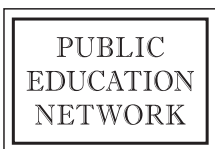


Open to the Public

Speaking Out on "No Child Left Behind"

A Report from 2004 Public Hearings

TENNESSEE



Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

Sponsored by Partners in Public Education (PIPE)
and Public Education Network



Public Education Network

Public Education Network (PEN) is a national organization of local education funds (LEFs) and individuals working to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation. PEN believes an active, vocal constituency is the key to ensuring that every child, in every community, benefits from a quality public education. PEN and its members are building public demand and mobilizing resources for quality public education on behalf of 11.5 million children in more than 1600 school districts in 33 states and the District of Columbia. In 2004, PEN welcomed its first international member, which serves almost 300,000 children in the Philippines.

Our Vision

Every day, in every community, every child in America benefits from a quality public education.

Our Mission

To build public demand and mobilize resources for quality public education for all children through a national constituency of local education funds and individuals.

Hearing Held in Memphis, Tennessee

September 30, 2004

4:00–7:30 PM

Teaching and Learning Academy, Memphis, TN

Acknowledgements

Hearing Partner:

Partners in Public Education (PIPE)

The Clarke Centre

5101 Wheelis Drive, Suite 200

Memphis, TN 38117

Phone: 901-682-8100

Fax: 901-682-7004

www.pipememphis.org

Éthele Hilliard, president

Dorothy Alston, director,
Parent Education Programs

Hearing Officers:

Éthele Hilliard, president,
Partners in Public Education, Memphis, TN

Gordon G. Fee, chairman, Public School
Forum of East Tennessee, Oakridge, TN

Ron Cowell, executive director, Education Policy
and Leadership Center, Harrisburg, PA

Amanda Broun, senior Vice President, Public
Education Network, Washington, DC

Parents:

Zorina Bowen, parent/Memphis Council PTA
Aretha King, parent/grandparent

Susanne Jackson, parent/Memphis Urban League

Loretta McNary, parent/
Successful Parenting magazine

Students:

Danisha Oliver, senior, Carver High School,
Memphis, TN

Michael Davis Lawyer, senior,
White Station High School, Memphis, TN

Coretta King, Freshman,
White Station High School, Memphis, TN

Business/Civic Leaders/Community Members:

Patrick H. Carter Jr, owner/president,
Olympic Staffing Inc.

Harry T. Cash III, community activist

Rev. Derrick Joyce, A. G. Edwards & Sons Inc.

Rev. Dwight Montgomery, pastor, Annesdale
Cherokee Baptist Church

Public Testimony:

Connie Friend, Even Start

Tammye Butler, M.A.S.E. Charter School

Tori Harris, parent

Mercedes Delos Santos, parent

John R. Cady, Memphis City Schools

Toni Hampton, PPE

Alicia Cowan, Memphis City Schools

Anabell H.R. Turner, parent

Imelda Sanchez, Even Start

Zulema Zalaya, Even Start

Charlene D. Sager, parent

Martha Duarte, Even Start

Candace Sawyer, Even Start

Teresa Shute, Even Start

Debra L. Kirkwood, Mid-South Christian
Services/parent

Juanita C. Stevenson, NCLB District Parent
Advisory Council

Julie Thomas, Even Start

Olga Bonilla, Even Start

Cecilia Lievanos, Even Start

Written Testimony:

Bethany Copperidge, senior, Ridgeway High School

Janice Robinson, parent

Special Thanks:

The Teaching and Learning Academy, host venue

Memphis City School's Telecommunications
Center, Ike Griffith, videographer

Conaway Brown, David Brown, Principal

Alpha Reporting Corporation, Dana May Webb,
Court Stenographer

Parents for Public Schools, Mary Murphy Guest,
timekeeper

Carolyn T. Matthews, community volunteer

Support for the NCLB hearings was provided by:

The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation

The George Gund Foundation

Open Society Institute

Report Writer:

Anne Lewis, education policy writer

Designer:

Kelly Griffith, kelly@rightbraincreative.net



“We can’t wait, as individual, as families, or as a nation, to make equal educational opportunity a reality. Unless we give all children the tools to succeed, America will have faltered on its promise and condemned its future. It’s that important.”

