S. HRG. 110–596

NCLB REAUTHORIZATION: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

EXAMINING NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REAUTHORIZATION, FOCUSING ON EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED IN SCHOOLS

MARCH 28, 2007

Printed for the use of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/senate

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

34–476 PDF WASHINGTON : 2008

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

VerDate Aug 31 2005 15:44 Dec 04, 2008 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00001 Fmt 5011 Sfmt 5011 S:\DOCS\34476.TXT SLABOR1 PsN: DENISE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

EDWARD M. KENNEDY, Massachusetts, *Chairman*

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD, Connecticut
TOM HARKIN, Iowa
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI, Maryland
JEFF BINGAMAN, New Mexico
PATTY MURRAY, Washington
JACK REED, Rhode Island
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, New York
BARACK OBAMA, Illinois
BERNARD SANDERS (I), Vermont
SHERROD BROWN, Ohio

MICHAEL B. ENZI, Wyoming,
JUDD GREGG, New Hampshire
LAMAR ALEXANDER, Tennessee
RICHARD BURR, North Carolina
JOHNNY ISAKSON, Georgia
LISA MURKOWSKI, Alaska
ORRIN G. HATCH, Utah
PAT ROBERTS, Kansas
WAYNE ALLARD, Colorado
TOM COBURN, M.D., Oklahoma

J. MICHAEL MYERS, *Staff Director and Chief Counsel*
KATHERINE BRUNETT MCGUIRE, *Minority Staff Director*

VerDate Aug 31 2005 15:44 Dec 04, 2008 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00002 Fmt 0486 Sfmt 0486 S:\DOCS\34476.TXT SLABOR1 PsN: DENISE

C O N T E N T S

STATEMENTS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2007

	Page
Reed, Hon. Jack, a U.S. Senator from the State of Rhode Island	1
Henderson, Anne, Senior Fellow, Community Involvement Program, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Washington, DC.	2
Prepared statement	4
Ritter, Philip J., Senior Vice President, Texas Instruments, Dallas, Texas	11
Prepared statement	13
Cardinali, Daniel, President, Communities in Schools, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia	18
Prepared statement	19
Patenaude, Kathy, President, Rhode Island Parent Teachers Association, Coventry, Rhode Island	32
Prepared statement	34
Puriefoy, Wendy, President, Public Education Network, Washington, DC.	37
Prepared statement	39
Alexander, Hon. Lamar, a U.S. Senator from the State of Tennessee	50
Murkowski, Hon. Lisa, a U.S. Senator from the State of Alaska	52
Isakson, Hon. Johnny, a U.S. Senator from the State of Georgia	56

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Statements, articles, publications, letters, etc.:	
Enzi, Hon. Michael B., a U.S. Senator from the State of Wyoming	60

VerDate Aug 31 2005 15:44 Dec 04, 2008 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00003 Fmt 0486 Sfmt 0486 S:\DOCS\34476.TXT SLABOR1 PsN: DENISE

NCLB REAUTHORIZATION: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2007

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 4:09 p.m. in Room SD–430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed, presiding.

Present: Senators Reed, Clinton, Brown, Gregg, Alexander, Isakson, and Murkowski.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR REED

Senator REED. Let me thank you for your patience and then you're all well rehearsed. I understand Ms. Henderson has to leave at 4:30 p.m. and so we'll ask any of my colleagues that join or have questions, we'll direct to you first, Ms. Henderson and then Mr. Ritter at 5 p.m. and we'll try to accommodate your schedule also.

Let me make a very brief opening statement and then welcome everyone and I'll ask you to present your testimony.

Thank you for being here today. Decades of research have overwhelmingly confirmed the significant correlation between parent, family and community involvement and increased academic achievement. A 2002 report compiled by Anne Henderson, one of our witnesses here today and her colleague, Karen Mapp, detailed research demonstrating the positive impact of effective parent involvement on improving students grades, test scores, attendance, behavior, and postsecondary prospects.

