



AFL-CIO

No Child Left Behind Resolution

Whereas, No Child Left Behind has been ineffective in achieving its intended goals, has had negative unintended consequences, is incompatible with policies that do work, is at the mercy of a political process that can only worsen its prospects, and is based on premises that are fundamentally flawed; and

Whereas, focusing narrowly on basic skill tests devolves the curriculum and the educational experience itself and narrows what should be a broad liberal education and the values and convictions that accompany teaching and learning; and

Whereas, NCLB assumes that the achievement gap is the fault of "failing schools" and that more accountability will somehow solve societal problems, such as poverty, adequate housing, lack of access to quality and affordable health care, and class; and

Whereas, the responsibility for improving student academic success does not begin and end at the schoolhouse door; and

Whereas, the currently proposed reauthorization does not fix AYP and makes it even more complex; and

Whereas, we must address factors that will improve learning and teaching conditions, not so-called "remedies" that push qualified teachers out of the teaching profession; and

Whereas NCLB has never been fully funded; and

Whereas, the proposed growth model in the reauthorization is a trajectory model and does not give credit for the gains that have been made; and

Whereas, the proposed multiple indicators simply lead to additional testing on top of the other testing provisions in the reauthorization; and

Whereas, while the proposed reauthorization is a slight improvement for special education students and English language learners, it does not go far enough to protect and support these special populations; and

Whereas, NCLB continues to use unproven programs such as supplemental educational services (SES) that use unqualified tutors, are not articulated with the school's curriculum, and have never been held accountable for student achievement; and

Whereas, the draft legislation removes the current law's requirement for comparability in curriculum, materials and instructional supplies, and the remedy for comparability in teachers could lead to forced transfers, which would simply drive teachers out of the profession or to other, more-advantaged schools; and

Whereas, the San Mateo County Central Labor Council does not believe that the federal government should mandate the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers; and

Whereas, the decision to use or not use student test scores as part of a teacher evaluation system should be made at the local level by the district officials and teachers who are directly affected by and most knowledgeable about the differential compensation plans that will work in their schools, and that compensation is a mandatory matter of collective bargaining subject to state and local, not federal, law; and

Whereas, the San Mateo County Central Labor Council believes that attention and resources should be focused on improving the whole school by dealing with infrastructure issues, providing for a solid curriculum, addressing safety and discipline issues, developing programs for parental involvement, and supporting staff with strong professional development, which are the incentives that will make schools appealing to students, their parents, and to teachers; and

Whereas, the San Mateo County Central Labor Council policy supports the acquisition of revenues and resources necessary to bring reality to the imperative that “all children can learn,” and the continuation and expansion of current funding for programs such as Title I, bilingual education and other federal initiatives in support of public education; and

Whereas, the San Mateo County Central Labor Council policy also calls for the delivery of a well-rounded education, including a full measure of social studies and the arts, necessary to the development of the whole human being and citizen, rather than narrowing delivery of instruction to meet the needs of standardized tests; and

Whereas, the San Mateo County Central Labor Council policy also supports performance-based assessment of students as opposed to multiple-choice assessments and local programs that prepare students to be active learners; and

Whereas, the San Mateo County Central Labor Council already has policy to work in conjunction with the California Educational Coalition and the California Labor Federation and any and all other allied groups to develop a multi-pronged counteroffensive to attacks on education including the reauthorization of NCLB; and

Whereas, the reauthorization is being rushed through Congress without taking the time to craft a bill that will truly help ensure great public schools for every child; and

Whereas, the nation’s students and schools deserve better than the current form of the reauthorization of NCLB which is unacceptable in its current form;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the San Mateo County Central Labor Council opposes the proposed reauthorization of NCLB until it provides a fair and accurate accountability system, provides educators the support and resources they need to succeed in the classroom, increases the support for research-based interventions to truly struggling schools to help raise achievement, and provides districts and schools the funds they need to ensure that our children and school staff have the very best to do their very best; and

Be It Further Resolved that the San Mateo County Central Labor Council opposes the proposed reauthorization unless it leads to class size reduction, quality early childhood education, adequate resources for quality teachers, a knowledge-rich curriculum, modern/well equipped school facilities and high quality materials; and

Be It Further Resolved that the San Mateo County Central Labor Council opposes the proposed reauthorization of NCLB that entails the challenges to collectively bargained contracts in the areas of determining the dates and timing of leaves, the assignment and transfer of teachers, the levels of pay for additional responsibilities, and the reliance on pay for performance that relies on student test scores; and

Be It Further Resolved that the San Mateo County Central Labor Council reiterates its opposition to access to student information by military recruiters when parents or guardians have not affirmatively consented to such access through an “opt-in” process, as opposed to the current and onerous “opt-out” process; and

Be It Further Resolved that the proposed reauthorization of NCLB shall only be supported if it is good for students, teachers, staff, and communities; and

Be It Finally Resolved that the San Mateo County Central Labor Council shall join with other education groups, including AFT, NEA, CFT and CTA, in publicly stating this opposition.

Adopted by the San Mateo County Central Labor Council on October 8, 2007.