

National PTA's stance on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act

As Congress moves towards reauthorization of the primary federal law regarding elementary and secondary education, National PTA (NPTA) has crafted specific recommendations to improve the parent involvement provisions within the law. While ensuring local flexibility, NPTA recommends creating a system of accountability designed to encourage parents to be active partners in their child's education. Though Congress cannot mandate parental engagement, NPTA believes that the government can and must provide parents multiple opportunities to be active participants in their child's education. The following is excerpted from the NPTA website. *For a full description of NPTA's recommendations, go to: www.pta.org*

NPTA's recommendations for the ESEA-NCLB reauthorization are built on four core principles:

More accountability to parents

- Provide details on resources, programs, materials, and activities within every district that help parents support the academic achievement of their children both in and outside of the classroom
- Establish that school-family compacts are to be based on current student achievement data and academic goals which will help strengthen the subjects which data suggests needs to be improved.
- Detail ways of increasing community involvement with the schools and students. This involvement should include both in- and out-of-school activities. These community connections can range from students providing public service in the community to local businesses working with teachers to incorporate career exploration opportunities into classroom curriculum.

Better data through a more understandable delivery system

Federal law currently requires schools to provide information to parents regarding how well the school is performing. Schools must be required to provide the information from the accountability systems in language that is both clear and understandable to parents.

Better resources to help teachers and parents

Parental Information and Resource Centers and other existing state and local resources with expertise in parent engagement and community outreach should be better utilized as part of the solution. Further, teachers need better preparation on how to engage and develop positive partnerships with parents to support active parent participation in their child's education.

Community support

Schools need to be an active, essential part of a community again. Residents, businesses, and organizations in the community must collaborate with schools in making the schools more successful, and must understand that they have a stake in children's education.

How can you as a Parent support the National PTA's position?

- Send a copy of NPTA's recommendations to your local school board members, county officials, state legislators, and education officials. Encourage them to support the recommendations.
- Make an appointment to meet with your members of Congress to talk about NPTA's recommendations for NCLB reauthorization. Senators and representatives will be working in their local offices April 2-13.
- Organize a group of volunteers to come with you to meet with members of Congress. Set a goal of at least five people at each meeting.
- Write a letter to the editor for your local newspaper. Explain the importance of parent involvement and why these provisions need to be strengthened in NCLB.
- Start a petition in support of NPTA's recommendations and circulate it at local education events and meetings. Send the completed petition to your members of Congress.

Wauwatosa PTA Council

Website: www.orgsites.com/wi/wauwatosa