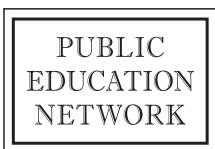


Open to the Public

Speaking Out on "No Child Left Behind"

A Report from 2004 Public Hearings

NEW YORK



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

Sponsored by Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc.,
New Visions for Public Schools, Good Schools for All
and Public Education Network



Public Education Network

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 and the District of Columbia. In 2004, PEN welcomed its first international member, which serves almost 300,000 children in 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.



Hearing Held in New York, New York

October 7, 2004

4:30–8:00 PM

St. John's University, Manhattan Campus, NY

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Witnesses:

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Robin Brown, President, United Parents

Association of New York City, NY

Kim M. Lennert Walek, parent resource manager,
Parent Network of Western NY, Buffalo, NY

Cynthia Mims, parent liaison, School No. 33,
Rochester, NY



Students:

Paula Kinev, 12th grade student,
LaGuardia High School, New York, NY

Orla Thompson, 11th grade student, Boys and
Girls High School, Brooklyn, NY

Lauren Adams, 10th grade student, Hempstead
High School, Long Island, NY

Business and Civic Leaders:

Margarita Mayo, New York State Business Council,
New York, NY

Ernest Prince, president, Urban League of
Westchester County, White Plains, NY

Nona Ullman, managing director, BearingPoint, Inc.

Community Advocates:

Margie McHugh, executive director, New York
Immigration Coalition

Elaine Blyden, president, Bob Lanier Center in
Buffalo, NY

Lisa North, teacher, PS 3 Brooklyn & Met Life
Fellow, Teachers Network Leadership Institute

Rachel Kravitz, program associate, Advocates for
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Aneesha Jacko, Teachers Network

Rocco Staino, New York Library Association

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No Child Left Behind In New York

Buffeted by chronic challenges to educate poor and minority children at great scale, the concerned public in New York has a sophisticated approach to *No Child Left Behind*. On the basis of testimony presented at a public hearing in New York City in October 2004, the massive federal law addresses many of the issues facing schools and parents in the state, but its flaws make reform even more difficult. Moreover, its promises depend on the skill and willingness of officials to be serious about them, which many who testified do not believe are evident yet.

The hearing, sponsored by Public Education Network, Campaign for Fiscal Equity, New Visions for Public Schools, and Good Schools for All was one of a series of nine hearings held across the country on the impact of NCLB in its first two years. The hearings were an opportunity for people ordinarily not heard by policymakers to have their say—the students, parents, and community and business leaders ultimately most affected by the law’s goals and mandates. While the testimony presented many viewpoints and issues, certain themes emerged, including:



- NCLB's punitive strategies result in fewer resources being available to struggling schools, imposing even more inequity on already underfunded schools and districts.
- The provisions for parent involvement and choice could be positive tools, but for the most part they have been inadequately implemented or not available at all.
- NCLB's test-based accountability relies on inadequate assessment systems that are narrowing the curriculum, demoralizing teachers and students because they do not take progress into account, and encouraging school leaders to shed their test-taking enrollments of low-performing students. The assessments also hold children with disabilities and English-language learners to fallacious test score standards that are more discouraging than challenging.
- The law's highly qualified teacher requirements, without additional resources for teacher preparation and support, do not address the real issues on staffing. Data are not complete or being disseminated to parents. There are shortages of experienced teachers in the neediest schools and a desire for greater attention to teacher qualities beyond paper certification.

"Every day we are facing sharing textbooks with other students that are outdated, buildings that are falling apart, classrooms that have 30 to 40 kids to a class, teachers' assistants that are teaching the class for a full year without qualifications, and the list goes on. With so many problems, it seems there are so few solutions."

—Lauren Adams,
10th grade student,
Hempstead High School



The “Why” of the PEN Hearings

Shortly after *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was passed in 2001, the Public Education Network (PEN) began an intensive examination of the law to determine the rights and privileges it affords to parents and community members. Approximately 10,000 print copies of the resulting publication, *Using NCLB to Improve Student Achievement: An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders*, have been requested by organizations throughout the country, with a further 40,000 copies downloaded from the PEN website. In addition, a series of NCLB action briefs, developed by PEN in partnership with the National Coalition for Parent Involvement In Education, have been downloaded more than 25,000 times.

