



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

Open to the Public:  
**How Communities, Parents  
and Students Assess the  
Impact of the**

*No Child Left Behind Act*

2004 - 2007

*The Realities Left Behind*

## About PEN

Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN believes an active, vocal constituency is the key to ensuring that every child, in every community, benefits from a quality public education. PEN and its members are building public demand and mobilizing resources for quality public education on behalf of 11.5 million children in more than 1600 school districts in 33 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In addition, PEN's international affiliates serve over 7 million children in Mexico, Peru and the Philippines.

## Our Vision

Every day, in every community, every child in America benefits from a quality public education.

## Our Mission

To build public demand and mobilize resources for quality public education for all children through a national constituency of local education funds and individuals.

### SPECIAL THANKS

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PEN Project Staff: Amanda Broun, Arnold Fege, Emily Reynolds,

Editor: Mary Stanik

Graphic Design: Rebecca Letsome

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## Executive Summary

# Open to the Public: How Communities, Parents and Students Assess the Impact of the *No Child Left Behind Act* *The Realities Left Behind*

Dear Citizen Concerned about Public Education in America:

Accountability for educating all children to their full potential is essential, but this particular goal of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act cannot be achieved unless policymakers address fundamental issues of resources, capacities and will within the public education system.

These are the messages that were heard clearly by Public Education Network (PEN) at public hearings on NCLB that took place from Boston to San Francisco, and from Orlando to Austin. Over a three-year period, PEN, in conjunction with local education funds, conducted 25 hearings, forums, focus groups and online surveys to give students, parents and community leaders --audiences very much affected by the law, but usually left out of the debate--an opportunity to tell their side of the NCLB story.

As people became more familiar with the law and its impact, their testimony unequivocally led to these conclusions: that NCLB must have a more compelling vision, strong policies to support it, and greater public engagement. NCLB's fatal flaw could be that it has left crucial realities behind. These include:

- NCLB has been imposed on a public school system that remains unequal. From one end of the country to another, witnesses described inequities in resources that made the federal mandates not only onerous but also exceedingly unfair. Moreover, the failure of policymakers to increase the capacity of state education agencies and districts to carry out reforms has allowed them to avoid responsibility and accountability. While these inequities stem from state and district policymaking, the federal government can leverage incentives or Title I formulas to encourage the reduction of disparities in resources between districts and schools.
- NCLB rests on a faulty measurement capacity. The quality and reliability of tests need improvement. In addition, the public wants a broader purpose for assessment systems. Beyond the acquisition of basic skills, assessment systems should measure student and school achievement in other areas, including fostering of citizenship, preparation in "soft skills" valued by employers and colleges alike, and the development of all talents, from technical to artistic. Admittedly, some of these aspects are not easily measured, but that should not be an excuse for ignoring them or minimizing their importance to student success.

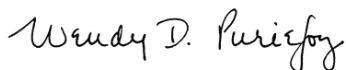
- The foundation for “highly qualified” teachers relies on qualities that ought to be present in the early recruitment and preparation of teachers but, instead, rarely affects who is allowed to teach. Results of the hearings indicated consistent faulting of paper certification and testing as the criteria for good teaching. The qualities students and parents want in teaching have more to do with professional commitment, skills with highly diverse student populations, and abilities to forge strong relationships with students and parents. While federal professional development funds need to be more focused on urban districts, national leaders and higher education institutions must also assist in recruiting and preparing teachers for the changing demographics of public schools.
- NCLB pays considerable lip service to parent involvement; in reality, parents and communities are almost shut out of the reform process. Thus far, federal mandates for parent involvement have done little to influence school and district cultures that inhibit partnerships with parents. On the enforcement side, federal policies could require audits of NCLB’s parent involvement provisions. However, at the same time, there needs to be just as much emphasis placed on supporting models of parent involvement that could be “teaching schools” for others and investments in preparing administrators and teachers for working with parents. The neglect of parent partnerships begins when administrators and teachers are learning to run schools and classrooms.
- Not only does NCLB ignore the role of communities, it seriously undermines the capacity of communities to be part of the solution for low-performing schools. Parent and community leaders in every hearing site (in 10 states) acknowledged that they have responsibility for helping students succeed. However, when a school is labeled as “failing” the community perception is that the school is abandoned--by students (encouraged through the NCLB transfer option), teachers, principals and the community. Instead, federal efforts should support community-wide plans for turning around low-performing schools, using a community schools model as a basis for investments.

Over three years, and at every hearing site, the public supported the goals of NCLB. However, until the act addresses the realities of inequities, limited expectations of student and teacher capacities, and the isolation of parents and communities from school reforms, it will engender more rhetoric than real difference in the success of all students.

These are important messages for policymakers to hear. Another equally crucial result from the hearings is that the public voice must be part of the process used by policymakers if they want to be trusted on behalf of the nation’s children.

PEN made one promise to its local partners and the many community members who took time to voice their opinions: that we would make sure the president and the U.S. Congress heard the voices of the public. I hope you find this report to be useful as we continue with the NCLB re-authorization process in the Congress. America’s children are counting on us to help render a law that does them justice.

Sincerely,



Wendy D. Puriefoy  
President and CEO, Public Education Network  
Washington, D.C., July 2007



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

# Open to the Public: How Communities, Parents and Students Assess the Impact of the *No Child Left Behind Act* *The Realities Left Behind*

## National Report

For three years, Public Education Network (PEN) has listened to parents, students, business and community leaders testify about what the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act means to their lives and aspirations. Their message is consistent, from Boston to San Francisco:

- It is right to hold public education accountable for adequately educating every child to his/her full potential.
- It is wrong to believe NCLB can achieve its goals unless far deeper and systemic changes are made in resources, capacities and will.

