEA grant set and achieved a goal of 115 percent of the expected growth according to state standards per annum in reading and mathematics achievement. While these schools have not yet all reached high levels of achievement compared to the state's affluent schools, they have made greater gains than many of the top-ranked schools. By significantly accelerating the rate of achievement, low-performing schools can close achievement gaps, while all schools continue to make progress.

Delivering trainings and products on a variety of instructional issues, including closing the achievement gaps, to our members and leaders across the country. Sponsoring statewide National Board Certified Teacher summits focused on recruiting and retaining accomplished teachers in high-need, high-poverty schools with low student achievement.

Developing and sharing with all NEA affiliates our *Closing Achievement Gaps: An Association Guide*—a blueprint for closing the gaps.

Awarding grants to ten states (Colorado, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania) focused on closing gaps through changes in state policies such as early childhood education, coaching for new principals, statewide teacher induction programs, and revised state professional development guidelines. We have also provided grants to eight states for their work to encourage highly skilled teachers to move to and stay in high-need schools.

Continuing the partnership established in 2005 with the Tom Joyner Foundation to increase the percentage of fully-certified minority teachers in targeted high-needs communities. The Teacher Licensure Scholarship Program works with

Historically Black Colleges and Universities to assist minority teachers in obtaining full licensure. To date, the Foundation has provided financial assistance and NEA has provided technical assistance and expertise to nearly 300 teachers in seven states.

Developing training modules on closing the achievement gaps for use in community conversations. This work has been piloted in Mississippi and Florida and will be used by the end of this program year in three of the seven states that have been awarded grants to convene community conversations.

Surveying, through the Center for Teacher Quality, teachers in three states (Kansas, Arizona, and Ohio) to identify the necessary working conditions to achieve optimum teaching and learning environments.

Developing online professional development focused on helping teachers become more effective with a diverse student body.

Awarding grants to recognize model teacher retention program through a Saturn-UAW-NEA partnership.

Launching and maintaining a user-friendly, interactive Web site to help our affiliates and the general public research and locate resources about the achievement gaps (www.achievementgaps.org).

In the near future, NEA will develop a program guide outlining effective support strategies for minority candidates pursuing National Board Certification, with the goal of increasing the percentage of minority National Board Certified teachers in high-need schools. In the next school year, we will convene community conversations in seven states as part of our Public Engagement Project (PEP) initiative. We will also develop additional educational materials for state affiliates on teaching and working conditions, and we will be announcing additional grants for 2006–07. Finally, NEA is building a database to identify policies, practices, and programs that help close the achievement gaps. I would be happy to share additional information on any of our projects with the committee.

CONCLUSION

On behalf of all 3.2 million members of the National Education Association, I want to thank you for this opportunity and for your leadership and commitment to hosting a national dialogue about ESEA/NCLB. I encourage every member of this Commission to talk to educators about their experiences. Ask them about their frustrations. But more importantly, ask them about their successes. They all have stories to relay about kids achieving and kids succeeding. When you ask for their stories, you'll get as clear a sense as I have that they all want every one of their students to realize their full potential. And that educators go above and beyond the call of duty time and time again to make that goal a reality for America's public school students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input. I hope the Commission will take time to read our policy report and agenda for ESEA reauthorization. We believe it embodies our firm belief that great public schools are a basic right for every child.

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APPENDIX I



ESEA: IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE!

NEA's Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization

July 2006

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Executive Summary

This Executive Summary of the Positive Agenda highlights the recommendations contained in the full report. The full report, starting on page 8, provides the rationale and additional background for each recommendation.

Great Public Schools Criteria

All children have a basic right to a great public school. Our vision of what great public schools need and should provide acknowledges that the world is changing and public education is changing too. Meeting these Great Public Schools (GPS) criteria require not only the continued commitment of all educators, but the concerted efforts of policymakers at all levels of government. We believe these criteria will:

- Prepare all students for the future with 21st century skills
- Create enthusiasm for learning and engage all students in the classroom
- Close achievement gaps and raise achievement for all students
- Ensure that all educators have the resources and tools they need to get the job done

These criteria form a basis for NEA's priorities in offering Congress a framework for the 2007 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The reauthorization process must involve all stakeholders, especially educators. Their knowledge and insights are key to developing sound policies.

- ✓ ***Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school every day ready and able to learn.***

Students must have access to programs such as public school pre-K and kindergarten programs; afterschool enrichment and intervention programs; nutrition, including school breakfast and lunch programs; school-based health care and related services; counseling and mentoring programs for students and families; safe and efficient transportation; and safe and drug-free schools programs.

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 8–11]

- ✓ ***High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.***

All students should have access to a rigorous, comprehensive education that includes critical thinking, problem solving, high level communication and literacy skills, and a deep understanding of content. Curriculum must be aligned with standards and assessments, and should include more than what can be assessed on a paper and pencil multiple choice test.

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, page 12]

✓ ***Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.***

Quality conditions for teaching and learning include smaller class sizes and optimal-sized learning communities; safe, healthy, modern, and orderly schools; up-to-date textbooks, technology, media centers, and materials; policies that encourage collaboration and shared decisionmaking among staff; and the providing of data in a timely manner with staff training in the use of data for decisionmaking. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 12–13]

✓ ***A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.***

A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce in our schools requires a pool of well prepared, highly skilled candidates for all vacancies; quality induction for new teachers with mentoring services from trained veteran teachers; opportunities for continual improvement and growth for all employees; working conditions in which they can be successful; and professional compensation and benefits. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 13–14]

✓ ***Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.***

Appropriate accountability means using results to identify policies and programs that successfully improve student learning and to provide positive supports, including resources for improvement and technical assistance to schools needing help. Schools, districts, states, and the federal government should be financially accountable to the public, with policymakers accountable to provide the resources needed to produce positive results. Accountability systems should be transparent so that policies are determined and communicated in an open, consistent, and timely manner. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, page 14]

✓ ***Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement.***

Policies should assist and encourage parents, families, and communities to be actively involved and engaged in their public schools; require professional development programs for all educators to include the skills and knowledge needed for effective parental and community communication and engagement strategies; provide incentives or require employers to grant a reasonable amount of leave for parents to participate in their children’s school activities. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 14–15]

✓ ***Adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding.***

School funding systems must provide adequate, equitable and sustainable funding. Making taxes fair and eliminating inefficient and ineffective business subsidies are essential prerequisites to achieving adequacy, equity, and stability in school funding. ESEA programs should be fully funded at their authorized levels. [See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 15–16]

NEA's Priorities for ESEA Reauthorization

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 17–29]

A great public school is a basic right of every child. NEA's priorities for the 2007 reauthorization of ESEA focus on a broad range of policies to ensure every child access to a great public school.

The current version of ESEA—the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—is fundamentally flawed. It undermines existing state and school district structures and authority, and shifts public dollars to the private sector through supplemental educational services and takeovers of public schools by for-profit companies.

However, its stated goals—to improve student achievement and help close the achievement and skills gaps that exist in our country—are important to NEA and our society. We want to retain the positive provisions of ESEA, both those that existed prior to NCLB and those that were added by NCLB, in the 2007 reauthorization.

Congress must shift from the current focus that labels and punishes schools with a flawed one-size-fits-all accountability system and severely underfunded mandates to one that includes common-sense flexibility and supports educators in implementing programs that improve student learning, reward success, and provide meaningful assistance to schools most in need of help.

The following five priorities are crucial to realizing the goals of improving student achievement, closing the achievement gaps, and providing every child a quality teacher.

➤ **Accountability That Rewards Success and Supports Educators to Help Students Learn**

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 19–22]

- Accountability should be based upon multiple measures of student learning and school success.
- States should have the flexibility to design systems that produce results, including deciding in which grades to administer annual statewide tests.
- States should have the flexibility to utilize growth models and other measures of progress that assess student achievement over time, and recognize improvement on all points of the achievement scale.
- Growth model results should be used as a guide to revise instructional practices and curriculum, to provide individual assistance to students, and to provide appropriate professional development to teachers and other educators. They should not be used to penalize schools or teachers.
- Assessment systems must be appropriate, valid, and reliable for all groups of students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, and provide for common-sense flexibility for assessing these student subgroups.

- States, school districts, and schools should actively involve teachers and other educators in the planning, development, implementation, and refinement of standards, curriculum, assessments, accountability, and improvement plans.
- Accountability systems and the ensuing use of the results must respect the rights of school employees under federal, state, or local law, and collective bargaining agreements.
- Accountability systems should provide support and assistance, including financial support for improvement and technical assistance to those schools needing help, with targeted assistance to those schools and districts most in need of improvement.
- Assessment and accountability systems should be closely aligned with high standards and classroom curricula, provide timely data to help improve student learning, and be comprehensive and flexible so that they do not result in narrowing of the curricula.
- A federal grant program should be created to assist schools in ensuring all students access to a comprehensive curriculum.
- A comprehensive accountability system must appropriately apply to high schools without increasing dropout rates.
- Standards and assessments must incorporate the nature of work and civic life in the 21st century: high level thinking, learning, and global understanding skills, and sophisticated information, communication, and technology literacy competencies.
- Schools that fail to close achievement gaps after receiving additional financial resources, technical assistance, and other supports should be subject to supportive interventions.
- If certain elements of the current AYP system are maintained, specific flaws must be corrected. These corrections include: providing more than one year to implement improvement plans before subjecting schools or districts to additional sanctions; designating schools or districts as “in need of improvement” only when the same subgroup of students fails to make AYP in the same subject for at least two consecutive years; targeting school choice and supplemental educational services (SES) to the specific subgroups that fail to make AYP; providing SES prior to providing school choice; and ensuring that SES providers serve all eligible students and utilize only highly qualified teachers.

➤ **Smaller Class Sizes To Improve Student Achievement**

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 22–23]

- Restore the Class Size Reduction program that existed prior to NCLB to provide an optimum class size of 15 students.

- Schools should receive federal support—through both direct grants and tax subsidies—for school modernization to accommodate smaller classes.

➤ **Quality Educators in Every Classroom and School**

[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 23–26]

- Provide states and school districts with the resources and technical assistance to create an effective program of professional development and professional accountability for all employees.
- Revise the ESEA Title II Teacher Quality State Grant program to ensure alignment of federally funded teacher professional development with the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards.
- Provide federally funded salary enhancements for teachers who achieve National Board Certification, with a smaller salary incentive for teachers who complete this rigorous process and receive a score, but do not achieve certification.
- Create a grant program that provides additional compensation for teachers with specific knowledge and skills who take on new roles to assist their colleagues.
- Expand opportunities for education support professionals to broaden and enhance their skills and knowledge, including compensation for taking additional courses or doing course work for advanced degrees.
- Provide federal grants that encourage districts and schools to assist new teachers by pairing them with an experienced mentor teacher in a shared classroom.
- Provide financial incentives—both direct federal subsidies and tax credits—for retention, relocation, and housing for teachers and support professionals who work in schools identified as “in need of improvement” or high-poverty schools, and stay in such schools for at least five years.
- Provide hard-to-staff schools with an adequate number of well trained administrators and support professionals, including paraeducators, counselors, social workers, school nurses, psychologists, and clerical support.
- Provide paraeducators who are involuntarily transferred to a Title I school and who have not met the *highly qualified* standard with adequate time to meet the requirement.
- Grant reciprocity for paraeducators who meet the *highly qualified* standard when they move to another state or district, with different qualifications.
- Revise the definition of *highly qualified* teachers to recognize state licensure/certification, eliminate nonessential requirements that create unnecessary obstacles, and eliminate loopholes in the scope of coverage.

- Provide teachers who may not meet the *highly qualified* standard by the current deadlines, due to significant implementation problems, with assistance and additional time to meet the requirement.
- **Students and Schools Supported By Active and Engaged Parents, Families, and Communities**
[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 26–27]
- Provide programs that encourage school-parent compacts, signed by parents, that provide a clearly defined list of parental expectations and opportunities.
 - Provide programs and resources to assist in making schools the hub of the community.
 - Expand funding for the Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) program in ESEA.
 - Include as a requirement for professional development programs funded through ESEA, training in the skills and knowledge needed for effective parental and family communication and engagement strategies.
 - Provide incentives or require employers to provide parents a reasonable amount of leave to participate in their children’s school activities.
- **Resources to Ensure a Great Public School for Every Child**
[See ESEA Positive Agenda, pages 27–29]
- Fully fund ESEA programs at their authorized levels.
 - Enforce Sec. 9527(a) of NCLB, which prevents the federal government from requiring states and school districts to spend their own funds—beyond what they receive from the federal government—to implement federal mandates.
 - Protect essential ESEA programs by:
 - Providing a separate ESEA funding stream for school improvement programs to assist districts and schools
 - Providing adequate funding to develop and improve assessments that measure higher order thinking skills
 - Establishing a trigger whereby any consequences facing schools falling short of the new accountability system are implemented only when Title I is funded at its authorized level
 - Providing a separate ESEA funding stream for supplemental education services and school choice, if these mandates remain in the law
 - Providing adequate funding to develop and improve appropriate assessments for students with disabilities and English Language Learner students
 - Providing technical assistance to schools to help them use money more effectively

- Providing adequate funding to assist state and local education agencies in administering assessments, and collecting and interpreting data in a timely manner so it can be useful to educators
- Important children's and education programs outside of ESEA, including child nutrition, Head Start, IDEA, children's health, child care, and related programs, must be adequately funded.

