

ESEA Alert

March 2, 2004

California Teachers Association

Rebellion Growing as NEA Steps Up Its Fight to Amend the *No Child Left Behind* Law

The chorus of dissent surrounding the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* is growing. In the past several months, a large number of states have passed resolutions expressing their dismay regarding what they see as a huge, unfunded federal mandate.

Criticism has been heard from across the political spectrum from elected representatives, as well as state and local education administrators.

Many are echoing the same themes that teachers have been speaking about consistently over the past two years since the law was signed by President George W. Bush in January 2002.

Leaders and lobbyists for the National Education Association, which was labeled a "terrorist organization" by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige in February, have worked hard to gain political and public support for more flexibility and funding for NCLB.



NEA's political efforts have been focused on possible congressional amendments to NCLB and more funding for Title I & II programs. Its theme of "One Size Does Not Fit All" has begun to resonate among education professionals, legislators, parents and the public.

A review of recent newspaper stories from the national press demonstrates a level of critical coverage of NCLB that was missing during the first year of state-by-state implementation:

"Bush Education Officials Find New Law a Tough Sell" - New York Times- 2/22/04

"More States are Fighting 'No Child Left Behind' Law" - Washington Post- 2/19/04

"Vermont, other states rebel against 'No Child'" - Rutland Herald- 2/18/04

"A School-District Rebellion Stirring" - Christian Science Monitor- 2/11/04

"'No Child' Rebellion Picking Up Momentum" - The Salt Lake Tribune- 2/5/04

"No Politics Left Behind in Education Debate" - Los Angeles Times- 1/25/04

"Virginia Seeks to Leave Bush Law Behind" - Washington Post- 1/24/04

HQT Compliance- It's Time to Get Your HOUSE in Order

With the imminent release of the California Department of Education's "NCLB Teacher Requirements Resource Guide," school districts and local associations will finally have a detailed road map to guide them through the Highly Qualified Teacher compliance process. Since the federal deadline is set for June 2006, local leaders will have an opportunity to design a mutually-agreeable process that will give California's teachers multiple options to fulfill these federal requirements. At the heart of the process is the "Certificate of Compliance" (Form 1) that must be completed by all teachers of core academic subjects and signed by an appropriate District administrator.

Please note: According to the CDE: "...nothing in the NCLB Act requires that teachers who have not yet demonstrated that they meet the NCLB Teacher Requirements be fired. In fact the statutory scheme is that federal funding is made available to enable districts to assist teachers in their efforts to meet the requirements."

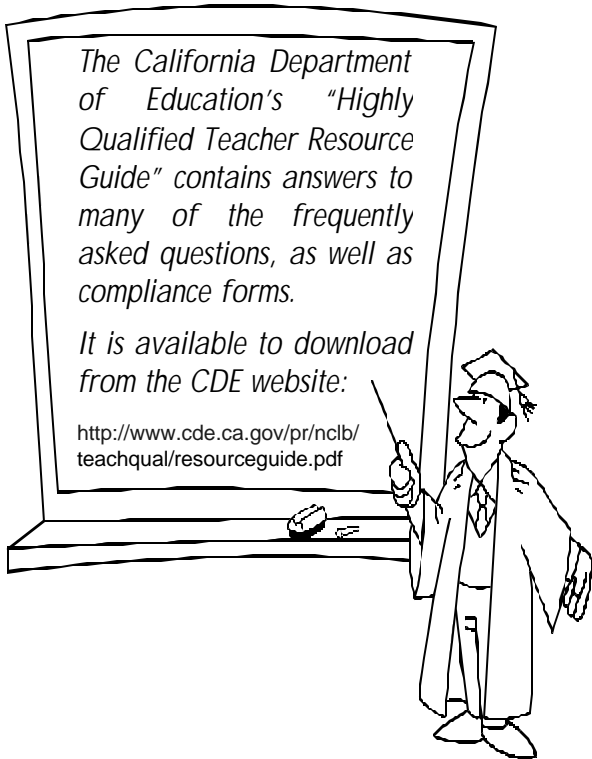
California Teachers Association

www.cta.org

The California Department of Education's "Highly Qualified Teacher Resource Guide" contains answers to many of the frequently asked questions, as well as compliance forms.

It is available to download from the CDE website:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/pr/nclb/teachqual/resourceguide.pdf>



The Road Ahead...

CTA encourages local leaders to work closely with district administrators to present a clear and consistent message to our teachers regarding the many facets of NCLB compliance. This process is a real opportunity to work in a cooperative way with our school districts.

However, it is also crucial that teachers recognize the connection between NCLB mandates and the political process. It is imperative that teachers vote in the Nov. '04 election and engage parents and community leaders in discussions about how to "fix" this law and how to really improve the academic performance of our local schools.

Please keep your CTA primary contact staff informed of any HQT discussions you have with your district administration or any local activities related to ESEA implementation in a broad sense.

Do Numbers Tell the Whole Story?

The CA Dept. of Education's release of the final 2003 AYP reports for all schools and districts in the state clearly demonstrates the massive challenge faced by educators in complying with federal and state academic growth requirements.

Of the nearly 5,550 Title I schools in California, nearly 22% (over 1,200 schools) are in Program Improvement status under NCLB.

Listed below is a sample of several California school districts' AYP status. The statistics reflect the number of district schools that did not achieve AYP in 2003:

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS NOT MAKING AYP</u>	<u>MIDDLE SCHOOLS NOT MAKING AYP</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOLS NOT MAKING AYP</u>
Fairfield-Suisun	6 of 18	5 of 5	4 of 5
Fontana	18 of 26	6 of 6	4 of 5
Hayward	13 of 24	4 of 5	4 of 4
Lodi	13 of 30	4 of 5	5 of 7
Long Beach	5 of 60	8 of 15	7 of 13
Los Angeles	168 of 467	80 of 81	103 of 118
Moreno Valley	4 of 19	6 of 6	8 of 8
Oakland	36 of 72	21 of 23	14 of 14
Palm Springs	3 of 14	4 of 4	5 of 6
Pomona	8 of 27	5 of 6	5 of 7
Sacramento	27 of 62	7 of 9	8 of 9
San Bernardino	32 of 42	7 of 9	10 of 11
San Diego	41 of 133	18 of 23	13 of 27
San Francisco	37 of 77	14 of 16	16 of 20
Stockton	28 of 37	4 of 4	5 of 7

No Community Left Believing?

As part of the on-going debate surrounding standardized testing in our nation's public schools, many educators question whether performance on a single test can accurately capture the academic performance of a school.

According to a January 2004 bipartisan poll commissioned by NEA, almost three-fourths (74%) of voters feel that schools nationwide are either improving or already in pretty good shape. More than 70% prefer schools be evaluated by multiple measures of success— not just standardized test scores.

2/3 of voters believe NCLB is unfair because it labels schools as "failing" even if only one group of students doesn't do well on a test. 3/4 oppose taking away funding from schools that do not increase standardized test scores.