PEN co-sponsored 25 hearings, public forums, town meetings or focus groups with local education funds (LEFs) and other community partners to give the public a voice in the debate over this very significant federal legislation. PEN is a Washington, D.C.-based national organization representing local education funds and individuals committed to improving public schools and giving citizens a role in school reform. It sponsored the NCLB hearings to counter the process used to develop the law in 2001, one in which the public was almost virtually shut out of the debate and the subsequent consensus-making.

PEN heard from thousands of parents, students, business and community representatives who were willing to “go public” with their feelings. An additional several dozen discussed the law intensely in focus groups.

In several states (Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas), the PEN hearings took place in all three years of the initiative, which allowed hearing officers or facilitators to detect any changes in knowledge or attitudes about NCLB. The hearing reports PEN has issued thus far also drew from two years of testimony in California, Michigan, and Ohio, along with single hearings in Florida and Tennessee. Participation ranged from 10 to 12 people at four focus groups to more than 250 people at public forums. For two years in Pennsylvania, the hearings focused almost exclusively on testimony by students from all parts of the state. The report on the second round of hearings also included summaries of hundreds of responses to online surveys about major components of the NCLB legislation.

PEN is able to make a unique contribution to the debate about NCLB's re-authorization because, like no other group, it has collected perceptions from experiences, stories and data presented at hearings over the years when NCLB had its largest impact. We heard from the people, not established education groups. At every hearing, we also included students, who would know better than others what changes

have occurred in classrooms over the five years' that NCLB has been a factor in public education. Drawing from the reports of the hearings and surveys of its own membership, PEN

“NCLB’s fatal flaw could be that it has left crucial realities behind.”

submitted details of recommendations for changes to NCLB to Congress.

These details, like the hundreds submitted to Congress over many months by innumerable groups and interests, are worthwhile efforts to make NCLB succeed. However, our experience in going to the people most affected by the law convinces us to tell policymakers at every level that NCLB probably will fail without a more compelling vision and policies to support that stronger vision. (see appendix 1)

#### REALITY 1: NCLB has been imposed on a public school system that remains unequal.

For more than 40 years, federal K-12 education policy primarily has focused on addressing the results of disadvantage, caused by poverty, disability, language background, or migration. It is unthinkable to consider what our schools and generations of children would be without this support. Still, inequities continue to exist in our poorest communities, and students, parents and community leaders feel their sting intensely.

As a student witness from Philadelphia said about NCLB sanctions: “Until resources are adequate, it doesn’t matter how high the expectations are.”

Testimony from those in schools most severely penalized by NCLB described broken computers, classrooms with no heat, teachers who showed disdain for students’ cultures or did not know how to teach their subjects. These are problems that exist all over the country. Here are a few examples from those who testified:

Chicago inner-city high school student: Why don’t we have the money to get a tile in the floor fixed? Why can’t we get the clubs we want? Why don’t we have money to...get new windows? Are those other schools getting a lot more funding to do what they want because their kids are smarter? One student said her science textbook was just three years younger than she was, while her friends in suburban schools were using just-published texts

Philadelphia high school student, replying to a suburban student comment: “You complain about not having enough textbooks to take home. We don’t have enough for everyone in our classrooms.” And another student who wanted to attend a selective college’s international studies program, but said “I haven’t taken calculus because it wasn’t offered at my school, and I haven’t been able to take adequate levels of Spanish. So, my desire to go to the University of Pennsylvania sort of feels crushed.”

Boston, a former student who transferred out: “We have paper, we have pencils, we have good teachers. At my school in Boston, it was a big deal if you got a playground.” And a group of high-achieving seniors at a Boston high school longingly described the advantages of students attending the city’s premier college-prep school: “They just have everything. They have all the opportunities in the world to do

“ Until resources are adequate, it doesn’t matter how high the expectations are.”



whatever and whenever like clubs and Advanced Placement (AP) classes and a tremendous library.” An even more graphic comment from another student: “I don’t feel like I’m wanted, like I’m dirty or something. Just because I go to a public school doesn’t mean that they can’t fix the toilets.”

Ohio, a student from Akron: “The labeled schools are at such a disadvantage. If there were more opportunities in them, as in the good schools, then the failing schools could become good.”

It is an absolutely fair comment to note that the students and adults who testified about unequal facilities, curriculum and teaching in high-poverty schools should have been addressing their remarks to district and state policymakers, and should not have needed to make comments about a federal law. But the federal government should not be left off the hook.

It follows that federal policymakers could use the power of incentives and/or mandates to more directly address the problem of resource inequities in public schools. Perhaps there could be incentives for states to reduce the per pupil spending disparities among districts, or for districts to address the spending disparities between schools. Title I formulas could be used as leverage to encourage the re-deployment of resources that come from district and state sources.

Undoubtedly, the mandates of NCLB require higher levels of federal funding. However, the usefulness of the additional funding largely will dissipate if it continues to be layered upon an unequal system of state and district funding.

## REALITY 2: NCLB rests upon a faulty measurement capacity.

Much has been presented to Congress about the “inadequacy” of the mandates under the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) component. But the proficiency target is impossible to accomplish by 2014. The lack of recognition for growth discourages educators, students and parents. Testing policies for the disabled and limited-English speaking students make no sense to either educators or parents. The mushrooming of annual testing has overwhelmed the capacity of testing companies to perform adequately. Even more discouraging, the lack of thought that has gone into the entire process has caused some gamesmanship and lowering of standards by the states. These actions have reached the point where it is almost impossible to determine causal relationships between NCLB and academic progress by students. (see appendix 2 and 3)

“It is an absolutely fair comment to note that the students and adults who testified about unequal facilities, curriculum and teaching in high-poverty schools should have been addressing their remarks to district and state policymakers, and should not have needed to make comments about a federal law.”

