

ASCD's Positions

Since 2001, ASCD has adopted a number of positions on issues affected by the No Child Left Behind Act, including the achievement gap, funding, teacher quality, and the whole child. Two of the adopted positions most pertinent to NCLB address high-stakes testing and low-performing schools.

High-Stakes Testing (2001, 2004)

Decision makers in education—students, parents, educators, community members, and policymakers—all need timely access to information from many sources. Judgments about student learning and education program success need to be informed by multiple measures. Using a single achievement test to sanction students, educators, schools, districts, states/provinces, or countries is an inappropriate use of assessment. ASCD supports the use of multiple measures in assessment systems that are

- Fair, balanced, and grounded in the art and science of learning and teaching;
- Reflective of curricular and developmental goals and representative of content that students have had an opportunity to learn;
- Used to inform and improve instruction;
- Designed to accommodate nonnative speakers and special-needs students; and
- Valid, reliable, and supported by professional, scientific, and ethical standards designed to fairly assess the unique and diverse abilities and knowledge base of all students.

Low-Performing Schools (2002)

Every student has the right to attend a high-performing school. School performance and resulting “high” or “low” designations must be determined by multiple indicators that extend beyond the use of tests.

Identification and intervention strategies should focus on improving, not penalizing, schools. Interventions in “low-performing” schools should include coherent strategies that include understanding each school’s unique context, strengths, and needs; ongoing professional development for staff; research-based practices; parent, student, and community involvement; and the necessary financial resources to support school transformations from low-performing to high-performing.

For more ASCD information and resources relating to NCLB, go to www.ascd.org/news and select “Education Issues” from the left-hand menu.