



# Congressional Black Caucus of the 110th Congress

*Change Course, Confront Crises, Continue the Legacy*

## No Child Left Behind & Education Reform



The centerpiece of education reform in recent years has been the No Child Left Behind Act. The goal of NCLB is to ensure that all children succeed in school regardless of race, ethnicity, income or disability. CBC members have expressed a variety of concerns about the effectiveness of NCLB.

Congressman Bobby Scott (VA) and Congressman Danny Davis (IL), Co-Chairs of the CBC Education Taskforce, collaborated in producing testimony to the Committee on Education and Labor on CBC Member Priorities for the Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. The concerns were divided into five general areas where we documented how the law has shown significant

deficiencies: **Student Achievement, Drop Out Rates, Teacher Quality, Measuring Adequate Yearly Progress and Approach to Intervention for Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress.**

### 1. Student Achievement

Three areas were singled out for special focus: (1) the need to study and understand differences by gender as well as race and ethnicity. African-American and Latino men in particular are lagging behind women in their race and ethnicity groups; (2) the need to broaden the scope and effectiveness of intervention to address racial and ethnic disparities - there is a need for greater resources and more effective strategies; and (3) the need to address the mislabeling of disproportionate numbers of minority children as mentally deficient or having behavioral disorders.

### 2. Drop Out Rate

The research clearly demonstrates that dropping out has major consequences on an individual's future earnings and social adjustment. One third of all high school students fail to graduate with their peers and schools need to be held accountable with consequences if they do not retain students through graduation. Schools also ought to receive credit for successful dropout prevention programs and for bringing dropouts back into the school.

### 3. Teacher Quality

Teacher quality is one of the most significant factors influencing student achievement. Reports released in 2006 demonstrated that there were large discrepancies between the qualifications of teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools and teachers serving in schools with low-poverty and low-minority student populations. This issue must be addressed in reauthorization.

### 4. Measuring Adequate Yearly Progress

The current system encourages schools to focus their attention on students who perform at passing level or just above or below passing. Students who are very far above or very far below passing may be ignored. Gifted students may not be adequately challenged and schools have no incentive to help very low performers improve. Schools must be held accountable for the progress of every child.

### 5. Approach to Intervention for Schools Not Making AYP

Reports from around the nation reflected two major deficiencies in the current law that need to be addressed: (1) the lack of flexibility in developing appropriate and effective interventions and a reliance on a "one-size-fits-all" type approach; and (2) the need for a more resource-intensive approach to intervention for underperforming schools and districts by investing in schools where students live rather than the current "school choice" approach which tends to remove resources from the most needy schools and districts.

2264 RAYBURN HOB • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 •  
TEL (202) 226-9776 • FAX (202) 225-5730  
WWW.THECONGRESSIONALBLACKCAUCUS.COM