NEA's Positive Agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization

PART ONE: Great Public Schools Criteria

All children have a basic right to a great public school. Our vision of what great public schools need and should provide acknowledges that the world is changing and public education is changing too. Fulfilling these Great Public Schools (GPS) criteria require not only the continued commitment of all educators, but the concerted efforts of policymakers at all levels of government. We believe these criteria will:

- Prepare all students for the future with 21st century skills
- Create enthusiasm for learning and engaging all students in the classroom
- Close achievement gaps and increase achievement for all students
- Ensure that all educators have the resources and tools they need to get the job done

These criteria form a basis for NEA's priorities in offering Congress a framework for the 2007 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The reauthorization process must involve all stakeholders, especially educators. Genuine involvement taps a breadth of knowledge, insights, and experiences that form the basis of sound educational programs and fosters commitment and success.

- ✓ *Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school every day ready and able to learn.*
- ✓ *High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.*
- ✓ *Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.*
- ✓ *A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.*
- ✓ *Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.*
- ✓ *Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement.*
- ✓ *Adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding.*

The Details of the Great Public Schools Criteria

- ✓ *Quality programs and services that meet the full range of all children's needs so that they come to school every day ready and able to learn.*

Children need a broad array of programs so they are ready to learn every day they are in school. Students must have access to programs such as public school pre-K

and kindergarten; afterschool enrichment and intervention; nutrition, including school breakfast and lunch; school-based health care and related services; counseling and mentoring for students and families; safe and efficient transportation; and safe and drug-free schools.

Brief descriptions of each area follow:

Preschool

Numerous studies have shown that high quality early care experiences, both classroom practices and teacher-child relationship, enhance children's abilities to take advantage of the learning opportunities in school.

A recent study by the National Academy of Sciences notes that much of the human brain develops in the first five years of life and a stimulating environment during this stage changes the very physiology of the brain. High quality early care leads to the development of more advanced learning skills in language and math, as well as social skills.

NEA supports policies and resources for quality, voluntary, universal preschool and pre-K programs that provide a safe environment, well prepared teachers, small class size, interactive relationships among teachers and children, emphasis in both social and learning skills, and that involve parents.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a year of transition from home and early childhood education programs to formal school programs. At least a half-day of kindergarten is a near-universal experience for American children, with nearly 98 percent of youngsters attending. Some children have access to full-day, half-day, and alternate-day programs while others have access to only one of these options. Recent research has shown that children who attend full-day kindergarten are better prepared to succeed in the first grade and beyond.

NEA supports policies and resources that provide high quality full-day kindergarten programs for all children.

Afterschool

Afterschool hours are the peak time for juvenile crime and risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use. Most experts agree that afterschool programs offer a healthy and positive alternative. These programs keep kids safe, improve academic achievement and help relieve the stresses on today's working families. They can serve as important youth violence prevention and intervention strategies. Yet, every day, at least eight million children and youth are left alone and unsupervised once the school bell rings at the end of the school day.

NEA supports policies and resources to ensure all children and youth access to high quality afterschool programs that both provide a safe environment and help improve student learning.

Nutrition

While the National School Lunch program provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to more than 28 million children each school day, too many schoolchildren still lack access to a hot breakfast or other adequate nutrition.

Malnourished children have impaired concentration and greater challenges in learning. In addition, improving the nutritional quality of school lunches and other meals can promote healthy eating habits in children.

NEA supports expanding child nutrition programs and enhancing their nutritional quality to ensure that all children have access to healthy, nutritious meals at school.

Health Needs

In response to a need for student health services, a number of communities have established school-based health centers (SBHCs). The more than 1,000 SBHCs nationwide are popular as providers of affordable, convenient, confidential, and comprehensive services at the school. These programs overcome barriers that discourage adolescents from utilizing health services (such as lack of confidentiality, inconvenient appointment times, prohibitive costs, and general apprehension about discussing personal health problems). Unfortunately too many children, especially children from low-income families, lack access to such services.

NEA supports policies and resources that enable communities to expand the number and the quality of school-based health centers so that all children have access to medical care, counseling, health education, and preventive services provided in a familiar and “teen-friendly” setting on or near school grounds. Such services should be provided by health professionals who are experienced and trained to work with adolescents.

Counseling

Counseling programs staffed by professional school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers help *all* students in the areas of student learning, personal/social development and career development, ensuring that students become productive, well-adjusted adults. Effective counseling programs are important to the school climate and in improving student achievement. Too often, however, these professionals have unreasonable caseloads, but counselors are expected to attend to the individual needs of students. In addition, many counselors are serving as testing coordinators, diverting their time away from meeting students’ needs. The American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250; the National Association of School Psychologists recommends a school psychologist-to-student ratio of 1:1,000; and the School Social Work Association of America recommends a social worker-to-student ratio of 1:400 for an effective program.

NEA supports policies and resources to states and school districts enabling them to achieve this important goal.

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring programs for students are an important resource for students and their parents or guardians. Parents are the most important influence on their children’s lives. But parents often need help. Mentoring offers parents the support of a caring one-to-one relationship that fosters their child’s healthy growth.

Mentoring programs have been shown to contribute to better attitudes toward school, better school attendance, and a better chance of going on to higher education. They also show promise in preventing substance abuse and appear to reduce other negative youth behaviors.

NEA supports policies and resources to expand programs, such as the mentoring program in Title IV of ESEA to provide mentoring services to all students who would benefit.

Transportation

Every school day, millions of parents and their children rely on the “yellow” school bus to provide safe and dependable transportation to and from school and school-related activities. In fact, according to the National Safety Council, school buses are the safest form of ground transportation—40 times safer than the family car.

Most states, except for the transportation of students with special needs, have no mandate to provide students with transportation to or from school. Even in states where transportation of students to and from school is required by law, distances set forth in the law fail to take account of hazardous pedestrian crossings, and funding shortfalls create problems in maintaining an adequate school transportation program.

As a result of budget constraints, many schools are seeking alternative transportation services for students. NEA agrees with the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services that the safest way to transport children to and from school and school-related activities is in a school bus.

NEA supports policies and resources that ensure all students have access to needed transportation in safe and modern school buses, and that all buses be provided with radios to ensure communication between drivers, schools, and other authorities in case of emergencies.

School Climate

A positive school climate encourages positive behaviors with rewards for meeting expectations and clear consequences for violating rules. Research shows that schools with a positive and welcoming school climate increase the likelihood that students succeed academically, while protecting them from engaging in high risk behaviors like substance abuse, sexual activities, and violence.

Most students and teachers report feeling safe in their schools, yet a 2002 study of school safety revealed that about one-fourth would avoid a specific place at school out of fear that someone might hurt or bully them. More than one-quarter (27%) of teachers in middle and high schools reported that the behavior of some students kept them from instructional activities during significant amounts of the school day.

NEA supports policies and resources, including safe and drug-free schools programs, to assist all schools in creating and maintaining safe and disciplined school sites.

✓ ***High expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students.***

NEA supports policies and resources to ensure all students access to a rigorous, comprehensive education. A rigorous curriculum, as defined by NEA, means that critical thinking, problem solving, and high level communication and literacy skills are included, as well as deep understandings of content. Rigor includes life skills and dispositions that support lifelong learning, such as persistence and thoroughness. Rigor does not mean simply a certain number of courses, more difficult courses, more time in class, or more test preparation.

NEA is not alone in calling for a broader definition of rigor. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a broad-based coalition of education organizations and major businesses states: “Rigor must reflect *all* the results that matter for all high school graduates today. Today’s graduates need to be critical thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators, who are proficient in both core subjects and new, 21st century content and skills.”

A comprehensive curriculum includes social skills, arts, health, physical education, a range of content understandings, and opportunities to practice and develop creative and divergent thinking.

The curriculum must be aligned with standards and assessments, and should include more than what can be assessed on a paper and pencil multiple choice test.

NEA continues to advocate the use of a variety of assessments aligned to the standards and appropriate to the purposes for which they are used. Assessment systems should include classroom assessments and multiple measures rather than a single standardized test. Increasingly, both educational researchers and the corporate world are concerned that teaching, focused on what is most conveniently tested, limits our students’ ability to succeed in school and life, and threatens our nation’s competitiveness globally.

Students held to high expectations need access to instructional systems, strategies, and programs that enable them to be successful learners. Teachers need flexibility in programs and a range of materials and tools to support their work in recognizing and addressing the diversity of students, and to enable them to reach all students.

✓ ***Quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.***

Quality conditions of teaching and learning include smaller class sizes; optimal-sized learning communities so that students can receive individualized attention; safe, healthy, modern, and orderly schools; up-to-date textbooks, technology, media centers, and materials; policies that encourage collaboration among staff, with increased planning time and shared decisionmaking; and the providing of data in a timely manner, with staff training in the use of data for decisionmaking about student instructional plans, educational programs, and resource allocations.

Class size has a direct impact on student achievement. The preponderance of research evidence indicates that achievement increases as class size is reduced.

Smaller classes allow more time for teaching and more individualized attention for students. Studies have shown that smaller class size provides lasting benefits, especially for minority and low-income students, and for students with exceptional needs. Students in smaller classes in the early grades (such as K-3) continue to reap academic benefits through middle and high school.

NEA supports policies and resources to achieve a maximum class size of 15 students in regular programs, and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs, including children with disabilities and English Language Learners.

✓ ***A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.***

NEA believes all newly hired teachers must have received strong preparation in both content and how to teach that content to children.

A qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce in our schools requires a pool of well prepared, highly skilled candidates for all vacancies, and high quality opportunities for continual improvement and growth for all employees.

The federal government should fund programs that provide financial incentives for qualified individuals to enter the teaching profession, and for collaboratives between school districts, teacher unions and institutions of higher education for the development of programs that would facilitate the recruitment and retention of a qualified diverse group of teacher candidates.

All newly hired teachers should receive quality induction and mentoring services from trained veteran teachers, to ensure a successful experience in the first years and decrease the turnover of new teachers.

Veteran classroom teachers must be intimately involved in every phase of the training and preparation of teacher candidates. A high quality professional development program, designed by school-based practitioners and supported by higher education faculty, should be a right of all teachers and other educators, including paraeducators, pupil support personnel, and administrators. High quality and effective professional development should follow the guidelines and standards of the National Staff Development Council.

Additionally, there should be effective processes in place to identify and train teachers as leaders, so they can lead school improvement efforts, create collaborative teacher communities, and build momentum for change among their colleagues.

Peer assistance should be available to help struggling teachers improve professional practice, retain promising teachers, and build professional knowledge to improve student success.

To attract, retain, and support the highest quality teachers, paraeducators, and other school employees, schools must have a healthy environment, supportive climate, and working conditions that support success, and provide professional compensation and benefits.

Too many teachers leave the profession because of poor working conditions. All educators—teachers, paraeducators, and others—should have appropriate workloads/caseloads that enable them to provide the individual attention their students’ diverse needs require. Additionally, programs should promote teacher collaboration and empowerment, and foster effective principal leadership.

✓ ***Shared responsibility for appropriate school accountability by stakeholders at all levels.***

States and schools are accountable in how they educate children. Flawed accountability systems are destructive. Sound school accountability systems must be effective and fair; ensure high levels of student achievement, excellent teacher practices and continual improvement; be based on multiple measures of success; use multiple assessment tools and sources of data; reflect growth over time; and be appropriate, valid, and reliable for all groups of students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Accountability results should be used to identify policies and programs that successfully improve student learning; surface and diagnose problem areas; and, provide positive supports, including resources for improvement and technical assistance to schools needing help.

Teachers, other educators, and parents should have an active role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of accountability systems at all levels. Policymaking should incorporate existing processes, including collective bargaining. Improvements in instruction and quality can be better accomplished through bargaining and other forms of collective joint decisionmaking.

We support financial accountability to the public from schools, districts, states, and the federal government, as well as accountability from policymakers to provide the resources needed for positive results.

Finally, we propose a transparent accountability system for policymakers so that policies are determined and communicated in a consistent and timely manner.

Too often, especially at the federal level, how and why decisions affecting states and school districts are made is unclear. Critical policy decisions are often not made in a timely manner, and once decided are not always made public or readily available.

✓ ***Parental, family, and community involvement and engagement.***

NEA supports policies to assist and encourage parents, families, and communities to be actively involved and engaged in their public schools.