We heard all of these criticisms at the hearings. The strongest testimony – from students and adults alike – concerned the conversion of education goals to test scores. Students in poorly performing schools, already shortchanged when it comes to creative, contextual teaching, felt the narrowing of the curriculum and an almost total focus on test prep more than other students. A minister from Erie, Pa., poignantly expressed the sentiment of many witnesses:

*“It saddens me to hear fifth graders no longer talking about the poem they wrote for their creative writing class or their amazement about learning a really cool fact about history.... Instead of these things, which make a more well-rounded, civically engaged person, fifth graders in the current environment of today’s classrooms now talk about in what percentile they scored.”*

While actions can be taken to improve the quality of tests, the public was saying much more. It wants schools – and students – to be measured with a broader set of criteria such as the fostering of citizenship, preparation in “soft skills” that employers and colleges want, how effectively schools retain all students to graduation, and how well they consider the “whole” child and the development of all potential talents.

We do not have a measurement system that can do this, nor have most schools/districts/states developed a process to find out from the public what it wants measured in the public education system. Until a measurement system reflects the values the public has agreed to, the system will not be trusted. Since a core assumption of NCLB rests on the use of data to improve public schools, either the lack of available data or the lack of trust in the data undermines a key strategy of the law.

Through investments in developing public consensus and in creating quality assessments systems that help teachers in classrooms and align to public goals, federal and state policies can help to create public support for accountability.

**REALITY 3:** The foundation for “highly qualified” teachers relies on qualities that ought to be present in the early selection, preparation and recruitment of teachers but, instead, rarely affects those who get to teach.

Paper certification and ability to pass a test mean little to parents and students subjected to the least competent teaching offered in a school district. They assume that teachers meet the paper qualifications, but not personal attributes, that students and parents expect of teachers. Those who called on teachers to “have a heart” or to “care about their students” usually received applause from adults and young people themselves at the hearings. (see appendix 4)

Except for community advocacy representatives in New York City and a group of Boston students who had conflicts with their school’s principal, hardly any testimony referred to principal leadership. Students are dependent on the personal relationships they have with teachers, and parents’ perceptions of schools are tied to how teachers respond to their children. No one at any hearing wanted teachers who were less demanding, but the witnesses’ definition of competence would include:



- Ability to teach content in ways that challenge and engage students. A Dayton, Ohio student wanted to know if a teacher “just reads textbooks or is someone who can tell me how this concept applies to other areas of life.” A Chicago high school student said a teacher with a doctorate still “may not be able to connect with students.” Although the NCLB accountability mandates appear to have dampened any teacher creativity in low-performing schools, the contrast between teachers’ expectations and support in low-poverty and high-poverty schools is not a recent phenomenon. Suburban Pennsylvania students, for example, praised the focus and personal support they received from teachers all through the K-12 system, while urban students just wanted one teacher “who cares.”
- Commitment to be a successful teacher in highly diverse classrooms. For a San Francisco high school student, “highly qualified” means nothing if a teacher “has a phobia about the neighborhood, or the predominant population, or even the culture.” An angry Boston student said that racial remarks by teachers in his school “kill kids’ spirits about wanting to go to school.” A Memphis research study submitted in testimony found that a majority of teachers and principals held low expectations for students and did not think they could overcome socioeconomic barriers. Parents in Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago and other cities called for a teacher corps ready, eminently able, and willing to teach in urban areas.

No legislation can change deeply ingrained teacher beliefs or behavior, so it was difficult for hearing officers to respond to the testimony about teacher-student relationships. Still there must be ways to address these real concerns. While these efforts are critical to improving the teaching force, there also is a need for a national effort to recruit highly qualified teaching candidates. Research confirms that teachers with higher academic credentials, and who attend more competitive colleges, have more academically successful students. Moreover, higher education institutions should be encouraged to deliberately prepare teacher candidates for diverse urban settings and require extensive clinical experiences in such schools. With 42 percent of the school age population comprised of students from minority groups, investments in professional preparation and development cannot be effective if they are built around traditional school populations.

By whatever means, American society must regain the regard it once had for teaching. Even though Americans once had more regard for teachers, that regard was rarely matched by adequate compensation. Conversely, a teaching career today, shaped by the dynamics of population changes and the global economy, must be seen as more challenging, interesting and rewarding than ever. This will require national leadership. Having the support of the “bully pulpit” of the presidency would be immensely helpful, as would targeted investments in recruiting and retaining a quality teaching force.

**REALITY 4: NCLB pays considerable lip service to parent involvement; in reality, parents and communities are almost shut out of the reform process.**

In various iterations, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB’s forerunner) made parental involvement an essential component of the law, primarily in Title I schools. NCLB went further, basing its major interventions in low-performing schools on well-informed parent choices to either transfer their children or to select tutoring providers. Both were options for

children in chronically low-performing schools. Even without the extensive statutes for these provisions, parent involvement, parent communication, and parent participation in decision-making for school improvement plans are mentioned hundreds of times.

However, the reality is that this openness to families as partners rarely becomes a part of the culture of schools, no matter what the law says. Parent witnesses in every city told of being left out, considered irrelevant, or tagged with the reputation of causing too much “noise,” as a New York parent described the attitudes toward parent activism. The Boston district’s directive for each school to have a parent involvement plan was carried out on paper, according to school leaders, but there was no time to make it happen or interest in monitoring it.