As such, in the last reauthorization, I authored the PARENT Act, a bill I worked on in conjunction with the National PTA, to implement effective ways to include parents in their children's education. During the debate on No Child Left Behind, with the support of Chairman Kennedy and others on this committee, we were successful in adding much of the PARENT Act. As a result, parents were placed front and center in the education reform effort to increase student achievement. Provisions were included to require all information to parents and communities to be in a language and format that parents can understand. It requires the evaluation of parent involvement programs to ensure they are effective and that States must collect and disseminate information about effective parent involvement practices.

VerDate Aug 31 2005 15:44 Dec 04, 2008 Jkt 000000 PO 00000 Frm 00005 Fmt 6633 Sfmt 6633 S:\DOCS\34476.TXT SLABOR1 PsN: DENISE

A study released last fall, the 2006 Met Life Survey of the American Teacher, shows the increasing importance of training teachers to work effectively with parents as 26 percent of teachers reported that they were not prepared to engage families in their children's education.

As such, I have also worked to include provisions in the Higher Education Act reauthorization to ensure that prospective and new teachers have the skills to effectively work and communicate with parents and families.

Community involvement is also of immense importance in raising student achievement and school performance. I authored, in the last ESEA reauthorization a bill, the Child Opportunity Zone Family Center Act, to help communities and schools work together to ensure that children and families have access to existing social services and supports so that children come to school ready to learn. Although we took significant strides in the areas of parent and community involvement in the last reauthorization, too many parents and families still face high barriers to engaging in their children's education, particularly in our highest poverty areas.

We must work to overcome these barriers by helping high-need schools and districts build up their parent engagement networks with resources and support at the Federal level and I'm just pleased and proud to be here today to listen to the experts and get their perspectives and I look forward to learning much from this hearing.

With that and in anticipation of the arrival of some of my colleagues, I would like to ask the witnesses to give their testimony and let me first introduce Anne Henderson because Anne has got the most demanding schedule. Ms. Henderson's specialty is the relationship between parents and schools. Her most recent book, Beyond the Bake Sale, the Essential Guide to Family School Partnerships written with Karen Mapp, John Davies and Vivian Johnson was published by The New Press in 2007. Among her many other reader-friendly reports is the Evidence series. She is a noted author and expert. Anne, welcome and thank you and please begin.

STATEMENT OF ANNE HENDERSON, SENIOR FELLOW, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM, ANNENBERG INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL REFORM, WASHINGTON, DC.

Ms. HENDERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I sincerely appreciate this opportunity.

Senator REED. You might want to pull that closer to you.

Ms. HENDERSON. I do two things in my life and you already described that fairly well, Senator. Thank you. I track the research on how and why engaging families does have a positive impact on student learning and I also look for effective practice out there that is putting the research into play.

First, I just want to discuss briefly the big stories that are coming out of the research over the past 30 years and then explore the implications of that research for the legislation that the committee is considering.

The first big story is that parent involvement definitely has a powerful impact on student achievement and the impact is greatest for children from low-income families. I often hear—I know my col-

leagues hear the same thing—educators saying, I have to focus all of my time on raising test scores. I don't have time to work with families. And what's missing there is the knowledge that parent involvement is a strategy for improving test scores. It's not something else that has to be done. It needs to be integrated as part of every school's improvement strategy, building parent involvement into the process.

The earlier the investment in parent involvement, the better. A study on the Chicago Parent Centers done by Arthur Reynolds and his colleagues, tracking students for over 17 years, found that in these centers, which start when children are age 3 and take families through the third grade or age 9, for every year a family is active in the program, there is a 16 percent increase in the odds that that child will graduate from high school. And for children whose families have been in the program for 6 full years, their graduation rate from high school is over 80 percent compared to a graduation rate of 38 percent for students whose families did not have that opportunity. That's a big spread. I don't think we can afford to ignore that. That's a program, the Chicago Parents Centers that is funded by Title I.