Research demonstrates that family education programs help to enhance the likelihood of parental involvement. For example, programs that illustrate to parents their role in helping their children learn to read encourage early and sustained literacy. In addition, for parents who are unfamiliar with the educational system in the United States, parental education helps to enhance their understanding of what

is expected of them and their children in our public schools, how to access assistance, and how to become engaged in their children's schools.

Using schools as a community hub brings together public and private organizations to offer a range of services, assistance, and opportunities that strengthen and support schools, communities, families, and students—before, during, and after school.

We support policies and resources to expand and improve such community schools.

Positive relationships between families, communities, and schools are of central importance to students' success. Educators need opportunities to build the skills needed to cultivate these relationships.

NEA supports policies encouraging the building of skills and knowledge needed for effective parental and community communication and engagement strategies in professional development programs for all educators.

Time and availability are two obvious challenges to parental involvement.

Employers should receive incentives or be required by policymakers to allow parents to take a reasonable amount of leave to participate in their children's school activities.

In addition, many parents have strong needs for leadership, communication, and decisionmaking skills. Employer and community-based organizations often have skill-building resources that can be tapped to help teach such skills to employees. Employers would see that engaged and knowledgeable parents are an asset to public education and be reminded that quality public education is an asset to business.

✓ ***Adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding.***

Schools must have the necessary resources to fulfill their broad and growing responsibilities in a changing and increasingly complex society.

Schools are held accountable for helping students to meet federal and state standards, while also fulfilling myriad other requirements and expectations placed on them by policymakers. To ensure that the necessary resources are available when and where needed, school funding systems must provide adequate, equitable and sustainable funding.

Adequate funding, at the very minimum, is the level of resources needed to ensure that all students have a realistic opportunity to meet federal and state performance standards, taking into account the varied needs of different types of students. "Adequacy" requires a determination of the appropriate amount of resources needed to meet *all* students' needs to obtain a quality education.

NEA supports fully funding ESEA programs at their authorized levels, to ensure that states and schools have adequate funding for the programs and services needed to help close achievement gaps and improve student learning for all.

While less than 10 percent of overall funding for K-12 public education comes from the federal government, ESEA funding for urban, rural, and other school districts

with concentrated poverty and hard-to-staff schools that rely heavily on these supplemental federal funds, is especially crucial.

School funding that is merely adequate in the aggregate is insufficient. School funding formulas must also be equitable for both students and taxpayers. For students, equitable funding means that the quality of their education is not dependent on the wealth of the school district where a child lives and attends school. For taxpayers, equity in school funding means that the tax effort across all districts should be equal to produce the same level of funding. ESEA's Title I program has built into its funding formulas incentives for states to increase their education funding effort and steer funds to where they are needed the most. Adequacy and equity can be accomplished with additional incentives to states and districts to reduce financial disparities.

To function efficiently, while also meeting the increased demands being placed on them, schools need funding streams that are stable and sustainable. Year-to-year fluctuations in available resources and last-minute uncertainties hamper school districts' efforts to plan, to hire, and to retain highly qualified and experienced educators, to keep class sizes small, and to provide other essential resources, ranging from curriculum materials to transportation.

Making taxes fair and eliminating inefficient and ineffective business subsidies are essential prerequisites to achieving adequacy, equity, and stability in school funding.

More than 90 percent of funding for public schools comes from state and local governments. Ultimately the most important questions regarding funding for schools are decided at the state and local levels. The best way to maintain America's competitive edge in this global, knowledge-based economy is to invest in our ability to produce and manage knowledge. That means investing in education. Economic models show clearly that, dollar for dollar, investing in public education increases the economy more than equal amounts of tax cuts and subsidies. To date, however, too many lawmakers and policymakers believe that tax cuts and development subsidies are the best way to step-up the economy. Thus we see state tax structures that are increasingly regressive and that produce structural deficits. Similarly, state economic development policies too often emphasize inefficient and ineffective corporate subsidies. Together, these undermine state and local capacity to invest adequately in public education. Should these trends continue, America's competitive edge in the global, knowledge-based economy will continue to erode.

PART TWO: NEA's Priorities for ESEA Reauthorization

A Great Public School Is a Basic Right of Every Child

NEA's priorities for the 2007 reauthorization of ESEA focus on a broad range of policies, as articulated in this report, to ensure every child access to a great public school.

ESEA, originally passed on April 9, 1965, was a key component of the "War on Poverty" launched by President Lyndon Johnson. Title I provided resources to meet the needs of educationally deprived children through compensatory education programs for the poor. President Johnson said it would help "five million children of poor families overcome their greatest barrier to progress: poverty."

The original ESEA was authorized through 1970. Congress has since rewritten—or reauthorized—this landmark law eight times. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is the most recent version. Since the law's inception in 1965, NEA has strongly supported ESEA and its programs: Title I; professional development; afterschool; safe and drug-free schools; bilingual education; and others.

The 1994 ESEA reauthorization—called the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)—shifted the focus of Title I from providing financial support to schools with high concentrations of children in poverty, to standards-based reform. (For a more detailed history of ESEA see Appendix 1.)

The current version of ESEA—the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—is fundamentally flawed. It undermines existing state and school district structures and authority, and shifts public dollars to the private sector through supplemental educational services and takeovers of public schools by for-profit companies.

However, its stated goals—to improve student achievement and help close the achievement and skills gaps which exist in our country—are important to NEA and our society. NCLB represents a fundamental shift in ESEA that greatly expanded the federal role in education. The 1994 ESEA required all states to develop content and performance standards in reading and math and to measure the progress of student achievement in Title I schools through adequate yearly progress reports. NCLB, however, expanded the law's requirements to *all* schools, regardless of whether they received federal funds, and thus affects every public school in America.

It dictates to states how they measure student achievement and the timelines they must use; establishes the requirement that 100 percent of all students be proficient in reading and math by the 2013–14 school year; mandates certain consequences or sanctions for failure to meet AYP; and for the first time, requires that both teachers and paraeducators meet a federally defined standard of *highly qualified*. Under Title I alone, it establishes 588 federal requirements for states and schools.

The law's principal flaws revolve around its one-size-fits-all system for measuring student achievement and school system success, and its rigid definitions of highly

qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. Further, the law is incomplete because it fails to provide the additional tools and supports educators and students need to accomplish the law's stated goals of improving student achievement and closing the achievement gaps. To address the law's stated goals, Congress must: 1) substantially improve the measurement system for adequate yearly progress to reduce reliance on statewide paper and pencil tests and to recognize growth and progress over time; and 2) provide states, schools, and students with programs and resources to support their work in improving the level and quality of all students' skills and knowledge.

We want to retain the positive provisions of ESEA—both those that existed prior to NCLB and those that were added by NCLB—in the 2007 reauthorization. These positive provisions include: targeting funds in both Title I and other programs to schools with the highest concentrations of students in poverty; an increased focus on closing achievement gaps through disaggregated student achievement data; grants for school improvement; strengthened rights of homeless children to access public education; protection of school employees' rights during school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; strengthened parental involvement requirements in Title I; requirements for high quality professional development for teachers; help for small, high-poverty rural schools; and programs for dropout prevention, math-science education, safe and drug-free schools, mentoring, school counseling, and school libraries. Unfortunately, while written into the law, virtually all of these programs are severely underfunded.

Congress must shift from the current focus, that labels and punishes schools with a flawed one-size-fits-all accountability system and severely underfunded mandates to one that includes common-sense flexibility and supports educators in implementing programs that improve student learning, reward success, and provide meaningful assistance to schools most in need of help.

The following five priorities are crucial to realizing the goals of improving student achievement, closing the achievement gaps, and providing every child a quality teacher.

- **Accountability That Rewards Success And Supports Educators To Help Students Learn**
- **Smaller Class Sizes To Improve Student Achievement**
- **Quality Educators In Every Classroom And School**
- **Students And Schools Supported By Active And Engaged Parents, Families, And Communities**
- **Resources To Ensure A Great Public School For Every Child**

A growing chorus of voices is calling for corrections to this law. An alliance of 75 national organizations—including the NAACP, the Children's Defense Fund, the

American Association of School Administrators, the National Council of Churches, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and the Council for Exceptional Children—representing education, civil rights, special education, various religions, children, and citizens have joined together through the Forum on Educational Accountability in proposing 14 specific changes to the law. Other education groups that have issued policy proposals for amendments to the law include the National School Boards Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The National Governors Association (NGA) in March 2006 issued its proposals for change. The NGA statement notes that, “Maximum flexibility in designing state accountability systems, including testing, is critical to preserve the amalgamation of federal funding, local control of education, and state responsibility for system-wide reform.”

The National Conference of State Legislatures in February 2005 issued a report calling on Congress to make substantial changes to the law. The report states:

“Administrators at the state, local and school levels are overwhelmed by AYP because it holds schools to overly prescriptive expectations, does not acknowledge differences in individual performance, does not recognize significant academic progress because it relies on absolute achievement targets, and inappropriately increases the likelihood of failure for diverse schools.”

I. Accountability That Rewards Success and Supports Educators To Help Students Learn

The current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) model is a fundamentally flawed system that fails to accurately measure student learning and school success. Schools are held accountable based solely on a one-day snapshot of student performance on a standardized reading test and a standardized math test.

The law’s AYP model uses overly narrow measures and contains unrealistic timelines for school improvement. It results in improperly labeling many schools as low-performing and imposing punishments on them. AYP holds all schools accountable based solely on how many students reach a specific point on the achievement scale on one standardized test in each of two subjects—reading and math.

It fails to account for a school’s results in improving student achievement over time. Instead of measuring each individual student’s growth over time, it compares, for example, the snapshot of test scores for this year’s fourth-grade class to the snapshot of test scores for last year’s fourth-grade class, a different group of students with different strengths and different weaknesses.

It fails to recognize that all children can learn, but all children do not learn at the same rate. It fails to include fair, valid, and reliable measures for students with special needs, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. It fails to differentiate between those schools that are truly struggling to close achievement gaps and those that fall short on only one of 37 federally mandated criteria. Finally, it fails to

include a comprehensive set of measures for school quality and student learning, focusing only on one statewide standardized test in two subjects.

Consequently, it overidentifies thousands of schools as low-performing. Several studies project that well over 90 percent of public schools will eventually fail to meet federal standards and be subjected to severe sanctions. This overidentification hampers efforts to target limited resources to the neediest schools and students. Further, the focus on overidentification and accompanying sanctions diverts attention from assistance to states, districts, and schools that need to develop systemic improvement plans. Finally, NCLB's mandated sanctions are not research-based, divert money away from classroom services, and generally have not improved student achievement.

NEA supports the following policies that would meet the Great Public Schools criteria for stakeholders at all levels to share appropriate accountability and for high expectations and standards with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for all students:

School accountability should be a measurement beyond just scores on statewide assessments.

Accountability systems should be based upon multiple measures, including: local assessments, teacher-designed classroom assessments collected over time, portfolios and other measures of student learning, graduation/dropout rates, in-grade retention, percent of students taking honors/advanced classes and Advanced Placement exams, and college enrollment rates. *States should have the flexibility to design systems that produce results, including deciding in which grades to administer annual statewide tests, rather than being subject to a rigid federal one-size-fits-all system.*

An improved accountability system should allow states the flexibility to utilize growth models and other measures of progress that assess student learning over time, and recognize improvement on all points of the achievement scale. Growth models should use measurement results as a guide to revise instructional practices and curriculum, to provide individual assistance to students, and to provide appropriate professional development to teachers and other educators. They should not be used to penalize teachers or schools.

NEA is working with the Forum on Educational Accountability and a panel of experts in assessment to develop in greater detail models of effective systems that utilize multiple measures and growth models.

Assessment systems must be appropriate, valid, and reliable for all groups of students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Appropriate systems *provide for common-sense flexibility in assessing these student subgroups*, including more closely aligning ESEA assessment requirements with students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) under IDEA, and eliminating arbitrary federal limits on the number of students who may be given assessments based on alternate or modified achievement standards. For ELL students, we propose exempting from AYP their scores on reading and math tests not given in their native language for at least their first two years in the United States, while continuing to require

that their progress in reaching English language proficiency be measured through annual assessments.

Policies should ensure that states, school districts, and schools actively involve teachers and other educators in the planning, development, implementation, and refinement of standards, curriculum, assessments, accountability, and improvement plans. Their training and experience represent a valuable resource in designing programs that work for students. Accountability systems and the use of the ensuing results must also respect the rights of school employees under federal, state, or local law, and collective bargaining agreements.

Accountability systems should provide support and assistance, including financial support for improvement and technical assistance to schools needing help, target assistance to schools and districts most in need of improvement, and provide realistic timelines for making improvements.

In addition, accountability systems must be sensitive to the specific needs of rural and urban schools.