–Patrick Carter, public education advocate and president Olympic Staffing, Inc., Memphis

The “Why” of the PEN Hearings

Shortly after *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was passed in 2001, Public Education Network (PEN) began an intensive examination of the law to determine the rights and privileges it accords to parents and community members. Approximately 10,000 print copies of the resulting publication, *Using NCLB to Improve Student Achievement: An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders*, have been requested by organizations throughout the country, with a further 40,000 copies downloaded from the PEN website. In addition, a series of NCLB action briefs, developed by PEN in partnership with the National Coalition for Parent Involvement In Education, have been downloaded more than 25,000 times.



With this demand for information on NCLB as background, PEN held a series of state hearings to give the public a structured way to enter the debate on the pros and cons of NCLB and the effects, both positive and negative, the law is having on students, parents, and communities. Nine hearings took place in eight states over a five-month period: Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, California, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, New York, and Tennessee. Each state hearing was conducted in partnership with local organizations and presided over by a panel of state and national hearing officers.

PEN hopes these forums broadened the public debate about NCLB and provided policymakers with information on how their work encourages or discourages quality education for children. The findings from PEN's NCLB hearings will be transmitted to decision makers at the national, state, and local levels to help them determine which aspects of NCLB the public supports, what are the primary concerns, and what mid-course corrections are needed to achieve the most beneficial results for all students.



No Child Left Behind in Tennessee

In some ways, Tennessee pioneered the test-based accountability premise of *No Child Left Behind*. It implemented annual testing, grades 3-8, several years before the massive federal law was passed. Its accountability system is working toward standards-based tests in core subjects at every grade span. It participates in efforts to improve school leadership, and it sets test-based standards for its teacher preparation programs.

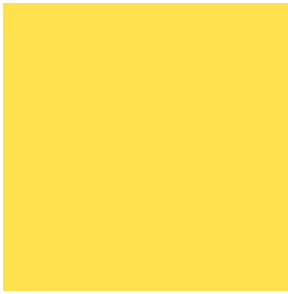
Because there has been a reform agenda in the state for some time, parent and community groups have emerged as partners and participants in school improvement. At a hearing on NCLB held in Memphis in September 2004, witnesses were familiar with and endorsed many aspects of the law, seeing it as a reflection of the issues and solutions that have emerged in Tennessee. In addition, because of their experience with reforms, the witnesses often questioned the actions taken under NCLB, and feared unintended consequences that would set back their efforts to develop support for faltering schools.



The hearing, co-sponsored by Public Education Network and Partners In Public Education of Memphis (PIPE), provided opportunities for parents, students, and community and business leaders to comment on the effects of the federal law on their school systems and communities. These are voices that ordinarily do not have access to policy circles. The Tennessee hearing—and the national report based on all of the hearings—was intended to allow policymakers to hear the views of those ultimately most affected by NCLB: students, their parents, and their communities.

The witnesses in Tennessee spoke from many perspectives and on many issues, but certain themes consistently appeared in their testimony:

- The current system of test-based accountability does not take into account individual student and school strengths and weaknesses.
- The punitive impact of NCLB unfairly stigmatizes schools, their students, and their communities, and makes it more difficult to encourage community support for struggling schools.
- Requiring highly qualified teachers in every classroom is critical, but the definition of “qualified” should go beyond paper certification.
- High standards are necessary, but so is sufficient support to meet the standards.
- Funding is inadequate to meet the challenge of NCLB.



The Tennessee Context

Tennessee has pursued a K-12 reform agenda for some time, but there are distinct challenges that make higher performance as required by NCLB difficult. One is inequitable funding, another is accountability, and yet another is the difficulty of meeting the goal and the 2005-2006 timeline of having all highly qualified teachers instructing in their core academic subjects. Division NCLB leaders at Memphis City Schools—the largest school district in Tennessee, and the 21st largest in the country—report “the new federal law focuses on many concepts and instructional strategies that the Memphis City Schools district has put in place over the last three years, some of the new mandates will require only minor changes to district practices to comply with the NCLB” as it relates to accountability. However, funding and highly qualified teachers are another matter.