So parent involvement has a protective effect on children. The more that parents can advocate for their kids, guide them through the system, get them help when they need it, help them plan for their future, the better kids do. But this is a complex skill set. Not everybody is born knowing how to do this. Not everybody grew up in families that regularly practiced that. So there is a big class and cultural disparity in families' capacity to be advocates for their kids that can be addressed by good programs.

I believe that this disparity is a major engine of the achievement gap, that the more families can be advocates for their kids, the more likely they are to finish school.

Now parents are doing more than we give them credit for. That's another big finding from the research. Families of all backgrounds, all income and education levels, are talking to their kids about school, they're trying to keep them focused on homework, they are telling them that they have to work hard and get a good education but how effective and well informed this is varies by how much information the families are getting from school. We need to build on this strength that families have and these things that our families are doing rather than blaming them for not doing more.

Community organizing efforts are also having a major impact on schools across the country. They are aiming to build power in low-income communities and hold schools more accountable for results and they are also making major contributions for linking schools to social services and other programs that can help build student achievement.

And then a major finding in the research is—and I know this is going to sound obvious but it is that the more family involvement programs are linked to improving student learning, the more effective they are. If we think about all the things that schools do to engage families—Back to School Nights, Open Houses, Fun Fairs—how well designed are they to help families understand what their kids are learning and doing in class, what good work looks like for their kid's age and grade level, how they can help their kids at

home build their skills. The more that they do this, the more impact they'll have. So we need to be much more intentional and that has big implications for family school compacts and policies.

Another study I want to let you know about was done by Westat and Policy Studies Associates that found that three practices of teacher outreach to families are associated with a 30 to 50 percent faster rate of gain for students in reading and math and those three practices are meeting every family in their class face to face, sending home learning materials that families can use with their kids and staying in regular touch with them about how their kids are doing, not just calling home when they've acted out. Those three things. How hard is that?

If schools would just do that, I think we'd see major steady gains in student achievement, assuming of course, that the teachers are highly qualified and effective.

So now that we have an idea of what needs to be in place, how do we get the parents there and engaged in doing this? This is the final big story from the research and that is, that when schools welcome families, honor them, treat them with respect, build relationships between families and teachers, they stay—parents will stay involved and get involved in ways that will improve achievement.

So we have enough information and experience and research, I feel, to do this right. But the question is, what is it going to take in the legislation to make it happen? I do have a few recommendations.

My colleague, Ed Darden and his group, Appleseed, have done a study and while they concluded that the current requirements in the law for parent involvement are strong and could be effective, they are at the bottom of the priority list. So what we need to do is help everybody up and down the line understand how to use family involvement strategies as a major means, as a major way of improving student achievement. It's the compacts that are required, for example, which were designed using student achievement data and hone in on the skills that need to be strengthened and hammer out agreements between teachers and families about how to work together to improve those specific skills. They'd be much more effective than they currently are and if a policy schools are required to develop actually committed the schools to do what the compact said the school was going to do, we'd have more effective compacts. So we need district and State infrastructure to make this happen. And we need enforcement and we need this to be set as a high priority at both the district and the State level so that schools are getting technical assistance and support to do this right.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Henderson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNE T. HENDERSON, SENIOR FELLOW

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important hearing on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. I am here today to discuss the all-important relationship between families and schools, especially low-income families and the schools their children attend, because this relationship has a powerful impact on students' academic achievement and life prospects. For over 25 years, I have been tracking two things:

• the research on how and why engaging families can have a positive impact on student learning, and

• effective policies and practices of schools, school districts and community organizations that are working to build and sustain strong family-school partnerships.

First, I will discuss the big stories coming out of the research over the past 30 years. Then I will explore the implications of this research for the legislation before this committee.

BIG STORIES FROM THE RESEARCH

1. If the first big story can be summed up in a sentence, it is: **When families are involved at home and at school, children do better in school, and the schools get better. The effects are greatest for low-income students.**

In my most recent review of the research, which was written with Karen L. Mapp of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in 2002, we found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

• Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
• Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits;
• Attend school regularly;
• Have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school; and
• Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.[1]

2. **The second big story is families are doing more at home than we realize or give them credit for.** For years, studies have been finding that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are talking to their children about school, trying to keep them focused on learning and homework, encouraging them to work hard and get a good education, and helping them plan for higher education. Low-income and culturally diverse families DO value education and they DO want their children to succeed.