Assessment and accountability systems should be closely aligned with high standards and classroom curricula, provide timely data to guide teaching strategies and help improve student learning, and be comprehensive and flexible so that they do not result in narrowing of the curricula.

As a result of the growing emphasis on achieving AYP and the need to reallocate resources toward accomplishing that, many school districts have de-emphasized and even eliminated courses in the liberal arts, humanities, and performing arts. We deplore this tendency that limits a child. These subjects create the appropriate context to develop the whole child. Redefining the art of teaching so narrowly significantly reduces creativity and critical thinking and diminishes a child's enthusiasm and motivation to explore and to learn.

NEA advocates the creation of a federal grant program to assist schools in ensuring all students access to a comprehensive curriculum that provides a broad range of subjects and deep knowledge in each subject. Students in high-poverty schools must not be limited to an instructional program that is narrowly focused on basic skills, as is happening too often under NCLB.

A comprehensive accountability system must appropriately apply to high schools without increasing dropout rates. High schools need programs and resources for adolescent literacy, dropout prevention, counseling, smaller learning communities, and expansion of AP and IB courses if they are to meet the diverse needs of all of their students. In order to measure high school graduation rates meaningfully, all states and school districts should report such data on a disaggregated basis, using the definition proposed by the National Governors Association and supported by many groups, including NEA.

Standards and assessments must incorporate the nature of work and civic life in the 21st century: high-level thinking, learning, and global understanding skills, as well as sophisticated information, communication, and technology literacy competencies.

Corporate America is telling us that a total focus on the most basic of skills is threatening our education system and our economic viability. Meaningfully assessing 21st century

skills will require tests that measure higher-order thinking and problem solving, utilizing more than multiple choice questions. Too often we are holding students to obsolete standards that don't reflect contemporary challenges.

If a school, after receiving additional financial assistance, technical assistance and other supports, fails to demonstrate that it is closing the achievement gaps, supportive interventions need to occur.

The most successful learning strategies are grounded on advice and coaching. School improvement teams, which include teachers and other educators from similar schools that have been successful, can function as mentors and examples. These teams should provide assistance based on the fact that profound, long-term, and sustained improvement of schools is the result of efforts that recognize essential principles:

- ✓ *Incentives are better than mandates in producing change.*
- ✓ *Increased student achievement should encompass more than just increased test scores. It should also reflect deep and broad learning.*
- ✓ *Teachers must play a central role in school reform efforts because of their firsthand knowledge of their students and how their schools work.*
- ✓ *Rather than starting from scratch in reinventing schools, it makes most sense to graft thoughtful reforms onto what is healthy in the present system.*

NEA is proposing a new and improved system of accountability. If certain elements of the current AYP system are maintained, specific flaws must be corrected. Necessary corrections include: providing more than one year to implement improvement plans before subjecting schools or districts to additional sanctions; designating schools or districts as “in need of improvement” only when the same subgroup of students fails to make AYP in the same subject for at least two consecutive years; targeting school choice and supplemental educational services (SES) to the specific subgroups that fail to make AYP; allowing schools to provide SES prior to providing school choice; and improving the quality of supplemental education services, ensuring that SES providers serve all eligible students and utilize only highly qualified teachers.

II. Smaller Class Sizes To Improve Student Achievement

Smaller class size is a key element to achieving the Great Public Schools criterion of quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning.

The classroom is the nexus of student learning and class size has a direct impact on student achievement. Smaller classes allow more time for teaching and more individualized attention for students. The preponderance of research evidence indicates that learning increases as class size is reduced, especially in the early grades. Studies have shown that smaller class size provides lasting benefits for students, especially for minority and low-income students, and for students with exceptional needs. Even in the upper grades teachers can be more successful in increasing student learning when they can provide more individualized attention.

NEA recommends an optimum class size of 15 students in regular programs, especially in the early grades, and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs including children with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Fewer than 15 students is an optimal class size, especially in kindergarten (K) and grade 1. Researchers have documented benefits from class size of 15–18 students in K and of fewer than 20 students in grades 1–3. Students in smaller classes in the early grades (such as K-3) continue to reap academic benefits through middle and high school, especially if they are minority or low-income students.

NEA supports restoring the Class Size Reduction program that existed prior to NCLB.

Closing the achievement gaps requires that teachers have more opportunities to work with students who need greater assistance. ESEA should provide a dedicated funding stream to complete the job of hiring 100,000 highly qualified teachers to reduce class size.

An innovative way to ensure that students receive more individualized assistance is pairing two teachers in the same classroom. This strategy is discussed in more detail in the next section.

We support a combination of federal programs—through both direct grants and tax subsidies to states and school districts—for school modernization to accommodate smaller classes.

III. Quality Educators In Every Classroom and School

A growing body of research confirms what school-based personnel have known—that the skills and knowledge of teachers and support professionals are the greatest factor in how well students learn. The credibility of each and every educator is damaged when one of us is unprofessional or unprepared.

Our proposals would help meet the Great Public Schools criteria of quality conditions for teaching and lifelong learning; and a qualified, caring, diverse, and stable workforce.

Our policies are focused on maximizing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of school-based personnel, creating the conditions to allow educators to do their best work, and making sure that the right people are in the right place to meet the needs of all students. In addition to teachers, many other educators and school staff, including paraeducators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, librarians and media specialists, bus drivers, food service workers, school maintenance staff, security personnel, and secretaries all play an important role in improving student learning by meeting the educational and other needs of students.

Our specific proposals for increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers are focused on professional development and on National Board Certification. Federal policy should be directed toward providing states and school districts with the resources and technical assistance to create an effective program of professional development and professional accountability for all employees. Effective professional development should promote continuing growth. It should create opportunities to acquire new knowledge and apply the best pedagogical practices consistent with the school's goals.

Specifically, we propose revision of the ESEA Title II—Teacher Quality State Grant program—by refining the program criteria and ensuring alignment of federally funded teacher professional development with the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards. We also propose federally funded salary enhancements for teachers who achieve National Board Certification, with a smaller salary incentive for teachers who complete this rigorous process and receive a score, but do not achieve certification.

Our second set of proposals is focused on creating the conditions in which teachers and education support professionals can apply their knowledge and skills most effectively to help children learn.

We propose a grant program to states willing to encourage skills- and knowledge-based staffing arrangements in schools. This program should encourage collaboration between the school administration and the local organization representing teachers and other educators, as well as increased collaboration among teachers and between teachers and other education staff, to promote innovation in the way teachers' and support professionals' roles and responsibilities are defined. The development and implementation of such programs must respect existing collective bargaining agreements. Teachers with specific knowledge and skills should be encouraged to assist their colleagues to become better at what they do, and should receive additional compensation for taking on new roles

However, we remain opposed to pay systems that directly link teacher compensation to student test scores. Such merit pay systems fail to recognize that teaching is not an individual, isolated profession. Rather, it is a profession dependent on the entire network of teaching professionals, where the foundation for student achievement is built over time from each of the student's educators. Further merit pay undermines the collegiality and teamwork that create a high-performing learning institution.

Education support professionals should be afforded every opportunity to broaden and enhance their skills and knowledge through training/professional development offerings, mentoring, and programs designed to support them as they assist the classroom teacher. They should be compensated for taking additional courses or doing course work for advanced degrees to assist in the classroom and to support student learning.

We propose federal grants that support innovation in addressing teacher workload issues, especially in struggling schools.

These grants should allow districts and schools to experiment with proposals such as assisting new teachers by pairing them in a classroom with an experienced teacher, and compensating the experienced teacher to induct and mentor the new teacher. Co-teaching—two qualified teachers in one classroom—can benefit students by effectively reducing the class size per teacher allowing for more individual attention. Co-teaching also allows increased mentoring opportunities for teachers, can reduce the need for less qualified substitute teachers, and can enhance parental involvement and communication.

Hard-to-staff schools should be provided with an adequate number of well trained administrators and support professionals, including paraeducators, counselors, social workers, psychologists, and clerical support. Teachers and support professionals in these schools should have access to targeted professional development focused on the specific

needs of the school and community. These proposals would reduce the costly and disruptive turnover common in struggling schools.

Paraeducators who are involuntarily transferred to a Title I school and who had not met the highly qualified standard required under NCLB in Title I schools, should be given adequate time to meet the requirement. The school district should be responsible for any remuneration required for meeting the standard (i.e., taking an assessment or taking continuing or higher education courses).

The third set of proposals focuses on distribution of the educator workforce—ways to ensure that all schools, no matter how challenging, are staffed by high quality education professionals.

We propose that teachers and support professionals who work in schools identified as “in need of improvement” or high-poverty schools, and stay in such schools for at least five years, be eligible for financial incentives—both direct federal subsidies and tax credits—for retention, relocation, and housing.

We also propose that the definition of “highly qualified” teachers be revised to respect state licensure and certification systems, and eliminate nonessential requirements that create unnecessary obstacles for talented and skilled teachers and loopholes in the scope of coverage for some charter school teachers, alternative route teachers, and supplemental education service provider instructors.

Specifically, we propose that all fully licensed special education teachers be designated as highly qualified; that broad-based social studies certification count as meeting the highly qualified requirements for any social studies discipline; and that additional flexibility be provided for middle school teachers, including accepting an academic minor to demonstrate subject matter competence. We also propose expanding the definition of “rural schools” used in the current rural school timeline extension. Finally, we propose that all teachers employed in programs authorized and/or funded through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including those in charter schools and supplemental education service providers, be required to meet the same definition regarding qualifications.

Due to numerous rules and guidance changes by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), as well as DOE’s recent notification to some states that their definitions were not in compliance, some teachers will have an extremely limited amount of time to meet the new definitions imposed upon their state, or may still not know the exact rules they must meet. In several states, teachers were told by their state that they met the highly qualified rules but now, years after the fact in some cases, the federal government is ruling their states’ definitions out of compliance. As a result, tens of thousands of teachers have already been notified they were highly qualified and may suddenly find themselves classified as not highly qualified. DOE appears to believe that content knowledge trumps all other forms of knowledge and skills (including decades of successful teaching).

Teachers who may not meet the highly qualified standard by the end of the current deadlines due to these significant implementation problems should not be penalized, but instead should be provided with assistance and additional time to meet the requirement.

Additionally, we propose that paraeducators who meet the highly qualified standard be granted reciprocity if they move to another state or district, where assessment scores or qualifications are different. Paraeducators should be able to provide documentation that they have met the requirements from a previous state or district to the receiving state or district. Documentation should be provided within 12 months of their hiring.

IV. Students and Schools Supported By Active and Engaged Parents, Families, and Communities

NEA supports inclusion of programs in ESEA that help to enhance family and community involvement.

Adult and family literacy programs encourage parents to model reading, which promotes early and sustained literacy, and enable parents to be more involved in their children's education, particularly with homework. Parenting classes can explain the significance of adequate sleep, appropriate nutrition, and other factors, so that children come to school ready to learn and can help parents understand their role as partners in their children's education.

An engaged community is a supportive community. Community engagement programs can expand the stakeholders in public education to include community organizations. Parent leaders can bring greater awareness of school issues to review boards, panels, oversight committees, and public officials.

Language barriers serve as an obstacle to school/family partnerships in growing numbers of communities. Strategies that have worked well include providing a bilingual teacher or other translator for parent conferences and other parent involvement activities, and multilingual school-to-home communications. In addition, for parents who are unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system, parent education helps to enhance their understanding of what is expected of them and their children in their public schools.

All schools should be encouraged to institute school-parent compacts—signed by parents—that provide a clearly defined list of parental expectations and opportunities for involvement.

NEA supports policies and resources that assist communities in making schools the hub of the community.

Community schools bring together public and private organizations to offer a range of services, programs, and opportunities—before, during, and afterschool—that strengthen and support schools, communities, families, and students. Community schools improve the coordination, delivery, effectiveness, and efficiency of services provided to children and families. These schools and communities develop reciprocal and mutually supportive relationships. In addition to building strong connections between schools and families and enhancing student learning, community schools help to make schools and communities safer and more supportive places; and they use scarce public, private, and community resources more efficiently.

As an essential component of a highly qualified workforce, NEA supports including training in the skills and knowledge needed for effective parental and family

communication and engagement strategies as a requirement for professional development programs funded through ESEA.

The case for the importance of parent and community engagement in bolstering public education is well documented. However, the research base could be strengthened by supporting more research designs that would enable firmer conclusions to be drawn about the specific effects of different types of programs.

Parent and community engagement can also be bolstered by more effective implementation of the parent and community engagement requirements in Title I of ESEA. Technical assistance to schools and financial rewards for exemplary involvement or improvement in involvement would help broaden the ethnic, language, and racial diversity of those involved in planning parent involvement and would help ensure that the full community is represented.

We also support expanded funding for the Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) program in ESEA. The PIRC program supports school-based and school-linked parental information and resource centers that help implement effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities; develop and strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children; and develop and strengthen the relationship between parents and their children's school.

