

BUSINESS COALITION FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Business Coalition for Student Achievement *No Child Left Behind Act Reauthorization*

NCLB'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- *No Child Left Behind* has focused America's attention on improving the U.S. K-12 educational system. The public reporting of achievement data for all groups of students and holding schools accountable for raising the achievement of all students has not only made the achievement gap transparent, it also made it impossible to ignore. Thousands of schools across the country are now meeting and exceeding reading and math performance expectations for all students.
- By increasing transparency and accountability, *No Child Left Behind* is positively influencing school performance. According to the Nation's Report Card, America's younger students have made more reading progress in the last five years than in the previous 28 years combined.

IMPORTANCE OF REAUTHORIZING THE LAW THIS YEAR:

- Reauthorizing *No Child Left Behind* in this Congress would build on the Act's successes by strengthening transparency and accountability measures while also adding a new focus on college and work readiness and student achievement in math and science.
- The Business Coalition for Student Achievement calls upon Congress to reauthorize *No Child Left Behind* this year. Postponing reauthorization until after the 2008 election would set the effort back two years.
- One of the key ways to achieve economic growth, job creation and prosperity here in America is through better education. A skilled, educated workforce is necessary to produce the innovations that will keep American businesses competitive, expand job opportunities in the United States, increase wages and improve our standard of living. Our foreign competitors are focusing on education because they learned from us that that is the way to grow their economies. If America does not do the same, our economy, and our children, will be left behind.

WHAT OUR BUSINESS COALITION IS CALLING FOR:

- Preparing students to meet the expectations of higher education and the 21st century workplace is the top concern for the U.S. business community. The Business Coalition for Student Achievement has laid out six principal areas where *No Child Left Behind* should be strengthened during reauthorization to help states, districts and schools work toward this overarching goal. We are asking Congress to:

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- Focus on college and workplace readiness;
 - Emphasize science, technology, engineering and math (STEM);
 - Enhance data-driven decision making;
 - Increase teacher and principal effectiveness;
 - Strengthen and refine accountability; and
 - Invest in school improvement and encourage innovation.
- A strengthened *No Child Left Behind Act* that includes greater emphasis on student achievement in math and science is a necessary complement to the *American Competitiveness Initiative* that President Bush announced last year. The United States will not be able to entice more American students to pursue undergraduate degrees in science, technology, math and engineering if they have not learned the fundamentals in elementary and secondary school. Likewise, school systems will not be able to find enough qualified math and science teachers unless we succeed in encouraging more Americans to pursue technical majors in college.
- The Business Coalition for Student Achievement supports healthy funding for America's schools, but to focus on only funding misses the point. America has the highest spending per student of any nation in the world. The reason *No Child Left Behind* changed the dynamic in a positive way is its focus on transparency, accountability and results.
- The Business Coalition for Student Achievement endorses the goal of ensuring that all American students are proficient in reading and math by 2014. The first step in dramatically improving performance is setting ambitious goals. The Coalition believes the 2014 proficiency goal is ambitious and achievable. America should do no less.

WHAT NCLB IS NOT AND WHAT OUR COALITION IS NOT CALLING FOR:

- *No Child Left Behind* does not preempt local control of school systems. Rather, it encourages school systems to increase student performance by requiring that performance be measured and reported and by holding schools accountable for student achievement. Student achievement is a national issue because it directly affects American international competitiveness, as well as income inequality in the United States.
- K-12 education remains a state and local responsibility, under the control of state and local governments. *No Child Left Behind* does not change that. But K-12 education is a national issue because of its link to economic competitiveness. When our children enter the workforce, they will be competing in a global economy and it's our responsibility to make sure that they are prepared. *No Child Left Behind* demands more of local school systems in the way of transparency and accountability, with the goal of boosting student achievement.
- Holding schools accountable for doing their job adequately should not be considered an unfunded mandate. *No Child Left Behind* focuses on the most fundamental task of our schools – ensuring that our kids have the basic skills they need to succeed in a 21st Century

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economy. Holding schools accountable for the performance of their students is good policy and common sense.

- *No Child Left Behind* does not restrict school curricula. All students should be challenged by a rigorous, well-rounded core curriculum in safe and engaging learning environments. While the Act emphasizes the fundamentals, there is nothing in the law that precludes states and local districts from providing additional enriching content, including the arts.
- The Business Coalition for Student Achievement is not advocating for voluntary national standards as part of the reauthorization of *No Child Left Behind*. There are different views in the business community on this issue and we are not taking a position at this time.

The Business Coalition for Student Achievement is not taking a position on individual bills at this time. We are meeting with staff and Members of Congress to let them know our priorities so that the business community's input is addressed as the process to develop a bipartisan bill moves forward.

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