NCLB may have empowered parents more than in the past, but they still seem to have to struggle to be heard at the decision-making table. Not a single school district represented at the hearings received passing marks for their communication with parents on NCLB provisions. Legalistic gibberish apparently is the same in Spanish or Khmer as it is in English (in those few cases when a district even offers a foreign language translation). (see appendix 5)

States have included parent involvement in their plans, districts often have elaborate parent centers and/or structures for parent coordinators and the nonprofit sector frequently takes on the task of helping parents understand how to navigate and influence the public education system. Still, when meaningful parent involvement is not considered important to a school’s mission, no paperwork requirements or parent demands will change school practice more than superficially. It is clear that for most Title I schools, when the parental involvement provisions as included in Section 1118 of NCLB (which requires Title I schools and school districts to develop parental involvement policies and include parents in decision-making) do not have “enforcement teeth,” they are not taken seriously. As such, it is not being widely implemented. A formal parental grievance procedure would be warranted to be used by parents in case the district does not involve parents in the process.

Federal law should go a step further and require audits of the parent involvement provisions. On an even more basic level, federal officials might encourage higher education institutions to include research on best-practice experiences with parent involvement in teacher and administrator education programs. The neglect of this factor in public education begins when educators are learning to run classrooms and schools.

Federal incentives also could encourage the selection of exemplary schools with strong parent involvement policies and practices that correlate to improved academic outcomes. These would serve as models for training others and for producing research that takes parent involvement – and attitudes about it – “beyond the bake sale.”

**REALITY 5:** Not only does NCLB ignore the role of communities in achieving its goals, it seriously undermines the capacity of communities to be part of the solution for low-performing schools.

The only reference to communities in the entire NCLB law concerns the eligibility of community-based organizations to participate in offering services for students.

However, in cities across the country, parents and community leaders were quite willing – even desperate – to say they need to be part of the resolve and resolution for turning all schools into excellent community centers of learning. Witnesses (including students) frequently expressed their frustration at the lack of commitment to education by some students and parents, but everyone had hope. With encouragement and avenues for participation, communities could rally behind the schools. Indeed, the hearings made it obvious that for the most seriously troubled schools, only community-wide action would enable them to improve.

As the chair of the Detroit After-School Roundtable put it:

*“Education is more than the four walls of the school building. It is a partnership with teachers, communities, administrators, parents, grandparents, government, churches, as well as the children and youth themselves.”*

However, NCLB unwittingly undermines the capacity of communities to respond to mandates for school improvement. Schools that consistently do not meet accountability targets are considered “in need of improvement,” a euphemism that even students did not accept. Bluntly put, communities view these schools as “failing,” a label with far-reaching consequences. A Columbus, Ohio, student said that a school failing to meet its AYP target “reflects on the community. Who wants to attend a failing school? What parent wants to live in a community where the schools are failing?”

When a school is labeled as such, and the transfer provision of NCLB takes effect, witnesses felt a betrayal of desperately needy schools. Instead of serving as an opportunity to rally support among businesses, parents and community groups to improve schools, neighborhood by neighborhood, the label caused the community to abandon schools. They saw resources leaving schools that needed them the most. Even supporters of school choice and the transfer option available under NCLB no longer use market theory as often to justify this provision. Much more than limited competition is needed to turn poorly performing schools around. A better plan, according to the testimony at the hearings, would be to provide sufficient resources and community services for the schools.

At the conclusion of the second round of hearings, PEN heard the anguish over the labeling of schools. It was enough to make PEN recommend that any school improvement plan for chronically under-performing schools should be a community-wide plan involving all the institutions that affect children, their education and their development. Requiring such schools to employ a community schools model would be a logical next step for policymaking.

By organizing communities to be partners in school improvement, policymakers could shape changes that address several issues. Strong school-community ties might help create better working conditions for teachers, find support services for their students, and build trust with parents. Also, if the business community received encouragement and incentives for working with schools, it could provide learning contexts through workplace experiences that make school studies relevant to students.

*“Education is more than the four walls of the school building. It is a partnership with teachers, communities, administrators, parents, grandparents, government, churches, as well as the children and youth themselves.”*

Over the three years of hearings, the testimony changed in subtle ways. From their perspective, students perceived the only differences under NCLB to be the increased emphasis on testing. In the beginning, parents were more angry and frustrated, taking out their complaints on a federal law they did not understand very well. Gradually, the testimony began to offer solutions and focus equally on what parents, communities, and students themselves could do to improve school outcomes.

After five years of living with NCLB, the public remains skeptical that any law on its own, and especially one with so many untried assumptions, can or should significantly change schools. A participant at the final focus group in New York summed up much of the testimony with two words: "It depends." Better outcomes for students "depend" on the decisions of policymakers about school funding, on access to quality teaching, on having enough textbooks, on using fair assessments – all elements that should be guaranteed and not be made to be conditional.

The hearing process allowed the public to let policymakers know what it is really like to implement NCLB in schools. Their comments were not filtered through committee meetings and executive boards of organized interest groups. They told genuine personal stories, sometimes with tears, and expressed deeply felt opinions about their hopes for schools. The process confirmed PEN's belief that policymakers need to hear directly from the people most affected by their decisions. This is necessary if they want to be trusted to act on behalf of the nation's children.