While on paper the state is complying with the highly qualified teacher definitions in NCLB, it only recently required secondary school core subject teachers to have degrees in the core subjects in which they teach. However, under the alternative certification programs, the state does require teachers entering classrooms to take tests; to have academic majors in educational fields, such as math, science, history, and government; or to possess a set number of semester hours in a content area to begin teaching. Despite taking the lead on test-based accountability—and working with a value-added system of measuring progress—gaps in achievement among various sub-groups of students and those that are more affluent are significantly large.



Tennessee Fast Facts

Enrollment: 911,735 K-12 students in 1,677 schools

Enrollment by sub-group: white, 70.5%; African American, 24.8%; Hispanic, 3.2%; limited English proficient, 2.1.%; students with disabilities, 15.9%; economically disadvantaged, 49.9%..

Percentage of highly qualified teachers: 55.5%

Percentage of schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress: 15%

Achievement gap: In grades K-8, White, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian met proficiency standards in math, reading and language arts. African Americans, as a group, did not meet proficiency in these areas. Similarly, again in grades 9-12, as a group, White, Hispanic, Native Americans, and Asian met proficiency in math, reading and language arts, while African Americans, as a group did not meet proficiency standards.

While the average of all students was reported as proficient, only white students achieved proficiency as a group in math and reading/language arts/writing (and Native American/Asian American). In grades 9-12, the student average and white students reached proficiency in English and Algebra I, but all other groups did not (except Hispanics in Algebra, Native Americans in English, and Asian in both subjects) standards. (*Tennessee Department of Education 2003-04 AYP Results*)

Also, suspension rates among minority/disadvantaged students are disproportionately high. The state-reported high school graduation rate is 75.76 percent, which means that the schools lose one-fourth of their students during the high school years. Underlying many of these unresolved deficiencies is the fact that Tennessee has an inequitable and under-funded school system, according to the release of funds through the Title 1 funding formula. According to the 2004 data in "Quality Counts," a publication of *Education Week*, just over one percent of students in Tennessee attend schools in districts that spend

at least the national per-pupil average. The state is the second lowest in terms of the publication's adequacy index, which calculates the percentage of students in districts spending at or above the national average, and how far the rest of the state's students fall below that benchmark. Providing just about half of the local/state expenditure on K-12 public education, the state ranks 30 out of 50 on its efforts to target its contribution to less wealthy districts. On average, wealthy districts receive more state and local funds for education than do property-poor districts.



It is the funding issue that ranks as a priority for PIPE, said Éthele Hilliard, PIPE president, as the hearing began. Like all legislation, NCLB is not perfect. Without question, there are areas that need attention. Chief among them is the question of adequate federal funding to implement the requirements of the law, she added. It was because of these concerns that PIPE, in its role as convener and advocate, is co-sponsoring this public hearing to give the public a voice in the process as changes to the law are considered.

PIPE strongly supports the essential goals of strong standards, accountability, qualified teachers, and parental involvement. It welcomes the high expectations that the law sets for all of us, because it demands our best as a community in support of every student. We clearly support the intent of NCLB—"that every child deserves an opportunity for a great education"—and seek to inform parents and the community about what is working in the law and what needs to work better. It seems clear that in the coming months, NCLB will likely be amended, and we again want to underscore the importance of adequate funding to support the law's mandates.

In hosting the Memphis hearing, PIPE assembled panels of students, parents, and community business leaders, who presented formal testimony before the hearing officers. Open-mike sessions allowed brief commentaries from other members of the audience after each panel. While the testimony covered many concerns, most of it related to the three issues PEN believes are the most critical in NCLB—accountability, teacher quality, and building community.



What We Heard About Accountability

The people of Tennessee have had so much experience with test-based accountability, that testing *per se* is not an issue. Rather, they have acquired a sophisticated understanding that leads to thinking about how to improve it and make an assessment system work better for children. According to “Quality Counts,” for example, the state receives a lower grade on its progress on standards and accountability because it relies heavily on multiple-choice items to test students’ knowledge (except for a writing assessment). According to testimony at the hearing, NCLB accountability measures are now pushing the Tennessee system toward other undesirable policies.

