

American Association of School Personnel Administrators Position Paper on the “No Child Left Behind” Law

Executive Summary

The education professionals that make up the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) agree with and actively support the overall goal of the No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB) that ALL students achieve proficiency. Schools must place a greater emphasis on closing the achievement gap of minority and low-income students and testing plays a role in measuring student achievement. However, while schools and educators should be held accountable for student progress, the accountability system needs to be fair and equitable for educators and students alike.

The following position paper attempts to narrow the focus and address the strands in the No Child Left Behind Law that most impact school personnel professionals. AASPA has collected input from its membership at three NCLB Summits identifying the difficulties personnel professionals are having trying to implement the requirements of the law. It is AASPA’s intent to update the conclusions and recommendations presented in this position paper through a continuing dialogue with its membership. It has been encouraging to see that adjustments have been made by the US Department of Education since the initial passage of the law in 2001 (*See notes following some recommendations to acknowledge policy amendment changes announced by the US Department of Education since the law’s enactment*). However, additional refinements are needed in order to ensure the legislation achieves its intended goal.

AASPA is asking the US Department of Education and/or Congress to take action to correct the following structural or policy components in the law that school personnel professionals have identified as needing refinement as they have struggled with the law’s implementation:

1. **Reconstruct the Accountability Model** of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
2. **Develop Needed Flexibility in Determining Highly Qualified Staff** (Teachers and Paraprofessionals), Particularly in Small and Rural Schools
3. **Provide Adequate Federal Resources** to Implement High Expectations for All Students, Teachers and Paraprofessionals
4. **Raise the Debate Over the Appropriate Role of the Federal Government** in Providing Oversight of Public Education

At the conclusion of this position paper you will find reference to an article from *Education Week*, proposed federal legislation (SB 2794), and a newspaper editorial that clearly communicate that AASPA’s position of constructive criticism and needed changes in the No Child Left Behind Law has broad base support. Making positive, constructive changes to the No Child Left Behind Law will enable education professionals to comply with the ambitious goals of the legislation in a fair and equitable manner.