Critical Exposure

# Methodology and Participants

Between May 2004 and March 2007, Public Education Network (PEN) sought the opinions of students, parents, business and community leaders regarding the federal No Child Left Behind Act. During that time, PEN:

- Held 21 hearings, 2 town meetings and 8 focus groups
- Received over 20,000 responses to an online survey on PEN's e-advocacy website, GiveKidsGoodSchools.org.
- Produced 2 national preliminary hearing reports, 9 state reports and a student voices report

More than 2,000 pages of testimony resulted from the PEN hearings, focus groups, town meetings and the survey. States and local communities were chosen for participation based on large percentages of low-income children enrolled in school districts. All hearings were co-hosted with local partner organizations with deep ties to their community. Since the absence of the public is too often evident in forums on public education, PEN intentionally did not invite professional educators to formally testify. However, everyone was encouraged to complete the PEN survey, submit written comments and speak openly during the hearing sessions.

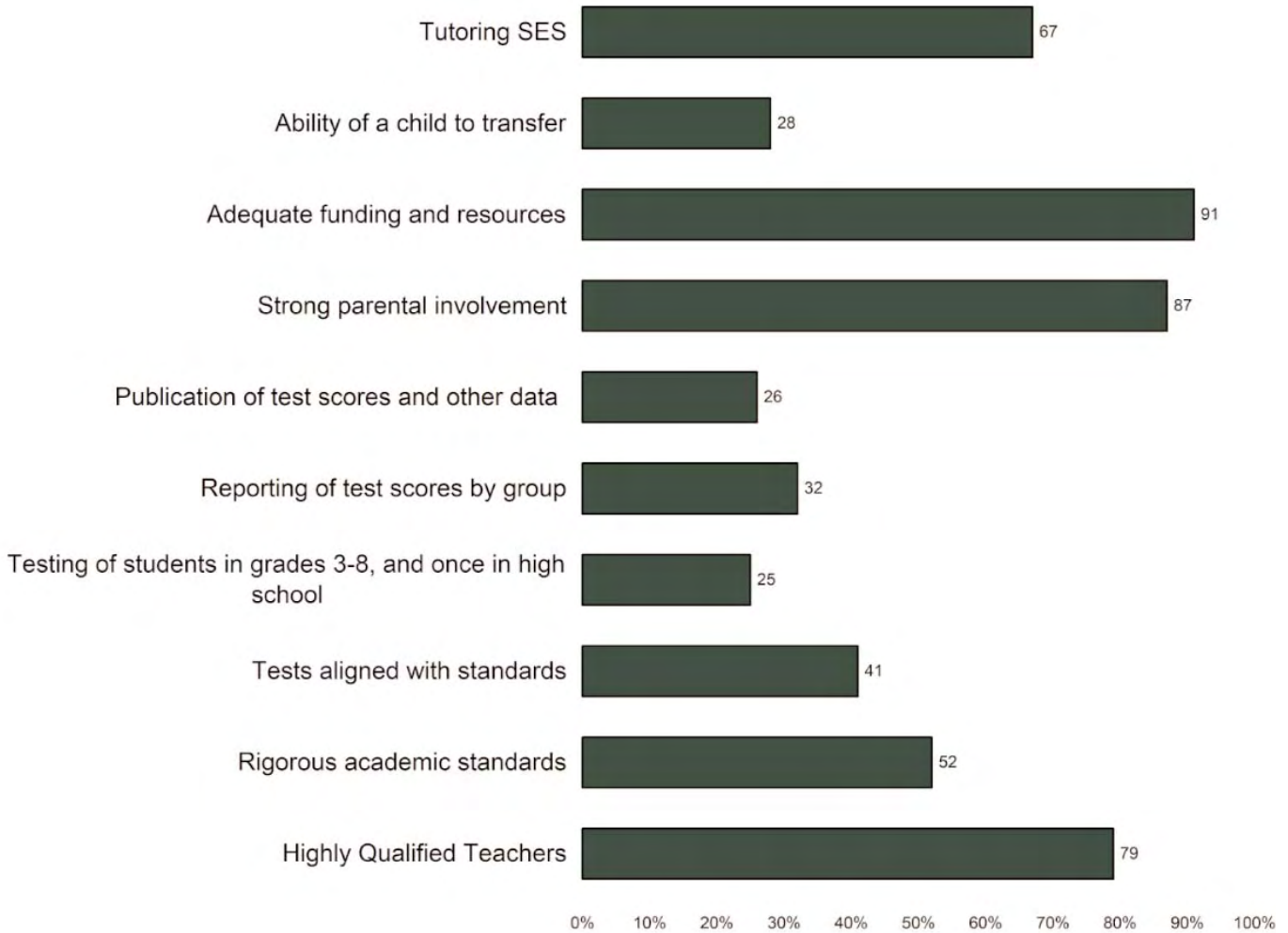


# Appendix: PEN 2005 NCLB Online Survey

From September through December 31, 2005, Public Education Network conducted a survey on various aspects of *No Child Left Behind* through GiveKidsGoodSchools.org, its e-advocacy website. The online survey garnered 8,000 responses from education advocates around the country who joined in this vibrant and vital national debate on public education. Highlights of the survey follow.