With this demand for information on NCLB as background, PEN held a series of state hearings to give the public a structured way to enter the debate on the pros and cons of NCLB and the effects, both positive and negative, the law is having on schools and students. Nine hearings took place in eight states over a five-month period. Each state hearing was conducted in partnership with local organizations and presided over by a panel of state and national hearing officers.

PEN hopes these forums broadened the public debate about NCLB and provided policymakers with information on how their work encourages or discourages quality public education for children. The findings from PEN’s NCLB hearings will be widely reported to the public at large, so they will know that what we heard from them was accurately reflected. The report will also be transmitted to decisionmakers at the national, state, and local levels to help them determine which aspects of NCLB the public supports, what are the primary concerns, and what mid-course corrections are needed to achieve the most beneficial results for all students.



The New York Context

Supporters of public education and of ensuring a quality education for all children throughout New York State could well have written the rationale for NCLB. For years, the activism of parents and advocacy groups has addressed the challenges of educating large numbers of poor and/or children of color. The state, for example, has a limited open enrollment policy, and New York City pioneered smaller secondary schools. Various groups are experienced at using data and oversight to produce consistent, sophisticated studies of the quality of education, support services, and teaching, among many issues. Advocates for children have pursued legal actions to make sure state funding of public education is boosted to adequate levels, an issue still pending before state policymakers after court decisions have consistently ruled the current state funding system violates the state constitution's guarantee that all students have the opportunity to obtain a "meaningful high school education." Still, it is a constant struggle to fight for quality education in a state with one of the worst records of funding schools educating poor or minority students.

Meanwhile, state officials have built a framework of higher standards. According to *Education Week's* "Quality Counts" report, New York was one of eight states earning an "A" for progress on setting standards and accountability. It was the only state to have clear, specific standards in English, math, science, and social studies/history at elementary, middle and high school levels. The report said the state's assessment system was aligned with the standards in each subject and for every grade level tested.



The state has just now begun requiring prospective teachers to pass subject-matter tests in order to receive initial certification, a requirement that previously only applied to teachers wanting a permanent license. It also has stopped issuing temporary teaching certificates.

According to "Quality Counts," however, New York scores worse than other states in regard to student engagement, school safety and parent involvement. While the state scores the highest in overall fiscal adequacy, it ranks 37th on the wealth-neutrality score. This means that many wealthy suburban districts are extremely high spending while neighboring urban districts (with higher costs and student needs) and most rural districts spend little more than half as much.

While New York is on target regarding compliance with NCLB's administrative requirements, there are disturbing inconsistencies between paper compliance and realities as described in the testimony at the PEN hearing. Witnesses covered many subjects and concerns, but their testimony generally complemented the three components of NCLB that PEN believes are the most crucial to its success: accountability, teaching quality, and parent and community involvement.



What We Learned About Accountability

New York's experience with standards, culminating in the Regents exams for all students, ought to make the public comfortable with the accountability requirements under NCLB. In fact, Margarita Mayo, director of education and training policy development for the Business Council of New York State, testified about her members' support of annual tests in reading and math in the early grades and pointed out the positive news from cumulative test data:

"Since New York State started testing reading and math in the 4th grade—even before NCLB came about, the curriculum began to be strengthened, especially for those children from whom little was expected before. We actually began the talk about raising expectations and standards well before we had the measures in place. But until the tests were put in place, we only had empty words about high standards for all."



High school students attributed the increase in the availability of Advanced Placement courses to the higher standards encouraged under NCLB, although they also were critical of the lack of resources to support increased achievement. Said Orla Thompson of Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn: "Our computers are either broken or not properly equipped. Would you expect students from schools using 1997 applications to be more adept with computers compared to the students whose computers have been updated?" She also testified, however, that because of NCLB, honors teachers were being assigned to regular classes to help them improve their English language arts test scores. Paula Kinev, a 12th grader at the LaGuardia High School for Music and Art and the Performing Arts, objected to teachers' focus on preparation for the state's Regents exams at the expense of classroom discussion and elaboration. "If we asked questions that were significant but more off topic, they would say they don't have time and must stick to the curriculum because of the Regents," she said. Kinev also described the lack of resources:

"The No Child Left Behind Act has positively affected schools.... Future generations of LaGuardians will grow to be accustomed to taking higher level courses and better achievements on statewide tests because that will become the norm in my school. But NCLB does put a lot of stress on schools to perform better without telling them how or giving them the necessary

resources to do so.... For example, it is already a month into the school year and I still do not have a textbook for my AP calculus class, along with many other students. Our teacher is doing her best and gradually getting used copies from college students on the Internet. There aren't even enough desks in many of the classes for students to sit down. It is overwhelming for students and teachers. We need more classes and textbooks badly, especially for the high achievement classes that NCLB ideally wants students to aim for."