Students were the first to pinpoint this issue. Michael “Davis” Lawyer, a senior at White Station High School in Memphis, addressed one of the disadvantages of what several witnesses termed the “one-size-fits-all” model of NCLB. His high school, with more Advanced Placement courses than any school in Memphis, and more National Merit semi-finalists annually than any school in the state, nonetheless was named a school needing improvement under the adequate yearly progress requirements of NCLB. The school houses one of the city’s hearing impairment program, in which students depend on sign language for communication. Its shorthand approach does not prepare them for the state’s writing exam, he explained. Virtually all of the high school’s failing scores on the writing exam were from hearing impaired students. Said Lawyer:



"I am not pushing specifically for an exception to be written into the legislation. Rather, such an example calls into question the entire premise of a 100 percent standard. Such a standard allows for no special circumstances, encourages states to lower rather than raise standards in an attempt to keep achievement at 100 percent, while also causing a sense of failure at quality educational institutions, undermining public faith in public education."

Another student from White Station High School, freshman Coretta King, told the hearing officers that being able to take standardized tests is important for students, but students have different responses to tests. "Scantron tests or 'bubble-it-in pencil tests" may not be able to reveal everything about what a person has learned or their abilities," she said. "A student may have understood the material that is on the test, but may comprehend it differently because of a different learning style." To illustrate, she said she did not perform as well as she knew she could on traditional, timed tests because of the stress.

Adults also called for improvements in the assessment system. Anabell Turner, a parent from Memphis, said that even though the law calls for appropriate tests, the same tests are used with English-language learners and with children with disabilities, without the extra

resources to help them. "When I contacted my congressman [about no test for English-language learners]," she said, "I was told that Tennessee is an English-speaking state and will stay that way." A middle-school counselor criticized the use of norm-referenced tests by the state, explaining that under such a system, some students always will be considered below the norm. He called for criterion-referenced tests and better information for teachers from test results. Currently, most data concern either the gifted or children with disabilities, he said.

On the basis of test scores, one pre-schooler was denied access to publicly funded pre-school, because he scored too high, reported his mother. She called for state-funded pre-school programs for all children, so that someday NCLB would not be needed.

Representing the Memphis Urban League, Susanne Jackson said Tennessee's tests should be reviewed "to ensure fairness and equity and to look for any evidence of a disparate impact of the tests on sub-groups of students as seen in the disaggregated data." From a business owner's perspective, Harry Cash said that in a business, "you need to determine where you are financially on a daily basis." In regards to test-based accountability, he explained:

"The measurements should be consistent with the testing that teachers may perform on a daily or weekly basis. There should not be a surprise at the end of the school year."



Gordon Fee, a NCLB hearing officer and public education activist who currently serves on the State P-16 Council and Chair of the East Tennessee Public School Forum of East Tennessee had this to say about accountability:

“My overall impression is that the law is working from the standpoint of getting communities to rally around and help the public school system, rather than pointing fingers. However, over and over again we heard that some changes should be made. Specifically, it is very unfair and unproductive to label a school as non-performing when only one small segment was not performing to standards, and many people question whether it is realistic to expect all students to learn at the same rate.”



What We Learned About Teacher Quality

Because NCLB-required data on teacher quality are not readily available, few witnesses could comment on this aspect of the federal law. However, there was a universal recognition that the law's attention to the quality of teachers was very important. One witness, however, considered the requirement a "time bomb" because of current and predicted shortages of teachers. Another remarked that career options now available to women had diminished the quality of the teaching force. This was one of several comments that negatively contrasted the educational experience students are receiving today with what adults of one or two generations ago had experienced.

