



Our Opinion: The NCLB Debate

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A sampling of the testimony before Congress last week on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind:

"We strongly agree with the need for accountability, effective teachers, and high academic achievement standards, but No Child Left Behind failed to provide the flexibility, room for innovation, resources targeted to those students who need it most, and the proven strategies to assist our staff in turning around vulnerable schools."

David L. Brewer, superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District

"Accountability is a two-way street, and the federal government must do its part to ensure ample funding is provided to schools in order to meet the requirements and challenges the law creates."

Michael Resnick, associate executive director of the National School Boards Association

"We continue to see too many people reject the proposition that virtually every student regardless of background can learn and achieve. We see too many others who believe children regardless of background might have the capacity to succeed but that we don't have the capacity as adults to unlock that potential given all of the obstacles. Those beliefs persist in face of evidence from classrooms and schools to the contrary."

Jon Schnur, chief executive officer and co-founder of New Leaders for New Schools

"Policies promoting performance-based pay need to do more than simply offer financial incentives and bonuses. They need to provide a mechanism for intelligent, highly motivated individuals to become and remain teachers who make a positive impact on student achievement."

MaryKate Hughes, master teacher at DC Preparatory Academy in Washington

"Educators express frustration that this test-based system is leading to a narrow vision of education and hope that our nation could pursue a more comprehensive vision of how to make American education the best in the world."

Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy

"Under current law, graduation rates are not defined consistently, not disaggregated by subgroup, nor required to improve significantly over time in the same way that test scores are. It's as if we are clocking runners in a race every mile but then do not pay attention to whether or not they cross the finish line."

Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education

"We should care as much or more about whether a child graduates after receiving a comprehensive, high-quality education as we do about how he or she performs on a standardized test. We should be sending a message to educators that the art and practice of teaching is and must be about more than test preparation."

Reg Weaver, president of the National Education Association

"Most high-achieving countries not only provide high-quality universal preschool and health care for children, they also fund their schools centrally and equally, with additional funds to the neediest schools. By contrast, in the U.S., the wealthiest school districts spend nearly ten times more than the poorest, and spending ratios of 3 to 1 are common within states."

Linda Darling-Hammond, co-director of the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and the School Redesign Network

"Currently, too little attention is paid to creating the financial incentives necessary to recruit and retain a high-quality teacher workforce. We need to change that by raising starting salaries and by offering competitive and substantial compensation that recognizes and rewards different roles, responsibilities, and results."

John Podesta, *president and chief executive officer of the Center for American Progress*