Time and availability are two obvious challenges to parental involvement. *Employers should receive incentives or be required to provide parents a reasonable amount of leave to participate in their children's school activities.*

V. Resources To Ensure a Great Public School For Every Child

When NCLB was enacted, Congress promised to provide the resources necessary to meet the many mandates contained in the law, provide school improvement funds to schools that failed AYP, and provide increased resources especially for Title I and Title II Teacher Quality to help close achievement gaps, improve overall student achievement, and ensure all students have a quality teacher. NCLB has never been funded at the authorized levels. And, after an increase in funding in the first year (FY 2002), funding for NCLB programs is on the decline, with most states and school districts facing unfunded mandates, real cuts in resources, and no federal funds to turn around low-performing schools. Note the following illustration of ever-diminishing resources:

- In the 2005–06 school year, two-thirds of all schools districts are receiving less Title I money than they did the previous year. In the 2006–07 school year, an additional 62 percent of school districts will have their Title I funding cut—most for the second consecutive year—because Congress reduced overall Title I funding.
- Up to 20 percent of school districts' Title I money must be diverted from classroom services to pay for transportation for school choice and supplemental services. This mandatory set-aside compounds the impact of continued reductions in funding. Thus, many districts are experiencing severe reductions in Title I funds available for classroom services to help our neediest students

improve their learning, and even districts slated for an increase in Title I funding have less money available for classroom services after this set-aside.

- Under the President's proposed budget for FY 07, 29 states will receive less Title I money than they did in FY 06, with some states actually receiving less money than they did three, four, or even five years ago.
- NO money has ever been provided for the school improvement state grants program. The only money available for school improvement comes off the top of states' Title I allocations, taking funds from the few school districts that have not yet had their Title I funding cut.
- Funding for teacher quality state grants in FY 06 is less than the level provided three years ago. The President's budget proposes to continue funding in FY 07 at this reduced level.
- Overall, Title I funding proposed for FY 07 is only roughly half of the authorized level promised when NCLB was passed, leaving almost 4.6 million low-income students denied Title I services.

To help meet all the Great Public Schools criteria, and in particular adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding, NEA supports the following:

- Fully funding ESEA programs at their authorized levels so that states and schools have adequate funding for programs, including professional development for teachers and paraeducators, needed to help close achievement gaps.
- Enforcing Sec. 9527(a) of NCLB, which prevents the federal government from requiring states and school districts to spend their own funds—beyond what they receive from the federal government—to implement federal mandates. NEA is joined in this position by school districts, several states, the American Association of School Administrators, and other state and local officials.
- Protecting essential ESEA programs by:
 - Providing a separate ESEA funding stream for school improvement programs to assist districts and schools
 - Providing adequate funding to develop and improve assessments that measure higher order thinking skills
 - Establishing a trigger whereby any consequences facing schools falling short of the new accountability system are implemented only when Title I is funded at its authorized level
 - Providing a separate ESEA funding stream for supplemental education services and school choice, if these mandates remain in the law
 - Providing adequate funding to develop and improve appropriate assessments for students with disabilities and English Language Learners
 - Providing technical assistance to schools to help them use funds more effectively
- Adequately funding important children's and education programs outside of ESEA, including child nutrition, Head Start, IDEA, children's health, child care, and related programs. Each of these programs makes an important contribution

to a child's ability to learn. Further, reduced federal funding for social services programs erodes funding for education by pitting funding for education against health care and other needs at the state level, undermining the states' ability to adequately fund their public schools.

Positive Agenda: Appendix 1



Great Public Schools for Every Child

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965: From the War on Poverty to No Child Left Behind

The largest source of federal support for K-12 education is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Passed in 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty, ESEA has provided federal funding to the neediest students and schools for over 40 years. It has been reauthorized eight times—usually every five or six years—since 1965. In announcing his plan to construct a “Great Society,” President Johnson stated, “Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.”¹ Bolstered by the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, elections yielding an increase in the number of Congressmen from northern, more urban areas, and his own landslide election victory, Johnson quickly won passage of ESEA. Representative John Brademas summarized the congressional sentiment behind Johnson’s legislation, stating, “Many of us in Congress and some presidents of both parties perceived that there were indeed genuine needs—in housing, health, and education—to which state and city governments were simply not responding. It was this inattention by state and local political leaders, therefore, that prompted us at the federal level to say, ‘We’re going to do something about these problems.’ And we did.”²

ESEA created for the first time a partnership among federal, state, and local governments to address part of the larger national agenda of confronting poverty and its damaging effects by targeting federal aid to poor students and schools. It also was based on a “grand” compromise concerning federal aid to private and parochial schools. To avoid directly sending public dollars to parochial schools, ESEA instead directed public school districts to use a portion of their Title I funds to provide services to low-income students enrolled in private schools. This provision—known as equitable participation—has stood for over 40 years.

Since then, ESEA has evolved in three major phases. From 1965 to 1980, the reauthorizations of ESEA focused on whether Title I (providing the bulk of ESEA funds for targeted help to poor students and high-poverty schools) was to be considered truly targeted funding or whether it was cleverly disguised as general aid to education (today over 90 percent of school districts receive Title I funding). This period was also marked by evolving lists of

¹ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, *U.S. Government Printing Office 1965*, Lyndon B. Johnson, Book I (1963-1964): 704-707.

² John Brademas, *The Politics of Education: Conflict and Consensus on Capitol Hill*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press (1987), p. 77.

“allowable uses” of Title I funds, from equipment to professional development to health services.³

The second phase of ESEA—from about 1980 to 1990—saw no significant increases (when adjusted for inflation) in funding for the Act, and President Reagan block-granted and consolidated several ESEA programs. Also during this time, *A Nation at Risk*—a Reagan Administration commission report—was released and catapulted education onto the national political scene as an important issue to voters. The report clearly linked the state of America’s schools to the nation’s economic productivity. In the 1988 reauthorization of ESEA, the first significant shift in the distribution of Title I dollars occurred, conditioning the states’ receipt of the funds upon some accountability for improved outcomes. Congress allowed Title I funds to be used for schoolwide programs (to support systemic improvement in schools where 75 percent of students were in poverty) as a way to respond to the urgent call for more wide-sweeping reform outlined in *Nation at Risk*.

Finally, from 1990 to the present, the education debate has been dominated by the desire of policymakers to see evidence that federal investments in education programs yield tangible, measurable results in terms of student achievement and success. The two main examples of this approach occurred in 1994 and in 2001, with the passage of President Clinton’s Goals 2000 and the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA) and President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Not surprisingly, the Clinton reauthorization built upon the standards-based reform initiatives of many governors, including many who in 1989 attended President Bush’s first-ever education summit of the nation’s governors to discuss national standards or goals. Goals 2000, passed in 1993, required all states to develop challenging standards for all students in reading and math, as well as issue school report cards. IASA went a step further and required states to develop and administer statewide assessments to all low-income students at least once in elementary school, once in middle school, and once in high school and to develop plans to improve their educational outcomes. While this policy movement occurred, congressional Republicans adopted a platform called the “Contract with America,” which called for, among other things, the abolition of the U.S. Department of Education. By early 1999, however, only 36 states issued school report cards, 19 provided assistance to low-performing schools, and 16 had the authority to close down persistently low-performing schools.⁴ Ironically, President Clinton’s Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Tom Payzant, remarked later, “The underlying policy direction of NCLB is consistent with the 1994 reauthorization, but there’s a level of prescriptions with respect to implementation that [Democrats] would have been soundly criticized for trying to accomplish, had we done so.”⁵

In May of 1999, the Clinton Administration forwarded its ESEA reauthorization proposal to Congress (a proposal that called for more funding, particularly for class size reduction, school modernization, and after school programs). A group of centrist Democrats, led by Senators Joe Lieberman (D-CT) and Evan Bayh (D-IN) developed an alternative proposal. At the same time,

³ Elizabeth DeBray, *Politics, Ideology, and Education: Federal Policy During the Clinton and Bush Administrations*, Teachers College Press (2006), p. 7.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Frederick Hess and Michael Petrilli, *No Child Left Behind*, Peter Lang Publishing (2006), p. 15.

conservative Republicans authored the “Straight A’s” plan, which would have block-granted most federal education programs, shifting power and money to the state level. Due to these fractures, ESEA was not reauthorized in 1999. During the 2000 Presidential campaign, Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore both embraced continued emphasis on standards-based reform, but it was Bush who grabbed the Lieberman/Bayh blueprint, attached a large voucher proposal to it, and campaigned to “leave no child behind.”

In February of 2001, shortly after Bush assumed office, Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) sent a letter on behalf of several centrist Democratic Senators to the President indicating their support for the basic thrust of the Bush accountability proposal. Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), knowing that Democrats were not united around a common ESEA reauthorization plan, met shortly thereafter with the White House to begin negotiating a compromise. Throughout the spring of 2001, Senator Kennedy and Representative George Miller (D-CA) had ongoing discussions with the White House in which the Administration agreed to abandon quietly the fight for its voucher plan (helped tremendously by 5 Republicans voting with all Democrats on the House Education and Workforce committee to strike voucher provisions from the Committee bill) in exchange for supplemental services and significantly more funding. By the summer, however, negotiations had slowed tremendously due to the difficulty in crafting an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) definition that did not over-identify schools. White House advisor Sandy Kress (a Texas Democrat who had helped Bush usher in an NCLB-like accountability system in Texas) met with an NEA-led task force of several major education groups to discuss the AYP definition. Kress stated that the White House did not wish to identify as low-performing so many schools that it would become impossible to target help to the schools most in need. Despite this expressed goal, the White House’s involvement in actual negotiations began to lessen.

In August, congressional staff had begun conference negotiations on the House and Senate bills. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks and the receipt in Senator Daschle’s office of an anthrax-laced letter, most congressional buildings were locked down for intensive cleaning. As a result, the “Big Four”—Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), Senator Kennedy, Representative John Boehner (R-OH), and Representative Miller—began intensive, private negotiations and drafting sessions. By the time they concluded, ESEA’s reauthorization, the “No Child Left Behind Act,” was 1,100 pages long. Members of both parties literally had a few days to review all of its contents before votes on the final legislation. In December 2001, the Senate voted 87-10 to approve the legislation, and the House approved it by a vote of 381-41.

The ESEA in Historical Context

Year	Public Law #	Title
2002	107-110	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) requires annual testing in reading and math in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school, requires science standards and assessments in at least three grades, requires that teachers and education support professionals meet new quality requirements, and sanctions schools that do not make adequate yearly progress.
1998	105-277	The 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, including the FY 99 Budget for the Department of Education. The Reading Excellence Act and legislation

Year	Public Law #	Title
		authorizing the class size reduction initiative were also included.
1997	105-17	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to reauthorize and make improvements to that Act, which is designed to improve access to education for those with disabilities.
1994	103-382	Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]. Covers Title I, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Eisenhower Professional Development, bilingual education, impact aid, charter schools, education technology and many other programs; also reauthorized the National Center for Education Statistics, amended General Education Provisions Act [GEPA] and several other acts.
1994	103-239	School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994
1993	103-227	GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, also included reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement [OERI]). Passed in 1993.
1993	103-33	To authorize the conduct and development of NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) assessments for fiscal year 1994.
1991	102-119	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1991 (IDEA)
1990	101-476	Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990
1989		President George Bush convened the first education summit of the nation's governors. This summit led to the creation of the first-ever national goals for education: every child would come to kindergarten "ready to learn," America would have a 90% graduation rate, students would master five core subjects before advancing past grades 4, 8, and 12; America's students would lead the world in math and science; all adults would be literate and prepared for the workforce; and every school would be safe and drug-free.
1988	100-297	ESEA Reauthorized as the "Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988" —major change was allowing Title I funds to be used for "schoolwide" programs in schools where at least 75% of the students were at or below the poverty level.
1987		Gallup poll reported that 87% of Americans believed that the federal government should require states and localities to meet some minimum national standards with respect to education.
1984	98-211	Education emerged as a top issue in the Presidential campaign; however, the Administration's political platform remained opposed to expanding federal involvement in education. ESEA reauthorized with rather technical changes. (Education Amendments of 1984).
1981		President Reagan's Secretary of Education, Terence Bell, appointed the commission that issued the widely-publicized report, "A Nation at Risk." The report, which characterized America's public schools as mediocre at best, called for increased salaries and professional development for teachers, tougher standards and graduation requirements, and a more rigorous curriculum.
1981	97-35	ESEA reauthorized as the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act – block-granted several programs.

Year	Public Law #	Title
1980	96-88	Department of Education Organization Act, creating the USED. NEA helped author this legislation and promoted it as a top organization priority.
1978	95-561	Education Amendments of 1978
1975	94-142	Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the origin of today's IDEA.
1974	93-380	Education Amendments of 1974. Adds the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, also often called the Buckley Amendment).
1972	92-318	Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). Prohibits sex discrimination in education.
1967	90-247	Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1967. Title IV of this act is known as the General Education Provisions Act [GEPA].
1966	89-750	Elementary and Secondary Amendments of 1966. Adult Education Act is Title III.
1965	89-10 89-329	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 Higher Education Act of 1965
1964	88-352	Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title IV covers education.