When discussing teacher quality, the witnesses did not dwell at length on the definition of a highly qualified teacher in NCLB—one who holds an undergraduate degree in the core subject he/she is assigned, is certified, and has satisfied state standards of skill and knowledge for the field of teaching. There seemed to be a longing for more than paper certification. Coretta King, a freshman at White Station High School in Memphis, stated that she appreciated the effort to make sure teachers are highly qualified. As she moved up in the grades, she said, schoolwork became progressively harder, and she realized that "not all of my previous teachers taught me the required curriculum for each grade level," causing her to fall behind. Other teachers, however, helped her catch up because they made an extra effort with her. King explained:



"I believe a major part of the qualifications that highly qualified teachers should have are the training and the professionalism to understand that teachers need to devote quality time with their students. From past experience, I know everyone does not learn at the same pace, and it is helpful and much appreciated when teachers take extra time out of their schedule to help a student in need. This shows that the teacher really cares about his or her students."

It is possible to design evaluations of teachers that take quantitative qualities into account, testified Susanne Jackson of the Memphis Urban League. The NCLB requirements are certification-based, but she recommends that one of the criteria of a highly qualified teacher to be that he/she holds high expectations for all students. Studies by PIPE and other groups of self-reported responses from principals and teachers found "an unusually high percentage," which said that students could not overcome out-of-school factors and achieve academically.

"We've got to have teachers who believe that all students can learn and who teach to that possibility and reality. If we don't, it won't happen. That's been proven in tests and study after study for decades. We have to learn from that, and for it to not be a part of the criteria is a huge failing." Jackson recommended that committees of students, parents, teachers, and community members come up with ways to measure the expectations of teachers.

Focusing on the lack of quality teachers in high-poverty, low-performing schools, Businessman Harry Cash recommended bonuses to attract and retain teachers for low-performing schools. Unqualified teachers in these schools inevitably produce below-average test scores, he said. Debra Kirkwood, a social worker who visits in schools throughout Memphis and surrounding Shelby County, testified about seeing "unqualified teachers teaching Gateway (high school exit exams) subjects such as algebra and biology, but in the suburban schools, all of the teachers tend to be qualified in the subjects they're teaching." She objected to the fact that "we moved into a No Child Left Behind situation without assuring that we had qualified teachers" for the subjects with required statewide exams.

Cash also supported high-quality, continuous professional development for all teachers. An Education Commission of the States analysis of the Tennessee state plan under NCLB, however, could find no evidence of "annual measurable objectives for each district and school that included 'an annual increase in the percentage of teachers who are receiving high-quality professional development.'"



What We Learned About Building Community

One of the assumptions of NCLB is that well-informed parents and communities will be empowered to demand changes and/or make choices for their children that lead to better educations for them. This is why the law includes public reporting of schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress. Parents whose children attend schools that consistently are low performing may opt to transfer their children to higher performing schools. If the school still does not make adequate yearly progress, parents can then select providers for supplementary education services, usually after-school tutoring.

The assumptions of NCLB, however, have been off the mark in Tennessee, according to witnesses.

First of all, some parents do not believe they are getting enough information. Loretta McNary, mother of five sons in the Memphis school system, could not answer positively on the effects of NCLB on her children even after extensive research on her part. "One thing that I am sure of," she said, "is that there is a lot of confusion around it....The information I've received, I understand it completely. I'm no dummy. But the problem is that I'm not getting *enough* information to make very informed decisions on whether or not I will see any positive results in the future." Harry Cash assured the hearing officers that "parents do care about the education of their children, but they need tools, not incentives, to empower them to be able to go to their schools (with demands)."



It is to the credit of those who organized the local participation in the PEN/PIPE hearing that many parents used the hearing as an opportunity to reach policymakers about their passion—continuation of Even Start. As many Even Start parents as could be squeezed into the hearing schedule spoke up strongly, often in Spanish or halting English, to plead their cause. The hearing was the only available tool they had to be heard about a program vital to their children and to the parents' abilities to help their children in school.

