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Schools call for changes to federal law  
*Greenville County School Board pushing for changes in No Child Left Behind*

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The Greenville County School Board isn't happy with the federal No Child Left Behind law and is calling on the state's congressional delegation to change it or vote against reauthorizing it.

The board voted unanimously in favor of sending a resolution to Sens. Lindsey Graham and Jim DeMint and to U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis and the state's five other members of the House, urging them to reauthorize the 2001 law only if it addresses their concerns.

The resolution says the board supports the law's goal of improving accountability, offering more choice and closing the achievement gap.

But it says the board has "serious concerns" about the law's "effectiveness, fairness and accuracy in reporting significant data."

**Advertisement** No Child Left Behind, which was President Bush's signature education reform initiative, set a goal of all children scoring Proficient or Advanced, the two highest levels on the state's standardized test, by 2014.

In the meantime, schools in which just one subset of students, such as an ethnic group, don't meet the standard, are judged as having not made Adequate Yearly Progress. Schools that don't meet that standard face sanctions such as being forced to hand over control to the state and having to offer students the choice of another school.

Proficiency, however, is defined by the states, not the federal government, and independent research has shown that South Carolina has one of the highest standards in the nation.

"For years we've sat back and watched as our schools have been labeled as being non-performing or below par," said Trustee Leola Robinson-Simpson. "And that has discouraged our teachers and our administrators, and most importantly our students and our parents."

The resolution says Congress failed to fully fund the act and that "inequitable standards and testing programs produce misleading state reports and unduly penalize states with high standards such as South Carolina."

It says the law erodes local control of schools and unduly hurts Title I schools, which have large numbers of students from low-income families.

"There are problems with it that clearly I think have not done what the spirit of the law intended for it to do," said board Chairman Tommie Reece, who put forward the resolution.

Inglis, R-Travelers Rest, said his preference would be to repeal No Child Left Behind, although he thinks it's unlikely that will happen.

"It surely is a lousy bill," he said. "It's one of the president's fondest domestic initiatives, but I think it's just the wrong direction. We should be looking to the local level for solutions."

Inglis said he supports legislation introduced by Michigan Republican Pete Hoekstra called the A-PLUS bill that would allow states to opt out of No Child Left Behind and still receive federal funding, if they set up and abide by a five-year performance agreement.

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