

# **Forum on Educational Accountability**

<http://www.edaccountability.org>

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## **NEW POLL SHOWS GROWING DISCONTENT WITH “NO CHILD” LAW; PUBLIC ENDORSES REFORMS PROPOSED IN JOINT STATEMENT SIGNED BY 139 NAT’L EDUCATION, CIVIL RIGHTS, DISABILITY, LABOR & RELIGIOUS GROUPS; “THE MORE PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT NCLB, THE MORE THEY WANT TO CHANGE IT”**

A major, annual poll released today demonstrates that the public increasingly supports a fundamental overhaul of the controversial “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) law, according to the Forum on Educational Accountability (FEA), a working group seeking to implement reforms sought by 139 national education, civil rights, disability, labor, religious and civic organizations.

“The Phi Delta Kappa (PDK)/Gallup poll shows that the more people know about NCLB, the more they want to change it,” said FEA convener Dr. Monty Neill, who is also the co-Executive Director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest). “Less than a third of the nation now believes NCLB is helping improve the performance of public schools.” (The new PDK/Gallup poll on NCLB is now online at [http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k\\_v89/k0709pol.htm](http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v89/k0709pol.htm).)

Neill continued, “The public both shares the criticisms made in the ‘Joint Organizational Statement on NCLB’ and endorses its overhaul proposals.” Specifically, Neill noted:

\* The Joint Statement calls for federal law to “shift from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement.” In the poll, overwhelming majorities of more than 80% supported proposals to “provide more instructional time and other help for low-performing students.” A similar percentage backs additional professional development time for public school teachers.

\* The Joint Statement calls for changes in NCLB to “allow states to measure progress by using students’ growth in achievement.” The PDK/Gallup poll reports that 82% of respondents favor rating schools based on “improvement shown by the students,” not just “percentage passing the test.”

\* The Joint Statement cites concerns with NCLB that include “over-emphasizing standardized testing” and “narrowing curriculum and instruction to focus on test preparation.” In the PDK/Gallup poll more than half of public school parents say there is “too much emphasis” on standardized exams. Three-quarters agree that schools now “teach to the tests.” Nine out of ten express concern about a “reduced emphasis on the teaching of science, health, social studies and the arts.”

“Senators and Representatives should heed the strong message from their constituents expressed in the PDK/Gallup poll,” Neill concluded. “When they return to Capitol Hill after Labor Day, Congress must work for a comprehensive overhaul of NCLB so that federal law helps, not hurts, the nation’s schools and our children.”

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\* the Joint Statement, a list of signers and other Forum on Educational Accountability documents are available online at [www.edaccountabilty.org](http://www.edaccountabilty.org)