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

21st Century Skills and the Reauthorization of NCLB/ESEA

The Partnership believes that our organization's framework for 21st century skills is consistent with the metrics and accountability emphasized in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. As congress considers reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), of which NCLB is the current version, we offer this set of principles to provide guidance for strengthening the Act in terms of its approach to accountability and integrating 21st century skills for today's students.

The Case for 21st Century Education:

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, representing both business and education, believes success of US education in the 21st century depends upon student acquisition of 21st century skills because:

- **Education is changing.** We can no longer claim that the US educational results are unparalleled. Students around the world outperform American students on assessments that measure 21st century skills. Today's teachers need better tools to address this growing problem.
- **Competition is changing internationally.** Innovation and creativity no longer set U.S. education apart. Innovators around the world rival Americans in breakthroughs that fuel economic competitiveness.
- **The workplace, jobs and skill demands are changing.** Today every student, whether he/she plans to go directly into the workforce or on to a 4-year college or trade school, requires 21st century skills to succeed. We need to ensure that all students are qualified to succeed in work and life in this new global economy.

21st century skills are the skills students need to succeed in work, school and life. They include:

- Core subjects (as defined by NCLB)
- 21st century content: global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health and wellness awareness
- Learning and thinking skills: critical thinking and problem solving skills, communications skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, contextual learning skills and information and media literacy skills
- Information and communications technology (ICT) literacy
- Life skills: leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility

P21 Principles Regarding NCLB

These principles are intended to provide guidance for strengthening NCLB's approach to accountability and integration of 21st century skills into classrooms.

Principle 1: Standards

Standards that reflect content mastery alone do not enable accountability and measurement of 21st century skills. And without a comprehensive, valid system of measurement, it is impossible to integrate these skills effectively into classroom instruction or monitor whether students have mastered the skills necessary for success in life and work today. The Partnership believes the Act should:

- Include language related to the integration of 21st century skills into state standards of the three subjects already identified by the Act (math, reading, science.)
- Incorporate "21st century skills" as part of the definition/description of "challenging academic content standards."
- Funds should be provided to states for development of robust standards that incorporate 21st century skills into core subjects, as well as 21st century content areas not currently covered by federal testing.
- States should be supported in collaborating with other states to develop 21st century standards.
- States should be supported if they choose to strengthen their standards to improve their students' abilities to compete in the global economy.

Principle 2: Assessment

An expanded approach to assessment, involving measurements that assess 21st century skills, is necessary to ensure accountability of schools in the 21st century. Most K-12 assessments in widespread use today—whether they be of 21st century skills and content or of traditional core subject areas—measure a student's knowledge of discrete facts, not a student's ability to apply knowledge in complex situations. Standardized achievement assessments alone do not generate evidence of the skill sets that the business and education communities believe are necessary to ensure success in the 21st century. The Partnership recommends the following improvements to ESEA:

- The assessment and accountability system should be based on multiple measures of students' abilities that include 21st century skills. In addition to statewide standardized assessments, such measures could include district level assessments, local school and classroom formative assessments, and other measures of student knowledge.
- Assessment of 21st century skills should be listed as an integral part of the academic assessments in math, reading and science.
- Reporting requirements should be expanded to include information on whether the student is achieving 21st century skills.

- Funds should be made available for pilot projects and test beds for the use of assessments that measure 21st century skill competencies in high school students.
- Funds should be allocated for an international benchmarking project that allows U.S. high school students to be compared to their international peers in terms of competencies in 21st century skills.

Principle 3: Professional Development

Students cannot master 21st century skills unless their teachers are well trained and supported in this type of instruction. The Act should support professional development that prepares teachers and principals to integrate 21st century skills into their classrooms and schools. Specifically, the Partnership recommends that:

- Funds should be allocated for professional development of 21st century skills and establishment of 21st Century Skills Teaching Academies.
- Higher education institutions should be supported in identifying and disseminating the best practices for teaching and assessing 21st century skills
- Higher education institutions should be encouraged to ensure that all pre-service teachers graduate prepared to employ 21st century teaching and assessment strategies in their classrooms.

Principle 4: Information and communications technology (ICT) literacy

ICT literacy is the ability to use technology to develop 21st century content, knowledge and skills. Students must be able to use technology to help them learn content and skills—so that they know *how* to learn, think critically, solve problems, use information, communicate, innovate and collaborate. The Partnership recommends that ESEA integrate ICT literacy in the following way:

- Maintain and fund the Enhancing Education Through Technology State Grant program.
- Transition the 8th grade technology literacy requirement into an ICT literacy requirement, so that the focus is not on technology competency, but the ability to use technology to perform critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication and innovation skills.

Principle 5: Content

Twenty-first century content areas like global awareness, financial literacy, civic literacy and health awareness are critical to student success in communities and workplaces, yet they typically are not emphasized in schools today. The Partnership believes the Act should:

- Support the teaching of each of these content areas.
- For global awareness in particular, support the teaching of multiple languages.

Principle 6: Research & Development

Targeted, sustained investment in research and development initiatives is required to promote 21st century skills and craft teaching practices and assessment approaches that more closely convey and measure what students need to excel in the 21st century. Therefore the Partnership recommends:

- The Act should provide support for state research and development initiatives, within the state university system and/or possibly others, that will identify through scientifically-based research the best practices for teaching, attaining and measuring 21st century skills.

Principle 7: 21st Century Skills Definition

The Partnership recognizes that the term “21st century skills” is used in a variety of contexts. Therefore we recommend:

- ESEA should contain a definition of “21st century skills” with a current description of the P21 framework as described earlier in this document.

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Appendix III



Policy Brief

Making Public Schools Great – An Initial Look at Approved and Rejected States’ Models in the U.S. Department of Education’s “Growth Model Pilot Project”

In response to growing dissatisfaction from the states and education groups, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) announced a pilot program in November, 2005, to allow up to ten states to use growth models to measure adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. On May 17, 2006, the Department approved proposals from two states— North Carolina and Tennessee— to participate in the growth model pilot project for 2005-06.¹ The two approved states are among 20 that submitted proposals to participate in the pilot in 2005-06 and 2006-07.

In general, growth models track individual student’ test scores over time, comparing actual and expected rates of growth. In the context of NCLB, growth models provide schools with the opportunity to make AYP if the same students show achievement gains over time, even if these gains fall short of proficiency in any given year. All students—including those whose academic progress is measured using a growth model—must still be proficient by 2013-14.

What sets North Carolina and Tennessee apart from the other 18 state applicants? What did the other states propose that left their applications wanting? What can state department of educations expect next from the Department in its decision-making process on growth models?

The Approved Models: North Carolina and Tennessee

North Carolina and Tennessee are the only states that have been approved to use their proposed growth models to determine if schools and districts made AYP in 2005-06. Table 1 shows the status of the total number of proposals ($n = 20$) states submitted to the Department.

¹ U.S. Department of Education. (May 17, 2006). Secretary Spellings approves Tennessee and North Carolina growth model pilots for 2005-06. Available online at www.ed.gov/print/news/pressreleases/2006/05/051706a.html.

Table 1
Status of Growth Model Proposals from North Carolina, Tennessee, and Other States

Approved for 2005-06: NC and TN
Not approved for 2005-06. Sent to peer review panel: AK, AZ, AR, DE, FL and OR
Not approved for 2005-06. No peer review: CO, IN, IA, SC and UT
Applied for 2006-07. No action by the Department: HI, MD, NH, NV, OH, PA and SD

Tennessee received full approval to implement its model, while North Carolina's approval was contingent upon the state's receiving the Department's final approval of its assessment system by July 1, which has now occurred. Both states proposed models that built on experience with longitudinal test data and a well-honed state system for tracking test scores from grade to grade and year to year.

For example, the peer reviewers noted that North Carolina has a history of dealing competently with large-scale data systems and statewide testing. In addition, it has been using growth modeling in its accountability systems for nearly a decade.² Similarly, the reviewers pointed to Tennessee's history of using achievement data in school management and to the state's capacity to operate data systems.³

North Carolina's Model: North Carolina will implement a modified form of a growth component that has been part of the state's accountability system since 1996-97. It will determine if schools make AYP by first applying NCLB's status model and safe harbor provisions, and then applying the growth model. In broad terms, the growth target is the average growth of each AYP subgroup in which at least 40 full academic year students have been tested. The growth target for proficient students is the same expectation as is currently in the state's accountability system. Growth targets for non-proficient students will be based on a trajectory that will place them as performing proficiently within four years of entering a tested grade in a school district.⁴ North Carolina notes that an additional 40 schools would have made AYP using its proposed growth model.

Peer Reviewers' Comments: Half the peer reviewers⁵ recommended approval of North Carolina's growth model; half did not. Those who did not were especially concerned with the state's use of average growth in trajectories that will determine if subgroups made AYP. They worried that the performance of

² U.S. Department of Education. (April 17-19, 2006). Growth model peer report: North Carolina. Available online at www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml.

³ U.S. Department of Education. (April 17-19, 2006). Growth model peer report: Tennessee. Available online at www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml.

⁴ North Carolina Department of Education. (March 2006). North Carolina's proposal to pilot the use of a growth model for AYP purposes (amended to reflect the U.S. Department of Education letter dated March 10, 2006). Available online at www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/nc/index.html.

⁵ The Peer Review Panel members are Eric Hanushek, Stanford University (chair); Mitchell Chester, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Accountability, Ohio Department of Education; David Francis, University of Houston; Margaret Goertz, University of Pennsylvania; Kati Haycock, The Education Trust; Sharon Lewis, Retired, Council of Great City Schools; Robert Mendro, Dallas Independent School District; Jeff Nellhaus, Deputy Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Education; Chris Schatschneider, Florida State University; and William Taylor, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights.

highly proficient students could mask the performance of non-proficient students. The subgroup could make AYP, but contain students who might not reach proficiency by 2014. In addition, the proposal called for resetting growth targets for students who moved from one school district to another, which some reviewers felt backpedaled from uniform growth targets for all students across the state. These concerns were considered serious.

Other concerns the reviewers raised: Students who are close to proficiency may meet the target in less than four years; individual students' growth would not be reported to parents; and the rate at which the state matches students' test records from year to year for students is low in some subgroups.

The reviewers cited the following as strengths of the North Carolina growth model:

1. Proficient students are included in the growth calculations.
2. State tests have a vertical scale so they function well across grade levels.
3. Students attain proficiency in four years and the growth targets are absolute rather than being reset periodically.
4. Students and student subgroups are not excluded due to missing test data.
5. North Carolina has a history of analyzing longitudinal test data.

Tennessee's Model: Tennessee proposed a "projection model" — not a value-added model — that determines the percent of students, by subgroup and subject area, who are projected to attain proficiency on the state assessment three years into the future. The model relies on statistical methodology that Tennessee has used since 2002 to consider all of an individual student's prior scores on the state assessment to estimate the student's achievement level at a future point in time. The state's longitudinal data system tracks student progress across time, schools and districts. In its growth model, Tennessee expects fourth and fifth grade students to make accelerated progress toward attaining proficiency so they are prepared for high school work. It expects sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students to make accelerated progress toward attaining proficiency on the state's graduation standards. The projection model gives schools credit for all students who are projected to be proficient within three years, whether they are currently proficient or non proficient.⁶ Tennessee estimated that an additional 47 schools (13 percent) would have made AYP using this model.

Peer Reviewers' Comments: Tennessee's was the only proposal to receive the reviewers' unanimous approval, but they recommended acceptance for one year with the condition that the state address two concerns before renewal or extension. The first concern relates to the accuracy of the state's growth projections. Because the state has done growth modeling previously, the reviewers felt it was important for Tennessee to report on the accuracy of its projections, particularly by subgroup. The second concern is that the model may result in systematic errors in its projections because it is based on a student receiving an average school experience, something not all students in the state do, in fact, receive.

The reviewers cited the following as strengths of Tennessee's growth model:

1. The growth projections use all available test information on all students (both proficient and non-proficient) and updates these projections when new tests are available.
2. The model reports on individual student's performance and growth targets to schools and parents.
3. The state has a history of using achievement data in school management and has shown a capacity to operate data systems.

⁶ Tennessee Department of Education. (Feb. 16, 2006). Proposal to the U.S. Department of Education. NCLB growth model pilot program. Revised March 17, 2006. Available online at www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/tn/index.html.