Families with more income and education, however, tend to be more engaged at school, better able to work collaboratively with educators, and therefore to be better informed about how to help their children at home. Supporting all families in their efforts to be more involved at school and more knowledgeable about what children are learning in class is an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap. We must build on this interest and effort, instead of blaming families for not doing more.

Another important reason for giving families information and resources to guide their children's out-of-school time is that students spend 70 percent of their waking hours *outside* school. How they spend that time, and with whom, is critical to their success *in* school. Reginald Clark's studies have found that students who spend at least 20 hours a week out of school in "high-yield learning activities" with responsible, caring adults tend to have higher grades and test scores.[2]

3. **Third, parent advocacy and support has a protective effect on children.** The more families can speak out for children and support their progress, the better their children do, and the longer they stay, in school. It takes a fairly complex skill set to do this job. To be effective advocates, parents must:

1. Know how the system works;
2. Work with school staff to plan for their children's future;
3. Guide children through the system, steering them to higher-level classes and programs;
4. Know where to get help when their children need it; and
5. Speak out for their children, and for other students and families, when problems arise.

Opportunities to learn these skills, from workshops to full-blown parent leadership training programs such as the Parent Leadership Exchange in Massachusetts, the Parent Leadership Training Program in Connecticut, the Parent Education Network in Wyoming, and the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership in Kentucky, give low-income and less well-educated families a real advantage.

4. **The fourth big story is that investing in parent education when children are young will pay off throughout their whole career in school.** The

[1] Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement* (Austin TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002).

[2] Reginald Clark, "Ten Hypotheses about what predicts student achievement for African American students and all other students: what the research shows," in Walter L. Allen et al. (eds), *African American Education: Race, Community, Inequality and Achievement—A Tribute to Edgar G. Epps* (Oxford, UK: Elsevier Science, 2002).

Child-Parent Center (CPC) program in Chicago is an excellent example. This is a center-based, early intervention program that provides comprehensive education and family support services to low-income children and parents from pre-school to third grade.

Direct parent involvement in the CPC program is designed to enhance parent-child interactions, parent and child connection to school, social support among parents, and children's school readiness and social adjustment. The program requires that parents take part at least one-half day per week. A parent resource room, staffed by trained parent resource teachers, offers a variety of activities, including parent-to-parent and parent-child interactions. It also offers materials, training, GED classes, membership on a school advisory council, and participation in school activities such as field trips.

The chart on the next page, from an important study by Arthur Reynolds and Melissa Clements (2005), summarizes the benefits for children whose parents took part in the CPC program from 1 to 6 years. In short, CPC students were better prepared for school and more likely to finish high school, and less likely to be maltreated, repeat a grade, need special education services, or be arrested.

Each year that families participated in the program increased the odds that their children would graduate from high school by 16 percent. Over 80 percent of the students whose parents were involved for the whole 6 years graduated from high school, compared to 38 percent of students whose parents were not involved at all.[3] The CPC program is funded in part with title I funds.

Proportion of CPC Pre-school and Comparison Children Achieving School and Social Competence
(Participation 1–6 years)

Child Outcomes	Age	Program Group	Comparison Group	Percentage
At/Above national norm on school readiness	5	46.7%	25.1%	+86%
Completed HS	18–22	65.7%	54.5%	+21%
Child maltreatment	4–17	5.0%	10.3%	−51%
Repeated a grade	6–15	23.0%	38.4%	−40%
Special education	6–18	14.4%	24.6%	−41%
Juvenile Arrest	10–18	16.9%	25.1%	−33%

5. The more that programs and activities for families are linked to what their children are learning and doing in class, the greater impact they will have on student achievement. Think about all the things schools put on for families: fun fairs, back to school nights, PTA meetings, family fun nights, science fairs, and so on. In general, when these programs and activities focus on helping parents understand what students are learning, what the standards say students should know for their age and grade level, and how they are being taught, they have significantly more impact on student achievement.