## APPENDIX 1

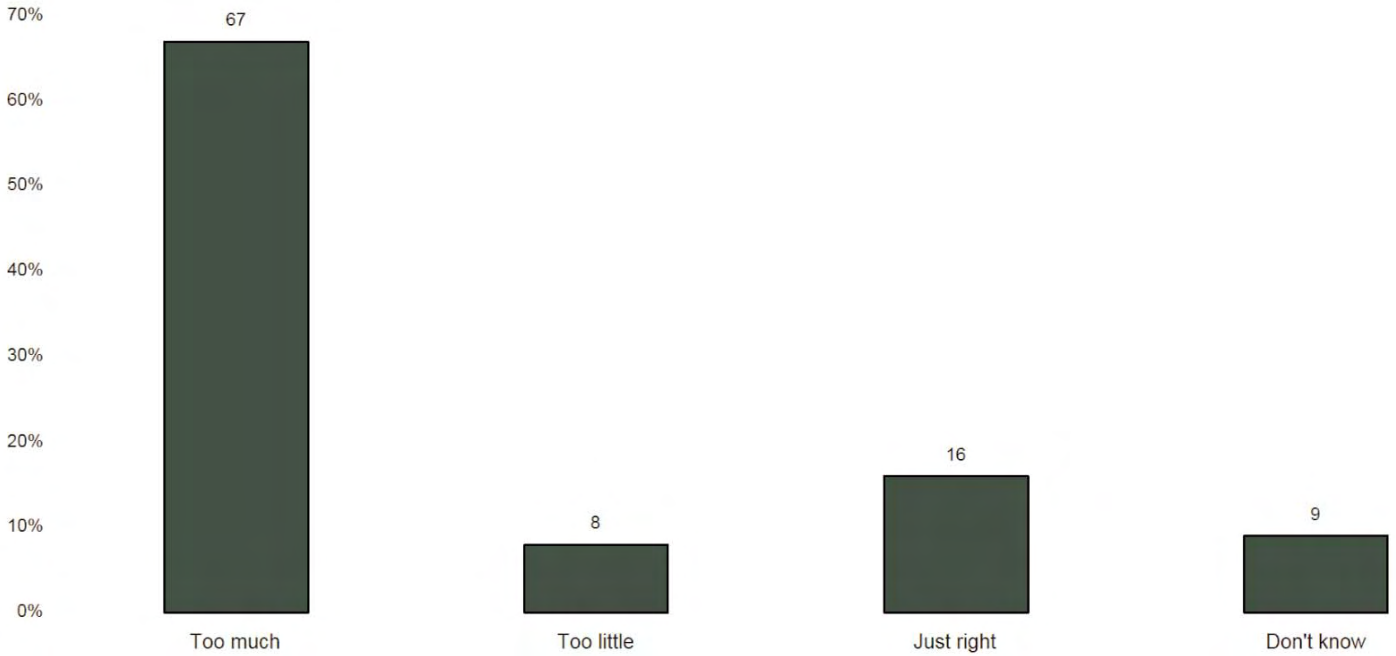
One of the major goals of NCLB is to close the academic achievement gap among children of different racial, ethnic, or economic groups. Select those provisions of the law that are essential in closing the gap.