Test-based accountability, however, has its doubters, especially as it is being applied under NCLB. Another business leader, Nona Ullman, a managing director with the \$3 billion BearingPoint corporation, strongly supported accountability for results and for a return on investments made in public education. She testified in favor of teaching to the tests "as long as the tests will evaluate and measure what children should know and be able to do." Ullman agreed with Margarita Mayo on the need for all students to be proficient in basic skills, but she described workforce readiness in a more nuanced way:



(NCLB) is a law of diminishing returns. The most alarming aspect of it is almost what I think is a de-emphasizing of the music, the PE, the arts programs.... (These) stimulate the academics. You have to have a well-rounded child to prepare them for the business world. The folks that I see moving ahead the fastest in the corporation are those with people skills. You have to have the basic technical skills down, but once you have them, it's how well you get along with other people, how well you empathize with them, your public speaking skills, writing and communication skills. You bring understanding from other disciplines....If you focus on the basics all the time, you're going to lose that."

NCLB's use of test-based accountability to rate and punish schools also had its critics. Everyone who testified supported strong accountability for results, but they wanted policies to be realistic. The experiences so far do more to point out what ought to be in an assessment system than satisfaction with what is, with much of the criticism generated by over-reaction by teachers and schools to accountability and testing, not to the accountability itself. One teacher/parent testified about a colleague who was reassigned to a class of 32 eighth graders and told to only use test prep materials until the day of the test. The principal feared the school's status as most improved would not be repeated, so the teacher "engaged in meaningless repetition of facts for six hours a day in the same room for six weeks. Not surprisingly, the school did not dramatically improve."

If schools could afford smaller classes (the ratio of students to teachers in New York is among the highest in the country, especially in the cities), more of them could use portfolios to determine promotion and retention, rather than rely on traditional tests, said a parent activist from the United Parents Association of New York City. Because of NCLB, she said, parents "are led to believe that tests alone should determine the quality of their schools." This policy was particularly onerous to parents in her middle school, a high-achieving school declared in need of improvement, because one sub-group of students failed to make adequate progress. "NCLB gives too much weight to testing and does not take into consideration that not all children learn at the same pace or that some children may need a different technique to get from point A to Point B," she said. Still, parents at the middle school have rejected the choice option and



“continue to make our schools the best possible.” Anne Byrne, president of the New York State School Boards Association, submitted testimony addressing this same issue. Her association believes schools and districts should be accountable, but wants the law amended so that inappropriate measures will not be used to misidentify them. The school boards' statement says in part:

“We firmly believe that the measurements used to determine academic success or failure should accurately measure student progress and not penalize schools for negative outcomes resulting from events or individual circumstances beyond the control of teachers and administrators. Without appropriate changes, flawed measurement systems within NCLB continue to erroneously identify some successful schools and local education agencies as needing improvement.... This erodes the entire federal effort to improve student achievement.”

Byrne also pointed out that the 95 percent participation rate in testing required by NCLB, intended to prevent a school from “gaming the system” by artificially inflating aggregate test scores, doesn't prevent the gaming. The arbitrary cut point exceeds the 92 percent average daily attendance rate of many New York schools, and “we have seen no evidence that relevant attendance data was used to establish a valid attendance threshold.” The law should be changed to use a more realistic target, such as each district's average attendance rate or national/state attendance rate averages, she said.

“The implementation of high-stakes testing with promotional standards has had an especially horrible impact on immigrant students. It just stands to reason that they are coming into the system already not able to be on a grade level with their English and language arts skills, and then without the specific investments that are needed to provide them the education they need to get up to grade level, they fall further and further behind. The greatest impact of NCLB is the sky-rocketing dropout rate for Latino and other ELL youth. Over 50 percent of ELL students drop out over seven years. The figure is bad enough for four years—that stands at the mid-30s—but if you look at seven years, which is often where we saw an improvement for these students because they had great staying power, they are now being counseled as early as 10th grade that they are never going to make it and that they should just go and get a GED....It is a joke that any (GED) programs (in their languages) are actually available to them, even if it were an appropriate option for them.”