The lack of information about NCLB and parental rights—despite more than 100 mentions of parents and their involvement in the law—is frustrating to parents. Susanne Jackson of the Memphis Urban League believed the problem went beyond just getting information. Schools need to be partners or open door schools in relation to parents. Some schools are “parent unfriendly,” she said, explaining:

“Particular attention needs to be paid to the enforcement of Sections 1111 through 1118 (of NCLB), which deals with parent involvement. A lot of times, I’ve found that parents truly want to be involved. However, they’re not feeling welcome in a lot of these places....All of the statistics have shown that, when the parents are involved in their children’s education, the children do achieve and excel. This also includes the middle and high school years. However, if the parents are kept out of the educational process by whatever means, this will not occur. So there needs to be some policy in place or some penalty in place to address the fact that schools need to be partners with parents and we cannot have schools that are parent unfriendly, or not open to parents.”

Much of the testimony at the hearing, however, revealed even deeper issues than communication and parent involvement ones. The witnesses were passionate about intended—and unintended—consequences of the public reporting of schools failing to make adequate yearly progress.

Memphis is a city where people are willing to shoulder their responsibilities. Students who testified said that they need to be more attentive to their studies. Parents and grandparents acknowledged that families must be educators themselves, and support the goals of the schools. The business and faith communities pledged support for schools and for needy students. This strong desire to share in the work of creating a better school system for children has been building slowly in Memphis. “There’s not one school, and there’s not one business that myself or the organization has gone to and solicited support that has not been granted.” According to the Rev. Derrick Joyce:

“I believe we’re finally just getting the edges of this triangle to connect. We are getting the schools, the parents, and the community... to come together. No one has said ‘no!’ No one!”

With the NCLB accountability measures, however, has come stigma—the list of “schools needing improvement”—that threatens to unravel what had been seen as genuine hope for students and schools. Witnesses struggled to balance the need for accountability with a determination to build community support and pride in the public schools. This was a dilemma faced by every group at the hearing—students who felt their diplomas would



be degraded, parents who believed it was more important to focus on strengths of schools, and community/business leaders who feared the stigmas threaten economic and civic progress in Memphis.

The testimony and discussion around labeling schools as failing was highly personal, as well as illuminating for policymakers concerned with the effects of NCLB's accountability structure.

Consider the testimony of Aretha King, a product of Memphis schools now concerned about those her great-grandchildren are currently attending. She supported NCLB's emphasis on highly qualified teachers and parent involvement, but mentions that it seems schools now have lower standards than in the past. She described how her children attended Carver High School and were accepted by colleges all over the country, "but my grandchildren enrolled there can't even get into Tennessee State." Even when her grandchildren are accepted at places like MIT, they are put in remedial classes because university officials say, "You are from that failing inner-city school." She could see NCLB succeeding, however, if it provides sufficient resources to get schools off the list:

"The concerns I have about the effects of NCLB on my family and community schools is the stigma of the high school listed on the failing list even though it is improving and getting more help with tutors and mentors and parent concerns. This year, parents were questioning if they should enroll their children there [Carver]. Most did go back to Carver and found children really learning and getting tutors for subjects they needed help in. If we lose students because of this low-scoring [list], it will tend to split the community....I do not feel that schools designated as low-performing should adhere to the same staffing formula for pupil/ teacher ratios as schools that are not on the state identified list. These schools need additional support. The needs are greater."



For students, the stigma of being labeled as failing cut to the quick. Michael Lawyer of White Station High School learned how much the public took notice. He was teased by former classmates, now in a rival private school, when his high school was put on the failing list, and he noted that “people already disdainful of public education” make judgments when high school exit exams reveal flaws that have been accumulating in a student’s education for years: “Some of the public may then look down [on the schools], but others may say: ‘We need to fix this thing.’”

The president of the Memphis PTA, Zorina Bowen, described the effect of labeling on children. “The children internalize it,” she said, “and they feel that no matter how hard they work, ‘my diploma doesn’t mean very much because I’m in a failing school.’” It would be better, she added, to focus on the group or groups of students who are failing, but not label the whole school.

One parent, Loretta McNary, objected to the basic accountability provision that causes schools to be labeled as needing improvement—the disaggregation of data by sub-groups of students. To label students by race or family income, she said, was discrimination: “If students are not achieving in school, why is it so important what color they are, or if they receive a free lunch or not? What should be more important is why these students are not achieving and what can we do about it.”

