

Forum on Educational Accountability

<http://www.edaccountability.org>

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for release Wednesday, October 3, 2007

“MINOR TINKERING” WON’T FIX ‘NO CHILD’ FLAWS; ED. ACCOUNTABILITY FORUM URGES CONGRESS TO ADDRESS “LOOMING CRISIS”-- MOST SCHOOLS WILL FAIL ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS UNDER CURRENT LAW

Contending that “Minor tinkering won’t fix the law’s reliance on high-stakes testing, unrealistic achievement targets, and punitive mandates,” the Forum on Educational Accountability (FEA) today called on Congress to overhaul No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in order to “transform the law to use accountability to build public school capacity and support educators.”

In a letter delivered to all members of the House and Senate, FEA reiterated that it had “proposed a comprehensive, balanced accountability system for Congress’ consideration.” But the FEA letter noted, “The modest changes in the House Education Committee’s discussion draft and those apparently under consideration in the Senate HELP Committee will not solve the problems.” FEA is a working group seeking to implement the goals of the Joint Organizational Statement on NCLB signed by 140 national civil rights, education, religious, disability, parent, civic and labor organizations.

The FEA letter to Congress included references to studies from nearly a dozen states, all of which found that most schools will fall short of NCLB’s Adequate Yearly Progress requirements in the near future. “This brand of accountability sets up a majority of American schools for failure,” FEA concluded. “Members of Congress must step forward to address this looming crisis.”

Among FEA’s recommendations for NCLB overhaul:

- Replace arbitrary AYP requirements with ambitious achievement targets based on rates of success actually achieved by the most effective schools.
- Shift from an overwhelming reliance on test scores in reading and math to using multiple indicators of student achievement.
- Help states develop assessment systems which include district and school-based measures.
- Fully fund federal mandates, including adequate money for high quality professional development for teachers.
- Decrease the amount of required testing.

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* The letter to Congress, the Joint Statement on NCLB, a complete list of signers, and other Forum on Educational Accountability documents are available online at www.edaccountabilty.org