Table 2 summarizes features of the North Carolina and Tennessee models that the reviewers noted as well as other features of interest that were not mentioned in the reviews. For example, neither model includes high schools, which will continue to be accountable using the current AYP model. In fact, most of the 20 states that submitted proposals did not include high schools in their growth models. Their exclusion could be attributed to the fact that NCLB requires states to test in only one grade in high school which precludes the kind of grade-to-grade comparisons in grades 3-8 that provide data for growth models.

Table 2
Key Features of North Carolina’s and Tennessee’s Approved Growth Models

Characteristics	North Carolina	Tennessee
Type of growth model?	On track to proficient	Projection model
How many years for students to reach proficiency?	4 years	3 years
Which grade levels are in the growth model?	Grades 3-8	Grades 4-8
Are high schools included?	No	No
Students with disabilities included?	Yes	Yes
English language learners included?	Yes	Not Addressed
Are students scoring above proficient included?	Yes	Yes
Are student growth targets reset?	No	No
Are parents provided with reports of growth?	No	Yes

Tennessee’s proposal does not address the participation of English Language learners (ELL) in the growth model, while North Carolina does. It includes ELL students in growth calculations provided they meet the full academic year requirements and have previous test scores that align with the change scale in its growth model.

Both states include students with disabilities in their growth models. North Carolina includes students if the assessment that is specified in their IEP is scaled in a way that can be converted to the change scale used in the growth model. This precludes students who are expected to attain alternate and modified achievement standards. Tennessee includes in its growth model current year scores from students with disabilities who participate in the alternate assessment. They are considered proficient if they score above the proficiency standard for that alternative assessment.

PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department will approve no more than 10 state growth pilots for 2005-06 and 2006-07. With the approval of North Carolina and Tennessee, eight slots remain. Some of those slots maybe filled by six that applied for the pilot program in 2005-06 and whose applications were deemed worthy of peer review. The six states are: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, and Oregon.

The Department recently announced that it will give “early consideration” to these states in the next round of proposals and its has invited the six to submit revised proposals for 2006-07 by Sept. 15, 2006.⁷

As the box to the right demonstrates, so far the Department has apparently considered other information in addition to the peer reviewers' recommendations in making the final decision to approve the states' proposals. For example, although most of the peer reviewers recommended approval for Arizona, its growth model was not approved for 2005-06. In contrast, the reviewers' vote to approve North Carolina's model was split 5/5, but the Department approved its model.⁸

Peer Reviewers' Recommendations to Approve States' Growth Models

State	Yes	No
Alaska	0	10
Arizona	8	2
Arkansas	1	9
Delaware	0	10
Florida	0	9
North Carolina	5	5
Oregon	0	9*
Tennessee	9	0*

**One reviewer abstained.*

In its report, the peer review panel notes that it recommended approval of two models. Based on panel members' individual votes these appear to be Arizona and Tennessee. The reviewers go on to say that “on a third state [North Carolina], there were more mixed views. Half of the panel members recommend approval if the state agreed to make the substantive changes necessary to meet the panel's conditions. The remaining members were not convinced either that the state is ready at this time or that the state can be expected to make sufficient adjustments.”⁹

The Special Case of Arizona: The peer review panel recommended conditional approval of Arizona's growth model. It indicated that Secretary Spellings needed to decide if the Department would allow states to incorporate growth into their accountability systems as Arizona proposed. Under the Arizona model, a student subgroup would make AYP if it met its growth target, regardless of its performance based on the NCLB status model or the law's safe harbor provision. If the subgroup met the growth target, it made AYP.

In addition, although Arizona computed growth for all students, it only factored growth into its progress calculations for non-proficient students. The reviewers concluded that this approach effectively ignored growth for proficient students. They left to the Secretary the decision whether or not to accept models that measure growth for all students, but allow proficiency status to over-ride growth targets for proficient students.

⁷ Department of Education. (May 17, 2006). Secretary Spellings approves Tennessee and North Carolina growth pilots for 2005-06. Press release. Available online at www.ed.gov/print/news/pressreleas.

⁸ U.S. Department of Education. (April 17-19, 2006). Growth model peer report: North Carolina. Available online at www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education. (May 17, 2006). Summary by the peer review team of April 2006: Review of growth model proposals, p. 2. Available online at www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml.

The peer reviewers also raised concerns about the use of confidence intervals in Arizona’s growth model, which was one of several “cross-cutting” themes they identify in their summary report and we discuss below.¹⁰

But rejection of the Arizona growth model may also be tied to ongoing negotiations between the Department and the Arizona Department of Education around the number of years ELL students could be in schools before their test scores were included in AYP calculations. The Department attached as a condition for approval of the growth model the requirement that ELL students’ test scores count for AYP purposes after the students’ first year in school. The Arizona Department of Education had argued consistently that ELL students’ scores should only be factored into AYP calculations after students had been enrolled in Arizona schools for three years. In 2003, the Department agreed to the three-year allowance but subsequently insisted on counting ELL students’ scores after one year. The state filed suit on this matter in early July.¹¹

FIVE CROSS-CUTTING THEMES IN STATES’ GROWTH MODELS

During its review of the growth proposals submitted by Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, North Carolina, Oregon, and Tennessee, the peer review panel identified five issues that it indicated “would need to be addressed by any future growth model proposals considered by the Department.”¹² The issues are:

- 1. Resetting Student Growth Targets Annually.** Three states (AK, AR, and FL) planned to reset individual student growth targets annually after they had established an initial trajectory for non-proficient students to reach proficiency in three or four years. The reviewers questioned whether these models really expected students to reach proficiency in that timeframe. By resetting growth targets each year, the reviewers argued these states could postpone the grade by which a student was proficient for six or more years, and at the same time, credit schools and districts with making AYP during the majority of those years. In addition, the reviewers pointed out that none of the states discussed any special interventions for students who did not attain proficiency in the three- or four-year period. Nor did they discuss how they would ensure that all students are proficient by 2014. The review panel concluded that growth proposals that routinely reset growth targets, and by doing so leave the timeframe for a non-proficient student to reach proficiency open-ended, should not be approved.
- 2. Including Proficient Students in the Growth Model.** Five states (AK, AZ, AR, DE, and FL) planned to apply their growth models exclusively to non-proficient students. Students who scored at or above proficient on state assessments in their current grade would be counted as meeting AYP and would not be included in the growth model.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education. (April 17-19, 2006). Growth model peer report: Arizona. Available online at www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml.

¹¹ Davenport, P. (July 6, 2006). Arizona sues feds over No Child Left Behind scoring for schools. Associated Press.

¹² U.S. Department of Education. (May 17, 2006). Summary by the peer review team of April 2006: Review of growth model proposals, p. 1. Available online at www.ed.gov/searchResults.jhtml.

The reviewers indicated that empirical data from a number of states show that some proficient students will fall into the non-proficient category in the future. They pointed out that a potential advantage of growth models is their ability to identify downward trends in

students' achievement, including the achievement of students who scored proficient at one time. Some reviewers felt that states should continue to collect data about the future performance of proficient students, but failure to do so should not eliminate a state from participating in the growth pilot.

- 3. Aggregating Growth for Determining AYP.** Three states (DE, NC, and OR) used procedures for aggregating test results across students that were reviewed negatively. However, the reviewers disagreed about what constituted an acceptable approach. One group argued that only a system that reported students' progress in terms of numbers and/or percentages of students satisfies NCLB guidelines. Other reviewers indicated that other systems, which might even include some form of averaging, could be used as long as the number/percentage of non-proficient students declined over time and 100 percent of students were proficient by 2013-14.¹³
- 4. Matching Student Test Records.** Information about how students test records would be matched from year to year that five states (AZ, AR, DE, NC, and OR) provided raised reviewers' concerns. They pointed out that states must hold schools accountable for the performance of the same student subgroups whether AYP is based on status or growth. Equally important, the students on which AYP is calculated — those who have matched test records from year to year — must be representative of the student subgroup(s) to which they belong. In addition, this pool of matched test records should be as large as possible so that the maximum number of subgroup members contributes to AYP determinations. For these reasons, the reviewers focused on what the proposals said about state's match "rate" — the percentage of students for which test data is available in the current and previous school years. The reviewers were especially interested in comparable match rates for student subgroups, arguing that without assurances, a subgroup with low match rates would yield data that are not fully representative of the group as a whole. The reviewers recommended holding schools accountable for subgroups that had a low match rate based on status rather than growth.
- 5. Using Confidence Intervals.** Seven states (AR, AZ, AR, DE, NC, OR, and TN) proposed using 95 percent or 99 percent confidence intervals to determine if student subgroups met growth targets and thereby made AYP. By guarding against error caused by the variation in students' performance from test to test and year to year, confidence intervals increase the likelihood that students are properly classified. Many states previously received the Department's approval to incorporate them into the AYP status model/safe harbor components of their accountability systems.

The reviewers argued that using confidence intervals in the law's status model is appropriate. It can reduce the impact of variations in test scores across student cohorts that are assessed from one year to another, which in turn, reduces the potential for misclassifying students as making or not making AYP. The reviewers contend that under the growth model the issue of student cohorts is no longer in play since the models measure the performance of individual students over time. The reviewers concluded that states need to justify the use of any confidence interval around growth projections, and that very wide confidence intervals (e.g., 95 percent or 99 percent) are inappropriate for growth models.¹⁴

¹³ Alaska's approach received a positive review. States that did not raise this issue specifically in their proposals, and presumably avoided the problem, were Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, and Tennessee.

¹⁴ Florida is the only state that did not propose using confidence intervals in its growth model.

“CORE PRINCIPLES” STATES MUST ADDRESS

The Department required states to address the following seven “Core Principles” in the proposals they submitted to date to participate in the growth model pilot project. States that participate in the second round of proposals in fall 2006 also will need to address these principles:¹⁵

Core Principle 1: Ensure all students are proficient by 2013-14, and set annual goals to ensure that the achievement gaps are closing for all students.

Core Principle 2: Set expectations for annual achievement based upon meeting grade-level proficiency, not based on student background or school characteristics.

Core Principle 3: Produce separate accountability decisions about student achievement in mathematics and reading/language consistent with the NCLB statute and regulations.

Core Principle 4: Include all districts, all schools, and all students in the tested grades; hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of student subgroups.

Core Principle 5: Include annual assessments in each of grades 3-8 and high school in mathematics and reading/language arts that have been operational for more than one year, have been approved through the NCLB peer review process for 2005-06, and produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year.

Core Principle 6: Track student progress through the accountability model and state data system.

Core Principle 7: Include student participation rates in the state’s assessment system and student achievement on an additional academic indicator.

WHY OTHER STATES’ MODELS WERE NOT APPROVED

The Department did not approve growth model proposals for 2005-06 from Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, South Carolina, and Utah, stating that they were ineligible for peer review because the states failed to adhere to the “Core Principles” the Departments had established for participating in the pilot. The grounds for the Department’s decision are explained in letters to each state and are summarized below. In all cases, except one, the grounds related to specific features of the proposed growth model. The exception is Iowa. The grounds for not approving its model related, in part, to the state’s failure to meet all of the requirements related to NCLB’s highly-qualified teacher provisions. Iowa is the only state that the Department has said must submit a plan for meeting these provisions as a condition for release of its FY 2006 Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A grants.¹⁶

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (January 25, 2006). Peer review guidance for the NCLB growth model pilot applications. Available online at www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.doc.

¹⁶ Johnson, H.L. (May 25, 2006). Letter to Judy Jeffrey, Director of Education, Iowa Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Colorado

- Did not establish growth targets that would meet 100% student proficiency by 2013-14 (Core Principle 1).
- Established growth targets for student cohorts rather than individual students (Core Principle 2).
- Did not make changes in response to Department's concerns.¹⁷

Indiana

- Provided few details about the how the model met the Department's Core Principles or issues described in its peer review guidance.
- The state's revised proposal lacked details related to establishing student growth targets (Core Principle 2) or describing how schools would be held accountable for growth (Core Principle 1).¹⁸

Iowa

- Did not provide evidence that all students are included (Core Principle 5). In the previous 2 years not all schools participated in the state's voluntary statewide assessment.
- Did not meet the "bright line" principle that all teachers be qualified which is a "precondition to consideration of additional flexibility" [such as a growth model].¹⁹

South Carolina

- Unclear that growth targets will achieve 100% student proficiency by 2013-14 (Core Principle 1).
- Proposed a higher minimum subgroup size for students with disabilities and ELL students than for other student subgroups (Core Principle 4).
- Did not make changes in response to Department's concerns.²⁰

Utah

- Establishes a goal that only 75% of students will be proficient by 2013-14 (Core Principle 1).
- Combines various student subgroups into one subgroup for analytic purposes (Core Principle 4).
- Does not examine achievement in mathematics and reading/language arts separately, but combines several components into one calculation (Core Principle 3).²¹

SECOND ROUND OF PROPOSALS IN FALL 2006

¹⁷ Johnson, H.L. (March 31, 2006). Letter to William Maloney, Commissioner of Education, Colorado Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

¹⁸ Johnson, H.L. (March 31, 2006). Letter to Suellen K. Reed, Superintendent, Indiana Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

¹⁹ Johnson, H.L. (March 31, 2006). Letter to Judy A. Jeffrey, Director of Education, Iowa Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

²⁰ Johnson, H.L. (March 31, 2006). Letter to Inez M. Tenenbaum, State Superintendent of Education, South Carolina. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

²¹ Johnson, H.L. (March 31, 2006). Letter to Patti Harrington, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Utah State Office of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

The Department has invited Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, and Oregon to submit revised growth proposals for 2006-07 by Sept. 15, 2006. Seven additional states (Hawaii, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota) have already applied to be part of the pilot for 2006-07. The Department has taken no formal action on these proposals, but the states are eligible to re-apply by Nov. 1, 2006. In addition, the five states whose proposals for 2005-06 were not sent to the peer review panel, and were not approved by the Department can, re-apply by Nov. 1.