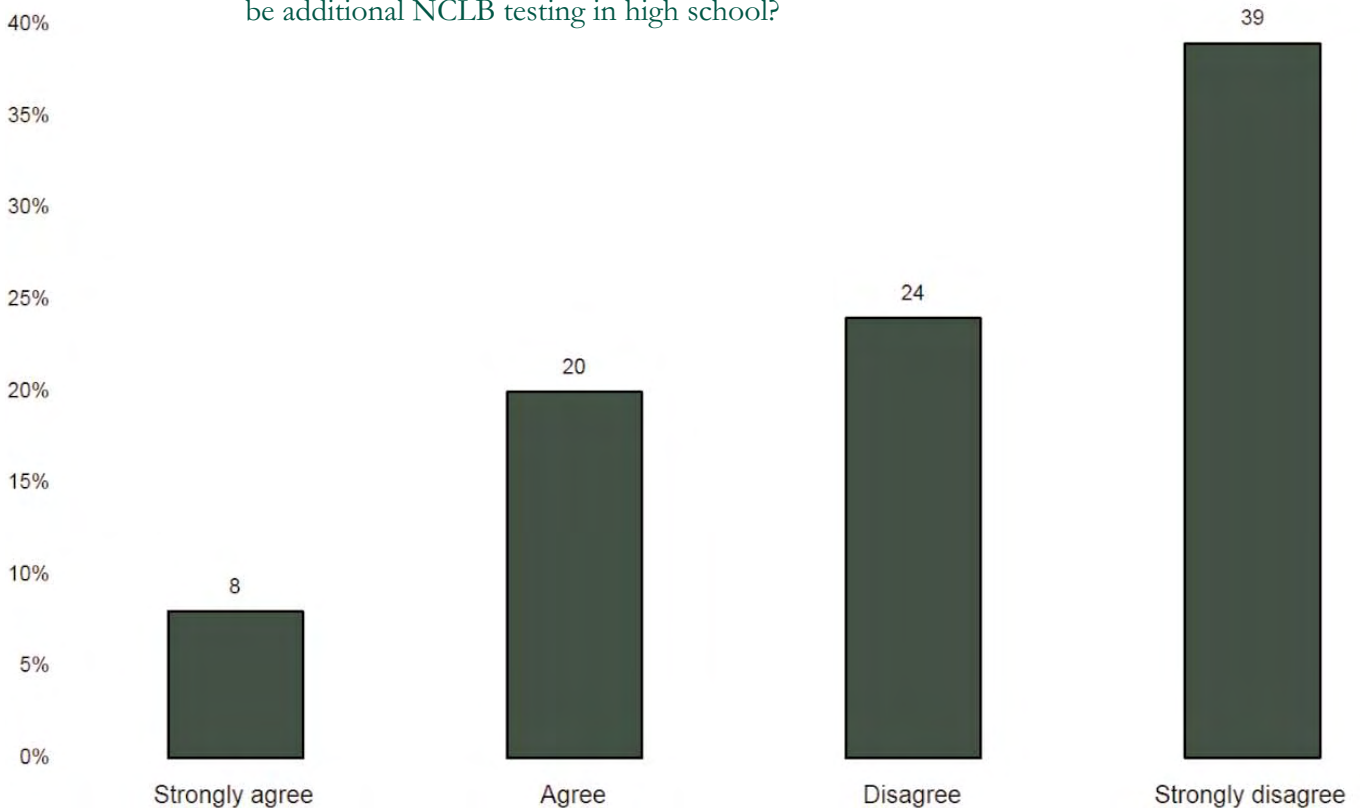
## APPENDIX 2

NCLB currently requires that all children in grades 3 through 8, plus one grade level in high school, be tested in reading and math. Does NCLB require too much testing, too little, just right?



## APPENDIX 3

Currently, NCLB requires testing at only one grade level in high school. There are proposals to have NCLB testing in high school in reading, science and math, and at every grade level. Do you agree that there should be additional NCLB testing in high school?



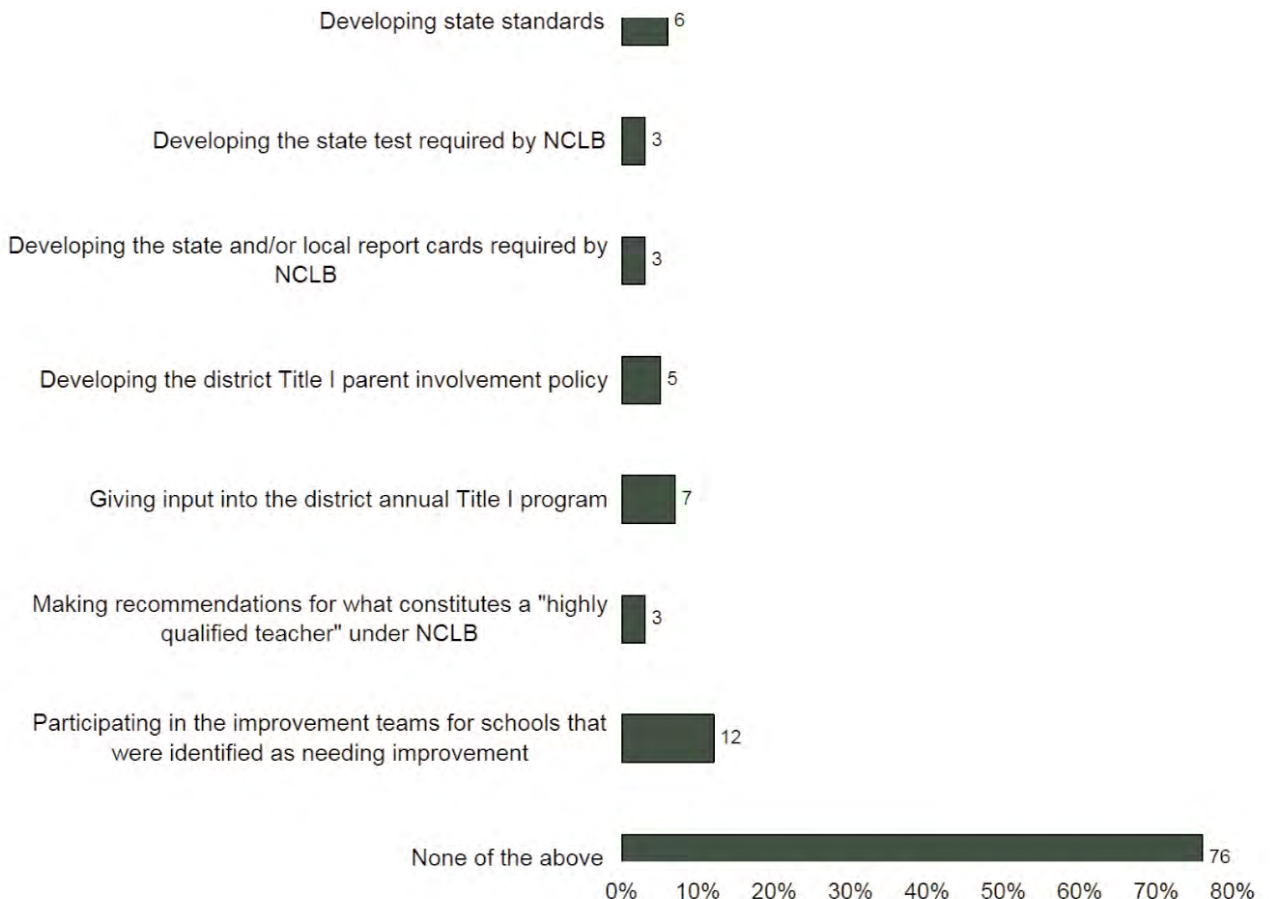
## APPENDIX 4

Currently, states have different definitions of what it means to be a “highly qualified teacher.” In judging whether a teacher is highly qualified, which of the following qualities do you believe to be most important? (For each, indicate a number between 1 and 5, with 1 for least important and 5 for most important.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Knows the subject matter	3%	1%	5%	20%	73%
Knows how to communicate and relate to students	2%	0%	1%	10%	87%
Establishes a relationship between the family and the school, and keeps channels of communication open	1%	2%	11%	29%	56%
Sensitive to and respects students' diverse cultural backgrounds	2%	3%	12%	26%	57%
Has passed license requirements mandated by the state	4%	6%	20%	25%	45%
Knows how to keep discipline and order in the classroom	1%	2%	8%	30%	59%
Knows how to meet the individualized learning needs of students	2%	1%	5%	21%	71%

## APPENDIX 5

Have you been asked to become involved in any of the following activities related to NCLB? (Please check all that apply)



# PEN: Resources on No Child Left Behind

Public Education Network (PEN) has developed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) resources and publications that are available on its website to inform parents, students and community members about the law so they can be equipped to make decisions and take action.