One parent who has formed an organization focused on improving math education wanted the assessments used in New York completely overhauled. “We can’t begin to glean what we need to about student achievement (from the assessments),” said Elizabeth Carson. States throughout the country are using very deficient assessments, she said, “and to ask states to show that they are being accountable by these measures is profoundly narrow minded and almost meaningless at this point.”

In addition to testimony from several witnesses pleading for the use of alternative assessments and accommodations for children with disabilities, an advocate for immigrant students, Margie McHugh, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, described vividly what testing policies are doing to New York City’s considerable immigrant student population.

The lack of adequately prepared teachers for immigrant students, large classes, and inappropriate curriculum put unfair consequences on students, McHugh said, “while the system gets off scot free.”

Others testified that the punitive effects of NCLB were applied before a school had time to implement strategies to bring a sub-group’s scores up or failed to account for a sudden influx of unprepared students such as English-language learners or additional special education students. Consistently, however, no matter what the issue, witnesses ultimately said inadequate funding was the critical issue. “Just make sure you provide the resources so that children are able to meet and exceed the standards,” said a parent leader. “It’s not the standard that’s the problem, it’s the resources not being there at the school level to ensure that children are able to do what they need to do.”



What We Learned About Teaching Quality

NCLB requires all classrooms to be staffed by highly qualified teachers by the end of the 2005-06 school year. All new teachers in Title I schools had to meet the definition in 2003. The law defines a highly qualified teacher as one who holds a bachelor's degree in the subject to which he or she is assigned, has been properly certified by the state, and fulfills the state's requirements for ascertaining the teacher has the skills and knowledge for the subject(s) he/she is teaching.

According to the 2004 report of Quality Counts, it was not until 2004 that New York began to require prospective teachers to pass subject-matter tests to receive their initial certificates. In the past, only teachers seeking permanent licenses needed to do so. However, New York is one of only two states (New Jersey is the other) to require all middle as well as high school teachers to have majors in the subjects they plan to teach, a requirement all states must meet within the year. The state also requires teacher candidates to complete at least 100 hours of field experience before taking on at least 40 days of student teaching. The state no longer issues temporary teaching certificates, although through next year it will allow a limited number of "modified" licenses in areas of teacher shortages, though not in Title I schools. Teacher training institutions must have an 80 percent passing rate by their students on teacher licensing exams if they want to avoid corrective action.



On paper, the state seems to be complying with NCLB requirements, but this does not prevent teachers in urban areas such as New York City from having lower passing scores than teachers in wealthier districts, according to newspaper accounts. Nor does NCLB address the support that witnesses at the hearing said that teachers need to be successful in highly diverse classrooms (professional development funding under NCLB has been meager). The basic problem for the public in New York is that people do not have the data to understand the effect of NCLB provisions on teacher quality.

New York officials and Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) have had difficulty collecting data on highly qualified teachers in classrooms, according to Wendy Lecker, an attorney with CFE. The state began collecting data in 2003 and 2004, but this has not reached the parent level yet. In addition, she said, "New York City has had a high percentage of uncertified teachers," especially in schools educating many low-income students, while the available data for the state as a whole look positive.

Rather than the paper certification requirements of NCLB, however, those who testified at the New York hearing seemed most worried that significant numbers of teachers were unprepared, did not get textbooks and supplies, and did not have support for teaching English language learners.

One of the failures of NCLB, asserted Margie McHugh of the New York Immigration Council is that "it put the cart before the horse," demanding that students meet standards without making necessary investments in the teaching force:

"We have (immigrant) students right now who maybe if they are lucky are getting two or three classes of ESL instruction, but in the other five or so classes they have during the day, they have no idea what's going on. We have had teachers in focus groups we have conducted cry to us that they got into the teaching force in order to make a difference in these kids' lives. Now they feel like they are giving cover to the system by pretending that they are teaching them when they can't. They have no way to get through to them because they have not had any training to teach the ESL methodology to them."



The witnesses from the business community favored research-based preparation of teachers, and one suggested differentiated pay scales “and different ways of organizing teaching so that beginning teachers have mentors.”

One parent advocate also wanted better supports for teachers, particularly new teachers who often receive the most difficult assignments in the lowest-performing schools. “I don’t believe that anyone comes to work to do a bad job,” she said.