Several of those who testified said that it was unfair to label a school as failing when most of the students are meeting expectations. Susanne Jackson of the Memphis Urban League said it was important to celebrate students and parents who are doing the right thing. “There are students succeeding and parents working diligently and

educators working diligently in every one of our schools. We need to lift up those examples and help others learn from them. We don’t need to overly stigmatize.”

Twelfth grade student, Danisha Oliver at Northside High School agrees that education is everybody’s business, not just students. She chimes in by stating:

“I feel that there is a heightened sense of awareness that education in America is everyone’s concern, from the politicians who make the laws, to the parents and community, and to the student in each classroom who feels the pressure to succeed by passing standardized subject area tests, among other things.”

Business and community leaders also were conflicted over accountability that results in labeling. When the Memphis schools were ranked very low in national reports, some major businesses decided against relocating to the city, so the labeling “absolutely makes a difference,” said the Rev. Derrick Joyce. On the other hand, businessman Harry Cash said some young people he interviews for jobs are ill prepared, but the response of business in the community should be to do more to support schools. He called on major employers to give paid leave to parents volunteering at schools. Joyce provided examples of schools with successful achievement largely because parents, businesses, and the community were supporting them. Dwight Montgomery testified that he founded the Faith-Based Public Education Initiative to mobilize outreach efforts



on behalf of the schools. It was his way, he said, to provide an antidote to what he termed “a conspiracy against public education, specifically as it relates to the Memphis City Schools.” He further states, “No Child Left Behind has created a framework. For the sake of our children, we must concentrate on instruction from the real tasks of meeting the needs of children.”

Business leaders also made the point that “funding is being left behind” and called for much greater federal and state support for public education. One criticized the fact that when students transfer to other schools under NCLB regulations, the district must use precious resources to cover transportation costs, a situation he considered unfair.

Schools in low-income neighborhoods need more resources, several of the community leaders emphasized. The 100 Black Men of Memphis started an academy in the poorest section of the city because, according to the Rev. Derrick Joyce, “those parents typically don’t have the money to allow their child to attend” better schools in the city. Businessman, Patrick H. Carter Jr., President of Olympic Staffing Inc. points out, “it would be easier to fulfill the highly qualified teacher mandate, if teachers were paid better.”

“Brown v. Board of Education was not only about access, but it really was about making sure that the students were educated. I believe we’ve got to make sure they have access to a better situation, but also make sure that the funding is there.”

–The Rev. Derrick Joyce



Public Education Network Online Survey Results

From August 10 through November 17, 2004, Public Education Network, through its GiveKidsGoodSchools.org advocacy website, conducted a survey on various aspects of *No Child Left Behind*. The online survey garnered 12,000 responses from people around the country who joined in this vibrant and vital national debate on public education.

PEN analyzed the data, which was disaggregated by state, to provide a snapshot of knowledge and attitudes about *No Child Left Behind*. The results for Tennessee are on the following pages.



Demographics (184 respondents)

Age

Under 18	0%
18-24	2%
25-34	17%
35-50	45%
50-65	34%
Over 65	2%

Gender

Female	86%
Male	16%

Race/Ethnicity

African-American	14%
Asian or Pacific Islander	.5%
Hispanic/Latino/Mexican	1%
Native American or Alaskan Native	1%
White	80%
Other	3.5%

Education

Less Than High School	0%
High School Grad or GED	5%
Some College	21%
Four-year College Degree or More	74%



Please identify yourself
(check all that apply)

Educator	48%
Elected Official	2%
Parent/Guardian of Current Public School Student	46%
Parent/Guardian of Former Public School Student	25%
Community Activist	22%
Concerned Community Member	54%
Business Person	14%

Did you vote in the last election?
(check all that apply)

School board election	75%
Mayor	68%
State legislator	76%
Governor	83%
US Congress	77%
US President	87%
None of the above	4%

Please identify the type of school(s) your child(ren) attend. (check all that apply)

Public school	70%
Private school (non-religious)	3%
Parochial or religious school	5%
Home school	2%
Too young to attend school	3%
I do not have children	17%



How They Responded to the Survey Questions

Have you heard of the NCLB Act?

Yes	98%
No	2%

What do you know about NCLB?