## Using NCLB to Improve Student Achievement:

### An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders

This guide outlines the rights, roles and responsibilities of community and parent activists and leaders, and highlights ways that NCLB can serve as a “launch pad” for strengthening the public voice in education

[http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb\\_main/Action\\_Guide.asp](http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb_main/Action_Guide.asp)

## Action Briefs

NCLB action briefs are a project of Public Education Network and the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE). They are designed to keep community and parent leaders current on more than 20 major provisions of NCLB’s Title I, II and III. The action briefs are written in easy to understand language and include recommended parent and community actions. All are formatted for easy retrieval.

[http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb\\_main/Action\\_Briefs.asp](http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb_main/Action_Briefs.asp)

## Open to the Public: Speaking Out on No Child Left Behind

### A Summary of Nine Hearings

A first of three PEN reports compiling the findings of nine public hearings conducted by PEN from May through October 2004

[http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb\\_main/Public\\_Hearings.asp](http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb_main/Public_Hearings.asp)

## Open to the Public: The Public Speaks Out on No Child Left Behind: A Summary of Nine Hearings

The second of three PEN reports compiling the findings of nine public hearings conducted by PEN from September 2005 through January 2006

[http://www.publiceducation.org/2006\\_NCLB/main/index.asp](http://www.publiceducation.org/2006_NCLB/main/index.asp)

## The Realities Left Behind:

### How Parents, Students and Communities Assess the Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act

The third and final PEN report compiling the findings of two town meeting, one public hearing and four focus groups between October 2006 and March 2007, in addition to synthesizing the findings of the previous two reports

[www.publiceducation.org](http://www.publiceducation.org)

## A Report on the Findings from Two Focus Groups in New York City

These focus groups were conducted on May 24, 2007. The report provides detailed findings gathered from the two New York focus groups: one of parents and the other of community members.

The findings are related to their opinions on NCLB.

## Preparing for NCLB Re-authorization

Designed to prepare the average citizen to become involved in NCLB’s re-authorization, this section of the website includes a definition of re-authorization, a question-and-answer section, pertinent news articles and a grid to keep track of NCLB legislation.

[http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb\\_main/Reauth.asp](http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb_main/Reauth.asp)

# State Hearing Sites and Primary Local Partners

PEN is indebted to the many individuals and organizations that supported the efforts of the primary local partners. Their commitment to public engagement is both admirable and critical. *\*Member of Public Education Network*

## CALIFORNIA

### **Los Angeles, California**

July 21, 2004

Primary Local Partner: Urban Education Partnership\*

### **Sacramento, California**

June 8, 2004

Primary Local Partner: Linking Education and Economic Development (LEED)\*

### **San Francisco, California**

January 18, 2006

Primary Local Partner: San Francisco Education Fund\*

## FLORIDA

### **Orlando, Florida**

December 14, 2005

Primary Local Partner: Foundation for Orange County Public Schools\*

## ILLINOIS

### **Chicago, Illinois**

October 13, 2004

November 17, 2005

Primary Local Partner: Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform

## MASSACHUSETTS

### **Boston, Massachusetts**

June 2, 2004

Primary Partner: Rennie Center at Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth

January 11, 2006

Primary Local Partner: YWCA Boston

May 14, 2007

Focus Groups: Students and Community

Primary Local Partner: Boston Plan for Excellence\*

## MICHIGAN

### **Detroit, Michigan**

January 27, 2006

October 19, 2006

Primary Local Partner: Youth Sports and Recreation Commission\*

## NEW YORK

### **New York, New York**

October 7, 2004

Primary Local Partner: Campaign for Fiscal Equity

September 29, 2005

Primary Local Partner: Campaign for Fiscal Equity

May 24, 2007

Focus Groups: Parents and Community

Primary Local Partner: Children's Aid Society

## OHIO

### **Bedford Heights, Ohio and Cleveland, Ohio Metropolitan Area**

September 14, 2004

Primary Local Partner: Ohio PTA

### **Columbus, Ohio**

December 5, 2005

Primary Local Partner: KnowledgeWorks Foundation\*

## PENNSYLVANIA

### **Harrisburg, Pennsylvania**

November 21, 2006

Primary Local Partners: Mon Valley Education Consortium\* and WQED Multimedia

### **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

December 8, 2005

Primary Local Partners: Mon Valley Education Consortium\* and WQED Multimedia

## TENNESSEE

### **Memphis, Tennessee**

September 30, 2004

Primary Local Partner: Partners in Public Education\*

## TEXAS

### **Austin, Texas**

January 12, 2006

Primary Local Partner: Austin Voices for Children and Youth\*

### **Houston, Texas**

March 27, 2007

Primary Local Partner: Houston A+ Challenge\*

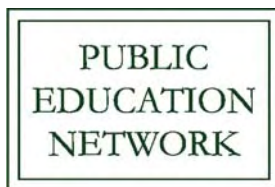
### **San Antonio, Texas**

September 28, 2004

Primary Local Partner: Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)



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**601 Thirteenth Street, Suite 710 South**  
**Washington, DC 20005**  
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