“The most important thing for a child is to have a well-trained, qualified teacher, a teacher who’s rich in content, a teacher who knows how to use different techniques in order to move children forward. I don’t believe that NCLB actually puts in the funding to do this.”

High school student Orla Thompson from Brooklyn said high-quality teachers “should be able to grasp the attention of the class, teaching the students things they need to know while preparing them for statewide tests,” endorsing testing as a useful measure for what students have learned. Another student, however, was more skeptical of teachers who focused too much on testing. To Paula Kinev, a qualified teacher should be defined by how much “students actually remember the next year” from the teacher’s instruction. In her own experience, she really learned Latin but doesn’t remember anything from pre-calculus:

“You come away with a much better experience with a teacher who doesn’t necessarily teach to a test or who is too locked into a certain mode from teaching too many years.... I’m sure one of the reasons why I learned so much more Latin is because there is no Latin Regents Exam, so we learned more, and it was a lot more effective.”

While Elaine Blyden, CEO of the Bob Lanier Center in Buffalo, believes NCLB “is the best thing that has happened to our children in a long time,” she worries that teachers’ attitudes and lack of quality professional development will undermine its goals. In a district where 50 percent of the 4th and 8th grade students are not reading at grade level, many teachers are not teaching at the level to meet the standards. “I think Buffalo is typical of any other area,” she said. “We have excellent teachers, then we have teachers.” Teachers’ unions need to change their policies regarding time and compensation for professional development, she said, and allow teachers “to participate in it when and where it’s offered,” even if it means time after school or on Saturdays, just like other professionals. A parent activist from western New York said being qualified means little if teachers are moved around and asked to take classes where they have had no experience such as different grade levels or special education, which she has seen happening.



What We Learned About Parent and Community Involvement

A major premise of NCLB is that parents receiving essential information about their children's schools will be able to make informed choices for their children, including transferring to a higher performing school and/or selecting providers of supplemental education services, primarily after-school tutoring. If parents are empowered to act in these ways, NCLB assumes, their children will be better off and all schools eventually will improve. The schools that consistently fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets must undergo radical changes, including reconstitution. Hopefully, better schools will garner more community support.

At the base of this premise about parent empowerment is a recurring rhetoric in NCLB about information and parent involvement. The latter is mentioned more than 100 times.

According to the witnesses at the New York hearing, however, the premises and promises of NCLB are falling short. Many welcomed the emphasis on parent involvement and provisions in the law to support it, such as parent centers. Many of the witnesses were active in trying to inform and organize parents around their rights and their choices under NCLB. They have formed small groups, set up parent services in housing projects, and conducted all-out information campaigns to engage parents. It isn't easy, however.



One barrier is the lack of articulate, clear information. Not only are some essential data required by NCLB not available to parents, the reporting of data often is confusing and also often is not enough to make parents feel they know what they need to know about their schools. A representative from the United Parents Association of New York City said her group had informed a hearing before the City Council on school report cards that the information for parents needs to be more succinct and useful, beyond just test scores:

“There needs to be something that talks about the overall culture and climate at that school, the number of students in a classroom, the qualification of the teachers, and if there is a sub-population that has been cited under NCLB, exactly what's being done to move those children forward...how much money is actually being allocated to that school and where it comes from. Then, the report cards need to be done in user friendly language that the common Joe can understand.”

A parent resource manager of the Parent Network of Western New York in Buffalo, Kim Walek said parents need more comparison information. They should know how their school compares to other schools, the district's results, and the outlying districts' results, with reasons why there are discrepancies between the two. Immigrant parents, however, do not even have access to basic

information, according to Margie McHugh, head of the New York Immigration Council. “Most of the parents we work with don't even ever know that the boiler is broken and you shouldn't send your kids to school tomorrow,” she said. “It's always the immigrant parents who show up with their kids because they can't read all these notices that come from school because they are not translated. The parents can't understand what's on the report card, and they can't go to teacher meetings because the teacher meetings don't have any translation.”

Even mandated parent involvement does not guarantee cooperation from schools, some testified. Part of the problem is the definition of parent involvement. A New York City parent activist said, “Some schools identify parent involvement as the substitute lunch lady that can help out because that's what they need because the funding has been cut. That's not the parent involvement piece, and everyone needs to be aware of that.” In Buffalo, said Elaine Blyden, parents must use strength in numbers to have an effect on school policies. If only two to three parents come to school, the school officials agree to talk to them. If a few more arrive, they will call a meeting. Said Blyden:

“You have to constantly fight to get those numbers to see any effective change. If I'm a single voice, what is going to happen? If I'm too much a single voice, are there going to be repercussions back to my child.... Do I want to rock the boat?”



