



Sample Op-Ed to Your Local Media

It's Time for Our Elected Officials in Washington to do the Right Thing for Our Students

As **(name of position)** of the **(name of school district)**, it is time for our entire community to join with us in requesting Representative **(name)**, Senator **(name)** and Senator **(name)** to ensure that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is reauthorized when Congress returns to Washington after its August recess. Our members of Congress will be back home over the next few weeks. Hopefully they will listen to our views and respond to them when they return to Washington in September.

After five years of implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, our school board believes that the current provisions of the law, if they remain unchanged, would hurt rather than help our school's efforts to raise student achievement. Furthermore, without changes, many of our highest performing schools will continue to be identified as "in need of improvement."

Fortunately, school boards across the nation have agreed on priority changes that we would like to see adopted with the new law. These provisions are contained in H.R. 648, the *No Child Left Behind Improvements Act of 2007*, that has both Democrat and Republican co-sponsors. We believe the provisions in this bill will help our schools, not abandon them – while giving states and local school boards more flexibility in the design and implementation of an accountability system that makes sense – which is what Congress promised in 2001 but never delivered.

By incorporating the provisions of H.R. 648 into the new law, Congress would:

- Ensure significant improvements in the validity and reliability of assessments for all students, particularly those students with disabilities and those not proficient in English;
- Foster increased accuracy and fairness in public reporting of student, school and school district performance;
- Allow schools and school districts to target federal funds to those students who need the most attention;
- Eliminate the overbroad negative labeling of schools and school districts; and
- Establish federal funding levels commensurate with the extensive federal requirements.

With Congress poised to reauthorize NCLB when it returns from its August recess, it needs to fix the law. We hope every citizen in our community will contact these elected officials and ask them to support our local schools. More importantly, we hope we can depend on Representative **(name)**, Senator **(name)** and Senator **(name)** to listen to us while they are back home and to do the right thing for our children and our community when they return to Washington in September.