Workshops, learning kits, family math and reading events, and other learning activities also are a good investment. Learning what their children are doing in class, practicing learning activities with their children, then borrowing materials such as math and science kits to use at home, all contribute to student learning.

The most powerful link to learning, however, is close, regular communications between teachers and families. A study of 81 high-poverty title I schools by Westat and Policy Studies Associates (2001), for example, found that three practices of teacher outreach to families lead to a 40–50 percent faster gain in both reading and math among third to fifth grade students:

- Meeting with families face to face.
- Sending materials on ways to help their children at home.
- Telephoning both routinely and when their child was having problems.[4]

If schools could do only this—and how hard would it be to do these three things?—they would be using parent involvement as an intentional strategy for improving achievement and their students would be making substantial gains. Provided, of course, that the classroom teaching was effective.

[3] Arthur Reynolds and Melissa Clements, "Parental Involvement and Children's School Success," in Eva Patrikakou et al. (eds), School-Family Partnerships: Promoting the Social, Emotional, and Academic Growth of Children (NY: Teachers College Press, 2005).

[4] Westat and Policy Studies Associates, *The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance in title I Schools, Volume I.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, 2001) *www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/esed/lescp—highlights.html.*

6. **Community organizing efforts to build parent and community leadership are improving schools** efforts by community organizations to engage parents in improving low-performing schools are growing across the country. Parent leadership training and community organizing expand families' knowledge of how the system works and how to make it work for their children. Unlike traditional, school-based parent involvement, parent leadership and community organizing programs build partnerships to support schools and hold them accountable for results.

Recent studies by the Community Involvement Program of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, which is based in Providence, RI, have found that community organizing contributed to these changes in schools:

- upgraded school facilities;
- improved school leadership and staffing;
- higher quality learning programs for students;
- new resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum;
- greater parent and community involvement in school activities and programs; and
- new funding for family services and after-school programs.[5]

Schools in low-income areas should be working with community organizations, rather than seeing them as "outsiders" who want to "interfere with" the school. Schools also should work closely with providers of after-school programs, to make sure their tutoring and homework help are aligned with what students are learning in class and focused on skills that need to be strengthened.

7. **The final big story is about building and sustaining effective partnerships with families. When families are welcomed and treated with respect, honored for their contributions, and connected to teachers, other parents and what's happening in the classroom, they become motivated to be involved over the long-term, in ways that can improve their children's success in school.**

I often hear complaints that low-income families "don't care about their kids," or "don't value education." This could not be farther from the truth. Kathy Hoover-Dempsey and Howard Sandler have done a series of studies on parent motivation and found that three key factors influence the choices parents make about being involved in their children's education:

1. **How parents develop their job description as a parent.** (Researchers call this "role construction.") What parents think they're *supposed* to do to help their children, and what teachers, family and friends say about what's important and *acceptable*, deeply affect what parents decide to do.

2. **How confident parents feel about their ability to help their children.** (Researchers call this "efficacy.") Parents are more likely to become involved if they feel that:

- they have the skills and knowledge needed to help their children;
- their children can learn what they have to share and teach;
- they can find other sources of skill or knowledge if needed; and
- what they do will make a positive difference in their children's learning.

3. **Whether parents feel invited—both by their children and the school.** This "sense of invitation" is strongly influenced by signals that parents receive from their children and school staff. These signals that let parents know what their children and teachers want and expect. Their children's age, and how well they're doing in school, also have an impact. (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997)[6] In her current research, Hoover-Dempsey notes that of the three factors, invitation is very often the most important.

In other words, we know that parents are more motivated to support their children's learning when they receive clear invitations and support from teachers and other school staff to be engaged, are confident about their ability to help their children, and are clear about what they should do to support their child's learning. Obviously, school staff can have a big impact on these considerations, especially on making parents feel invited and welcome.