It is the opportunity for transfers and to select supplemental educational services (SES) where the watchfulness of parent and other groups in New York comes up against the inadequate implementation of NCLB policies. Those who testified were knowledgeable about the provisions and had done research on their effects.

Rachel Kravitz, a program assistant at Advocates for Children of New York, said her group's studies of school choice and SES have found their implementation "to be problematic." School choice, the first option available to parents in schools failing to meet AYP for two consecutive years, was used by only 1,500 students in the first year, even though 220,000 were eligible to transfer. As for SES, in the first year this option was available, about 243,000 students could have applied for the services; only 12.5 percent of that number did, "begging the question as to how many parents were sufficiently informed about their options under NCLB," said Kravitz. In addition, the quality of SES services is under question. She said their study of the first year found that half of the private providers "were unaware of the needs of their students and less than half actually had services to accommodate special populations." McHugh participated in a survey, focusing on services for immigrant kids, and found that all of the SES providers had indi-

"If you want to do real community engagement, it means bringing in all the stakeholders, bringing in the parents, bringing in the students and teachers and the administrators, and figuring out the type of student that you would like to see produced from your school."

—New York City parent activist

cated that they could help ELL students. She found this not to be the case: "When we called them, they said we can't do anything for those students, we don't have a program for them, yet every one of them was approved and were saying they could accept the students."

Other investigations found that students could get transportation to SES providers, but not back from the sites. Lisa North, New York City parent/teacher, criticized funding being taken from low-performing schools to pay for SES providers. Although her school is not in need of improvement, many parents of low-performing students have requested SES services, but the students are not entitled to the tutoring services. "The real issues," she said, "is providing services for students that are in the greatest need."

Finally, the problem of targeting support to the neediest was mentioned as part of a larger concern by witnesses about stigma toward certain groups of students and schools. "What we don't want to do is use the term 'failing school,'" said Margarita Mayo of the New York State Business Council. "The important thing is to get the community to rally around what is going on in that school, what the reasons are that it was labeled failing." It is important for a business considering locating in a community "to see what is going on with regard to the dynamics of the school in terms of addressing



any kinds of issues that (would make) one school weaker than another in the area.” Her group has a project of recognizing schools throughout the state that have improved the most on student achievement in core subjects. Several witnesses recommended that NCLB use this strategy of recognizing improvement.

This would be a good strategy for sub-groups of students not performing well, according to Kim Walek. First, she recommended that NCLB policies focus on finding highly successful schools and teachers who would serve as models for others, instead of highlighting failing schools. When it comes to students, she said parents of children with disabilities are especially concerned about the stigma being applied to their children. The testing used for NCLB accountability is to assess school performance, not individual students, “but there is an unintended consequence of using the data to finger point and accuse, not deliberately, but blame a sub-population of kids for causing a school to be designated as a school in need of improvement.” Funding should be targeted at the sub-group, she said, and measure improvement.



Public Education Network Online Survey Results

From August 10 through November 17, 2004, Public Education Network, through its GiveKidsGoodSchools.org advocacy website, conducted a survey on various aspects of No Child Left Behind. The online survey garnered 12,000 responses from people around the country who joined in this vibrant and vital national debate on public education.

PEN analyzed the data, which was disaggregated by state, to provide a snapshot of knowledge and attitudes about No Child Left Behind. The results for New York follow.



Demographics (803 respondents)

Age

Under 18	0%
18-24	2%
25-34	15%
35-50	46%
50-65	30%
Over 65	6%

Gender

Female	76%
Male	24%

Race/Ethnicity

African-American	8%
Asian or Pacific Islander	5%
Hispanic/Latino/Mexican	1%
Native American or Alaskan Native	0%
White	77%
Other	9%

Education

Less Than High School	0%
High School Grad or GED	6%
Some College	20%
Four-year College Degree or More	74%



Please identify yourself
(check all that apply)

Educator	45%
Elected Official	12%
Parent/Guardian of Current Public School Student	45%
Parent/Guardian of Former Public School Student	23%
Community Activist	21%
Concerned Community Member	49%
Business Person	12%

Did you vote in the last election?
(check all that apply)

School board election	65%
Mayor	59%
State legislator	75%
Governor	81%
US Congress	76%
US President	86%
None of the above	5%

Please identify the type of school(s) your child(ren) attend. (check all that apply)

Public school	67%
Private school (non-religious)	3%
Parochial or religious school	6%
Home school	1%
Too young to attend school	6%
I do not have children	18%



How They Responded to the Survey Questions

Have you heard of the NCLB Act?

