



## **Erase, Rewrite and Reauthorize! Reauthorizing ESEA/NCLB Fact Sheet – April 19, 2007**

As Congress prepares to reauthorize the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** (ESEA) that was first implemented in 1965, CTA wants to erase the punitive and onerous provisions of the act, named **No Child Left Behind** (NCLB) by President Bush in 2001. CTA wants to rewrite the law to help our schools and improve student learning. CTA is calling for the following changes as Congress considers the reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB.

### **Use More than Test Scores to Measure Student and School Success**

- ESEA/NCLB must include multiple measures of student learning and school success instead of the current one-day snapshot based solely on standardized test scores. The snapshot approach is an unfair, inaccurate and misleading measure of student achievement.
- Additional measures of success could include using attendance rates, graduation rates, a rigorous curriculum, and the number of students participating in honors or advanced placement courses.
- Time spent on testing and test preparation has decimated important programs like art, music, foreign languages and physical education, and has limited the scope and depth of instruction during regular class time.

### **Use Growth Models that Recognize School Progress and Student Needs**

- Erase the one-size-fits-all approach of No Child Left Behind that requires all students to learn in the same way and at the same rate. We all know every child learns differently. The law must recognize the individual needs of students and schools.
- Rewrite ESEA/NCLB to allow states to implement growth models that measure changes in student performance and give schools credit for making progress over time. For example, schools that improve student achievement from below basic to basic, basic to proficient, or proficient to advanced should be acknowledged as making progress.
- ESEA/NCLB should provide common sense flexibility in assessing test scores from both students with disabilities and English Learners. Currently, schools are often unfairly penalized even though these students are working hard and making progress.

### **Provide Assistance and Resources, Not Sanctions**

- No Child Left Behind sets up schools to fail. This year NCLB labeled one out of every five California public schools as failing. Instead of punishing schools, we need a system that provides assistance and resources to help all students and schools succeed.
- The current one-size-fits-all approach to education hurts all children and pushes struggling students even further behind. According to a study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project, NCLB has not helped narrow the achievement gap and has shortchanged schools that serve predominantly disadvantaged, minority students with an over reliance on sanctions rather than assistance.
- NCLB forces schools to waste time and money on bureaucracy, paperwork and standardized testing, rather than providing resources to reduce class sizes and to attract and retain quality educators in every classroom.
- The President and Congress have broken their promise of funding and support, making NCLB a federally mandated burden on local school districts. The shortfall in promised federal support since 2001 now exceeds \$55 billion. It's wrong for Congress to make additional demands of our schools without providing the resources to meet those demands.

### **Reduce Class Sizes, Provide other Proven Reforms that Improve Student Learning**

- ESEA/NCLB should focus on reforms that work. Congress should restore and enhance the federal class size reduction program, with priority given to our schools of greatest need.
- California has some of the largest class sizes in the country and ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the number of teachers per student. Research shows that smaller class sizes improve student learning and significantly close the achievement gap.
- ESEA/NCLB should provide financial incentives to attract and retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools, as well as resources to provide quality training to teachers and paraprofessionals.
- ESEA/NCLB should encourage and provide resources to increase parental and family involvement in our schools.