At Wyman Elementary School in St. Louis a couple of years ago, I was attending a breakfast for parents. Standing just outside the door was an African-American parent, hesitating to come in. I went over and greeted her, introducing myself. She

[5] Kavitha Mediratta, *Constituents of Change: Community Organizations and Public Education Reform* (NY: Institute for Education and Social Policy, 2004).

[6] Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey and Howard Sandler, "Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education?" *Review of Educational Research,* 67(1)1997, 3–42.

said she was "Tyrone's mom" and had never been inside the school before. "Why did you come this time?" I asked.

"Because Tyrone's teacher called and invited me," she said.

When I asked if she had ever gotten other invitations to come to the school, she said, "Yes, I got flyers and other stuff. But I didn't think they meant ME. I didn't think they wanted ME to come." I'll never forget her.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TITLE I AND SECTION 1118 OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

"It Takes A Parent," a recent report by the Appleseed organization, is based on research involving 18 school districts in six States. The report finds that:

- data reports are often confusing and overwhelming, and parents wait months for performance results, often into the next school year;
- teachers and administrators often lack training in how to engage parents; and
- parent involvement has fallen to the bottom of the list of NCLB requirements, though it is integral to the success of the law and of students and schools.

The report concludes, and I agree, that current parent involvement provisions of the law are solid and ambitious, but require more faithful implementation and greater enforcement.[7]

1. First, make sure the requirements for compacts and policies are taken seriously and enforced. School staff must use the compact as a tool for collaborating with families to improve achievement. Instead, districts and schools tend to see it as a burden and do the bare minimum to satisfy the law. The general guidance on the U.S. Department of Education Web site is being copied and inserted into compacts all over the country. This is a missed opportunity.

When compacts were first proposed in 1994, one idea was to have a personal learning plan for every title I student. Because this was seen as burdensome, the 1994 law instead required a general compact, which can be discussed individually and made more detailed at parent-teacher conferences.

I recommend that schools be required to take the following steps in implementing compacts:

1. Look at the school's test data with parents. What are the areas of low achievement? Break down the data to find any gaps between different groups of students.
2. Set priorities for improvement and establish a goal for each group. For example, if reading scores are low across the board, then make improving reading skills a priority.
3. Ask parents, students, and school staff what *they* should do to meet the goals. Then ask each group to list what it wants the *others* to do.
4. Focus the compact on concerns that have come up in the discussions. For each area (e.g. homework, communication, rules of behavior), list what each group can do.
5. Draw up a first draft, then ask for comments. Revise it based on reactions from parents, teachers and students.
6. Review and customize the compact for each child at parent-teacher conferences.

The following chart, from my new book *Beyond the Bake Sale*, contrasts the typical compact (on the right) with one that has more specific links to learning.[8]

Compact Linked to Learning: This compact pledges our school community to increase student reading and math skills so all students will be proficient by the end of third grade.	***Old Style Compact:*** ''This compact will promote effective working relationships to improve student achievement.''

[7] *It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act,* (Washington, DC.: Appleseed, 2006). *www.appleseednetwork.org.*

[8] Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies, *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (NY: The New Press, 2007) 104–105.

Parent's Pledge: I will • Monitor my child's progress and let the teacher know right away if I notice any problems. • Use reading and math materials the school sends home each week to help my child. • Read to my child 20 minutes a day and keep a list of new words. • Limit TV to 1 hour a day and talk to my child about our favorite program. • Help my child see how to use reading and math to pursue interests and goals.	***Parent's Pledge: I will*** • Send my child to school every day. • Keep in contact with school once a month. • Support the school dress and discipline codes. • Limit TV watching time. • Be an active participant in my child's learning process.
Student's Pledge: I will • Ask for help from my teacher and family if I am having trouble doing my work. • Read on my own and with my family every day ..... • Work on my math and reading skills at home, using the materials my teacher sends home. • Write down assignments, do my homework every day, and turn it in when it's due. • Talk to my family about my favorite TV program	***Student's Pledge: I will*** • Complete my classwork. • Come to school prepared to learn. • Respect adults, myself and other students. • Obey school rules. • Complete my homework.
Teacher's Pledge: I will • Build a relationship with every family in my class ..... • Keep families informed of their children's progress and needs in each subject. • Make sure every student gets the help he/she needs as soon as it's needed. • Send home learning materials in math and reading ..... • Explain my approach to teaching, expectations, and grading to students and their families. • Work on my reading and math strategies so that I can reach all children. • Make sure students understand assignments and what they'll learn from them.	***Teacher's Pledge: I will*** • Have high expectations for all students. • Develop a classroom climate that is comfortable for all students. • Develop proficient learners. • Enforce rules fairly and consistently. • Provide the books and necessary supplies for education.