Yes	98%
No	2%

What do you know about NCLB?

Have heard of the law, but know little about its provisions	15%
Know about some provisions of the laws	54%
Have an in-depth knowledge of the law	31%

Where have you received most of your information about NCLB? (check all that apply)

Parents	18%
Teachers	30%
Administrators	45%
Other school personnel	20%
Community organizations	17%
Local newspapers	41%
Local television	19%
Radio	15%
National media	39%

Do you believe NCLB is:

A good law and should be continued without change	9%
A law that needs changing	68%
A law that should be repealed	23%

Does NCLB require too much testing, too little, just right?

Too much	70%
Too little	4%
Just right	8%
Don't know	22%

Do you believe that EVERY child in the country will score at grade level or above by the end of the 2013 school year, as required by NCLB?

Yes	3%
No	88%
Unsure	9%



Should states and school districts be required to report test scores on the basis of disability, income, English language proficiency, race/ethnicity?

Yes	50%
No	31%
Unsure	19%

Do you believe that a single test can tell if the entire student body needs academic improvement?

Yes	3%
No	94%
Unsure	3%

Do you believe that a single test can tell if the individual students are performing satisfactorily?

Yes	7%
No	91%
Unsure	2%

Do you believe that every child should have a qualified teacher?

Yes	97%
No	1%
Unsure	2%

Do you believe that, by 2005, every school will meet the NCLB requirement that all teachers must be qualified in the core subjects that they teach?

Yes	13%
No	75%
Unsure	12%

Have you received information from your school district about the qualifications of teachers in your schools?

Yes	36%
No	64%



How would you rate the teachers in your local schools?

No qualified teachers	0%
Some qualified teachers	18%
Many qualified teachers	49%
All qualified teachers	22%
I have no way of judging	11%

Have schools in your community been labeled as “needing improvement” or “failing” because of NCLB?

Yes	46%
No	35%
Unsure	19%

Are you getting enough information about the performance of the schools in your community?

Yes	50%
No	50%

**Has NCLB made a difference in any of the following areas?
(check all that apply)**

Access to information about schools	25%
Student performance	15%
Parental involvement	11%
Teacher quality	13%
None of the above	60%



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

Developing state standards	5%
Developing the state test required by NCLB	2%
Developing the state and/or local report cards required by NCLB	2%
Developing the district Title I parent involvement policy	7%
Giving input into the district annual Title I program	9%
Making recommendations for what constitutes a “highly qualified teacher” under NCLB	4%
Participating in the improvement team for schools that were identified as needing improvement under NCLB	9%
None of the above	77%

NLCB gives parents and students attending low-performing schools a choice option (transferring to another public school within the school district).

Do you think this option will help students perform better academically?

Yes	31%
No	69%

NLCB gives parents and students attending low-performing schools a supplemental educational services option (providing tutoring beyond the regular school day to help students meet the standards).

Do you think this option will help students perform better academically?

Yes	77%
No	23%



For More Information . . .

Public Education Network

601 13th Street, NW
Suite 710 South
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-628-7460
Fax: 202-628-1893
www.publiceducation.org

PEN's advocacy website,
GiveKidsGoodSchools.org:
www.givekidsgoodschools.org

Education Commission of the States

700 Broadway, #1200
Denver, CO 80203-3460
Phone: 303-299-3600
Fax: 303-296-8332
<http://www.ecs.org>

New York State Department of Education

<http://www.nysed.gov/>

New York State Office of the Governor

<http://www.state.ny.us/governor/>

State of New York

<http://www.state.ny.us/>

New York State Senate

<http://senate.state.ny.us/>

New York State Assembly

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/>

Campaign For Fiscal Equity

317 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10017
<http://www.schoolfunding.info/federal/federal.php3>

National Conference of State Legislatures

<http://www.ncsl.org>

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