Table 3
Timeline for Next Round of Growth Model Proposals

Invited to submit revised proposals by 9/15/06: AK, AZ, AR, DE, FL and OR
Can submit new proposals by 11/1/06: CO, HI, IN, IA, MD, NH, NV, OH, PA, SC, SD and UT

Some observers were surprised that as many as 20 states submitted proposals to be part of the pilot. Many questioned whether states currently have the infrastructure in place to track student growth over time.²² In addition, two requirements the Department imposed appeared to disqualify many states. First, states had to have at least two years of students test data from grades 3-8 and high school to be part of the pilot. This disqualified 23 states that are adding tests in at least some of these grades to meet the NCLB 2005-06 deadline for grade-by-grade testing in grades 3-8. Second, states’ testing systems must have been approved by the Department for the 2005-06 school year. During the period that the proposals were under review, only four states had received final approval (Delaware, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah).²³ All submitted proposals to participate in the growth model pilot but only Tennessee was approved.

NEA’S POSITION ON GROWTH AND THE DEPARTMENT’S PILOT

The NEA’s priorities for the 2007 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) include revising NCLB’s accountability model so that it rewards success and supports educators to help students learn.²⁴ To that end, NEA has argued for an improved accountability system that includes a growth component. (See box).

In addition, NEA is a member of an alliance of more than 80 national organizations representing education, civil rights, children’s, disability, and citizens’ organizations that has proposed several changes to the law, including one that would “allow states to measure progress by using students’ growth in achievement as well as their performance in relation to

“An improved accountability system should allow states the flexibility to utilize growth models and other measures of progress that assess student learning over time, and recognize improvement on all points of the achievement scale.”

NEA, May 2006

²² Olson, L. (Feb. 1, 2006). States to vie to be part of NCLB ‘growth’ pilot. *Education Week*, 25(21), pp. 24, 25.

²³ Olson, L. & Huff, D.J. (Nov. 30, 2005). U.S. to pilot new gauge of ‘growth.’ *Education Week*, 25(13), p. 1.

²⁴ National Education Association. (May, 2006). ESEA: It’s time for a change! NEA’s positive agenda for the ESEA Reauthorization. Adopted by the NEA Executive Committee May 2, 2006.

pre-determined levels of academic proficiency.”²⁵

NEA President Reg Weaver recently issued the following statement about the Department’s growth model pilot:

“We are encouraged that the U.S. Department of Education is allowing two states to participate in this pilot program—they now acknowledge the potential for a better way. Yet other states were denied the opportunity to use this common-sense growth model system, which would give schools credit for progress in student achievement both over time and within the school year. NEA stands ready to work with the Administration to improve the current system and expand the growth model pilot program to include more states. And we call on Congress to amend the law to include such a provision.” (Weaver, May 18, 2006).²⁶

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE AND LOCAL AFFILIATES

The Department’s growth model pilot project is in its initial phase. To date, it has only approved two of 10 state growth models. The next round of state proposals is due in September and November 2006. As affiliates—especially state affiliates—track the pilot project, they should be aware of the following:

1. The Department used peer review to evaluate eight states’ growth model proposals, but did not feel bound by the reviews in making its final decision to approve the models. In fact, the Department approved one model (North Carolina) that only half the peer review panel recommended for approval, and it did not approve a model (Arizona) that all but two of the reviewers said merited approval
2. Based on the Department’s approvals to date, and the peer reviewers’ comments, we anticipate that if states propose growth models that do the following, the models are unlikely to be approved:
 - Fail to consider the growth of proficient as well as non-proficient students;
 - Reset student growth targets each year;
 - Set a larger minimum size for certain student subgroups;
 - Aggregate student test scores in ways that suggest high-performing students are masking the performance of low-performing students; and
 - Propose using wide confidence intervals in the growth model
3. NEA affiliates may want to encourage their state departments of education to build political support for their proposed growth models among their Congressional delegation, and secure letters of support from Members of Congress.
4. The Department is unlikely to refer all the proposals states submit in September and November 2006 to its peer review panel if it follows procedures used in the first round of proposals. The Department notified some states that its internal review (not a peer review) of their proposals indicated the states did not meet one or more of seven “Core Principles.”

²⁵ Forum on Educational Accountability. (October 2005). Joint organizational statement on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Washington, DC: Author.

²⁶ Weaver, R. (May 18, 2006). NEA president Reg Weaver calls for Bush Administration to give states flexibility in measuring student progress. NEA Press Statement. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

5. States that decide to submit proposals in September and November 2006 have several sources of information that can inform their proposals. These include proposals 20 states have submitted to date, additional information eight states provided the Department about their proposed models, and peer review comments and approval/disapproval letters for these states (AK, AZ, AR, FL, NC, OR, and TN).
6. If the Department follows the same review timeline in the next rounds of proposals as it did in the initial round, approval decisions are likely in December 2006–January 2007 for proposals submitted by September 15, 2006, and in March–April 2007 for proposals submitted by November 1, 2006.

For more information on the Department's growth model pilot, contact Marcella Dianda, mdianda@nea.org.

This policy brief was prepared by Marcella Dianda, Senior Policy Analyst, NEA Student Achievement Department, and Joey Rocco, Student Intern, NEA Student Achievement, spring 2006.

Appendix IV

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

List of signers updated September 15, 2006

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 Counseling Association
6. American Dance Therapy Association
7. American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)
8. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
9. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10. Annenberg Institute for School Reform
11. Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
12. ASPIRA
13. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
14. Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
15. Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
16. Big Picture Company
17. Center for Community Change
18. Center for Expansion of Language and Thinking
19. Center for Parent Leadership
20. Children's Defense Fund
21. Church Women United
22. Citizens for Effective Schools
23. Coalition of Essential Schools
24. Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
25. Communities for Quality Education
26. Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
27. Council for Exceptional Children
28. Council for Hispanic Ministries of the United Church of Christ
29. Council for Learning Disabilities
30. Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
31. Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
32. Division for Learning Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children (DLD/CEC)
33. Education Action!
34. FairTest: The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
35. Forum for Education and Democracy
36. General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church
37. Hmong National Development
38. International Reading Association
39. International Technology Education Association
40. Japanese American Citizens League
41. Learning Disabilities Association of America
42. League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
43. Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice of the United Church of Christ
44. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
45. NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF)
46. National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education (NAAPAE)
47. National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)
48. National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA)

49. National Association for the Education of African American Children with Learning Disabilities
50. National Alliance of Black School Educators
51. National Association of Pupil Services Administrators
52. National Association of School Psychologists
53. National Association of Social Workers
54. National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
55. National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
56. National Conference of Black Mayors
57. National Council for the Social Studies
58. National Council of Churches
59. National Council of Jewish Women
60. National Council of Teachers of English
61. National Down Syndrome Congress
62. National Education Association
63. National Federation of Filipino American Associations
64. National Indian Education Association
65. National Indian School Board Association
66. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
67. National Mental Health Association
68. National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA
69. National Reading Conference
70. National Rural Education Association
71. National School Boards Association
72. National Urban League
73. Native Hawaiian Education Association
74. People for the American Way
75. Presbyterian Church (USA)
76. Rural School and Community Trust
77. Service Employees International Union
78. School Social Work Association of America
79. Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
80. Social Action Committee of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations
81. Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
82. Stand for Children
83. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
84. The Children's Aid Society
85. The Episcopal Church
86. United Black Christians of the United Church of Christ
87. United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
88. Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church
89. Women of Reform Judaism

Appendix V

Appendix VI

NCLB FUNDING: BROKEN PROMISES

Six-year gap (FY 02-FY 07) between Authorized levels and Appropriations = \$56.6 - \$56.7 billion

NCLB PROGRAMS	FY 2002 Final	FY 2003 Final	FY 2004 Final	FY 2005 Final	FY 2006 Final	FY 2007 House Committee	FY 2007 Senate Committee
<i>\$ in millions</i>							
Authorization Total	26,417	29,217	32,017	34,317	36,867	39,417	39,417
Title 1 Grants to LEAS	13,500	16,000	18,500	20,500	22,750	25,000	25,000
21st Century After School Centers	1,250	1,500	1,750	2,000	2,250	2,500	2,500
Innovative Education State Grant	450	475	500	525	550	575	575
Fund for the Improvement of Education	550	575	600	625	650	675	675
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>15,750</i>	<i>18,550</i>	<i>21,350</i>	<i>23,650</i>	<i>26,200</i>	<i>28,775</i>	<i>28,775</i>
Other programs	10,667	10,667	10,667	10,667	10,667	10,667	10,667
Appropriation	22,194	23,837	24,463	24,521	23,504	23,010	23,127
(\$ change v. previous year)	(+3,513)	(+1,643)	(+626)	(+58)	(-1,017)	(-494)	(-377)
(% change v. previous year)	(+18.8%)	(+7.4%)	(+2.6%)	(0.2%)	(-4.1%)	(-2.1%)	(-1.6%)
Appropriation compared with authorization	-4,223	-5,381	-7,554	-9,797	-13,363	-16,407	-16,290

Notes: The FY 2002 total NCLB authorization is from the Congressional Research Service, "K-12 Education Funding: Authorizations and Appropriations for FY2002", updated January 15, 2003. FY 2002-2007 authorization levels for Title 1 Grants to LEAS, 21st Century After School Centers, Innovative Education State Grant, and the Fund for the Improvement of Education are specified in the NCLB Act. FY 2002 authorizations for Other programs are specified in the NCLB Act and assumed to continue at these levels in FY 2003-2007.

NEA Government Relations, 08/7/06

Under the **House Appropriations Committee bill** NCLB funding in Fiscal Year 2007 (money for school year 2007-08) will be less than the amount provided in FY 06, FY 05, FY 04, and even FY 03. Thus, for school year 2007-08 (the first year of NCLB-mandated science testing) states, schools, and students will have LESS money than they had back in school year 2003-04.

FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 06 = \$-494 million (-2.1%)
FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 05 = \$-1,511 million (-6.2%)
FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 04 = \$-1,453 million (-5.5%)
FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 03 = \$-827 million (-3.5%)

Under the **Senate Appropriations Committee bill** NCLB funding in Fiscal Year 2007 (money for school year 2007-08) will be less than the amount provided in FY 06, FY 05, FY 04, and even FY 03. Thus, for school year 2007-08 (the first year of NCLB-mandated science testing) states, schools, and students will have LESS money than they had back in school year 2003-04.

FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 06 = \$-377 million (-1.6%)
FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 05 = \$-1,394 million (-5.7%)
FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 04 = \$-1,336 million (-5.9%)
FY 07 NCLB Funding v. FY 03 = \$-710 million (-3.0%)

Title I funding under NCLB

In millions of \$

	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	Total
Authorization	13,500	16,000	18,500	20,500	22,750	25,000	116,250
Appropriation	10,350	11,689	12,342	12,740	12,713	12,713	72,547
Shortfall	-3,150	-4,311	-6,158	-7,760	-10,037	-12,287	-43,703

Note: FY 07 appropriations = President Bush's proposed budget

NCLB's Broken Promise

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Authorization</u>	<u>Full funding</u>
FY 2002	\$10.35 billion	\$13.50 billion	\$27.22 billion
FY 2003	\$11.69 billion	\$16.00 billion	\$25.68 billion
FY 2004	\$12.34 billion	\$18.50 billion	\$24.72 billion
FY 2005	\$12.74 billion	\$20.50 billion	\$27.09 billion
FY 2006	\$12.71 billion	\$22.75 billion	\$29.02 billion
FY 2007	\$12.71 billion*	\$25.00 billion	\$30.26 billion
Total	\$72.54 billion	\$116.25 billion	\$163.99 billion

*Amount in the administration's FY 2007 budget

Full funding = CRS estimate of amount needed to fully fund the statutory formula that provides each state an amount of funds equal to 40 percent of its State average per pupil expenditure (subject to minimums and maximums) multiplied by the number of children from families in poverty.

Prepared by NEA Government Relations
3/29/06

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