Have heard of the law, but know little about its provisions	13%
Know about some provisions of the law	52%
Have an in-depth knowledge of the law	35%

Where have you received most of your information about NCLB? (check all that apply)

Parents	14%
Teachers	44%
Administrators	58%
Other school personnel	28%
Community organizations	25%
Local newspapers	50%
Local television	26%
Radio	18%
National media	45%

Do you believe NCLB is:

A good law and should be continued without change	9%
A law that needs changing	67%
A law that should be repealed	24%

Does NCLB require too much testing, too little, just right?

Too much	63%
Too little	7%
Just right	11%
Don't know	20%

Do you believe that EVERY child in the country will score at grade level or above by the end of the 2013 school year, as required by NCLB?

Yes	4%
No	82%
Unsure	14%



Should states and school districts be required to report test scores on the basis of disability, income, English language proficiency, race/ethnicity?

Yes	59%
No	30%
Unsure	11%

Do you believe that a single test can tell if the entire student body needs academic improvement?

Yes	7%
No	90%
Unsure	3%

Do you believe that a single test can tell if the individual students are performing satisfactorily?

Yes	8%
No	88%
Unsure	2%

Do you believe that every child should have a qualified teacher?

Yes	96%
No	3%
Unsure	1%

Do you believe that, by 2005, every school will meet the NCLB requirement that all teachers must be qualified in the core subjects that they teach?

Yes	17%
No	67%
Unsure	16%

Have you received information from your school district about the qualifications of teachers in your schools?

Yes	47%
No	53%



How would you rate the teachers in your local schools?

No qualified teachers	0%
Some qualified teachers	17%
Many qualified teachers	62%
All qualified teachers	14%
I have no way of judging	7%

Have schools in your community been labeled as “needing improvement” or “failing” because of NCLB?

Yes	76%
No	12%
Unsure	12%

Are you getting enough information about the performance of the schools in your community?

Yes	58%
No	42%

Has NCLB made a difference in any of the following areas? (check all that apply)

Access to information about schools	36%
Student performance	22%
Parental involvement	9%
Teacher quality	20%



Have you been asked to become involved in any of the following educational activities related to NCLB? (check all that apply)

Developing state standards	3%
Developing the state test required by NCLB	1%
Developing the state and/or local report cards required by NCLB	0%
Developing the district Title I parent involvement policy	6%
Giving input into the district annual Title I program	6%
Making recommendations for what constitutes a “highly qualified teacher” under NCLB	4%
Participating in the improvement team for schools that were identified as needing improvement under NCLB	14%
None of the above	77%

NLCB gives parents and students attending low-performing schools a choice option (transferring to another public school within the school district).

Do you think this option will help students perform better academically?

Yes	32%
No	68%

NLCB gives parents and students attending low-performing schools a supplemental educational services option (providing tutoring beyond the regular school day to help students meet the standards).

Do you think this option will help students perform better academically?

Yes	78%
No	22%



For More Information . . .

Public Education Network

601 13th Street, NW
Suite 710 South
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-628-7460
Fax: 202-628-1893
www.publiceducation.org

PEN's advocacy website,
GiveKidsGoodSchools.org:

www.givekidsgoodschools.org

Education Commission of the States

700 Broadway, #1200
Denver, CO 80203-3460
Phone: 303-299-3600
Fax: 303-296-8332
<http://www.ecs.org>

Tennessee Department of Education

<http://www.state.tn.us.education/>

Tennessee Governor's Office

<http://www.state.tn.us.governor/>

Tennessee General Assembly

<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>

Tennessee State Government and Services

<http://www.tennesseeanytime.org>

National Conference of State Legislatures

<http://www.ncsl.org>

Denver Office:
7700 East First Place
Denver, CO 80230
Phone: 303-364-7700
Fax: 303-364-7800

Washington Office:
444 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 515
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-624-5400
Fax: 202-737-1069

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
Phone: 202-336-7000
Fax: 202-408-8072
<http://www.ccsso.org/>

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Phone: 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)
Fax: 202-401-0689
<http://www.ed.gov>

© Public Education Network, 2005