2. Schools also should be required to develop, with parent participation and approval, school parent involvement policies and programs that actually commit schools to do what the compact says and to make the school family-friendly. For example, the policy should allow parents to observe in the classroom so they can see how reading and math are being taught; give teachers time in their schedule to meet one-to-one with families; and use title I funds to purchase learning materials that can be sent home.

The policy should provide that all activities, events and programs for families be designed so that in some way they help families:

- Get a clear idea of what their children are learning and doing in class.
- Promote high standards for student work.
- Gain skills to help their children at home.
- Understand what good teaching looks like.
- Discuss how to improve student progress.

The policy also should lay out clear expectations for staff about making the school welcoming and family-friendly. For example, setting standards for customer service in the front office, posting signs that clearly explain where things are in the school, setting aside parking spaces for parents, and establishing regular hours for parents to meet with teachers and the principal.

3. Make it clear that title I funds can be used to hire family-school coordinators and that this is a sound investment. Not only can coordinators save teachers a lot of time, they also act as cultural brokers, bridging differences of class, language and culture between staff and families. For this position to be effective, there must be training both for the coordinator and for school staff about the role of the coordinator. A good job description should consist of four key tasks:

Number One: Help the school to develop a family-friendly school climate. This should be done in cooperation with the principal, teachers, parent organization, and other staff. For example:

• Conduct an annual "welcoming school walk-through" with parents and teachers to make sure the school welcomes families and treats them with respect.

• Work with school staff to use the walk-through results to make improvements (e.g. signs, directions, greeting at front office, displays of student work, regular visiting hours.)

• Create a comfortable family resource room where families can meet, get to know each other, and discuss their interests and concerns. Stock the family room with books, games, learning materials that families can borrow.

• Develop a school family involvement policy with input and approval from parents and teachers.

Number Two: Develop programs and activities designed to engage families in improving student achievement. Plan these in collaboration with an action team of families, teachers, parent organizations, business-community partners, and the principal. For example:

• Design two family involvement programs/activities each quarter to help families participate more effectively in improving their children's learning (e.g., family reading activities, math and science trainings, and career and college planning events).

• Help families understand standards and assessments, student test scores, rubrics, and the school report card.

• Facilitate and organize other parent meetings and workshops, as parents request.

• Collaborate with school staff, community members, partners and families to develop programs and activities geared to reach families who are under-represented because of social, economic, racial and/or language barriers.

Number Three: Help teachers/staff and families develop strong partnerships and enhance communication between families and school staff. For example:

• Create ways for teachers and parents to meet face-to-face. Examples: class meetings, breakfast with principal, getting-to-know-you activities at PTA/PTO meetings.

• Develop monthly contact logs for teachers with families' telephone numbers, so that teachers can be in touch with families at least once a month.

• Communicate regularly with the principal about parents' and families' concerns and ideas for improvement.

• Work with teachers and other staff to develop learning kits that families can take home to use with their children.

• Be a liaison between families and teachers when problems arise, more information needs to be shared, or cultural differences are a barrier.

• Arrange for translation and interpretation services for meetings, parent-teacher conferences, telephone calls, and notes home.

• Partner with community groups to organize tours of the community for school staff to get to know families and neighborhoods better.

Number Four: Develop and implement effective family involvement strategies and activities to empower students and their families. For example:

• Invite parents to participate in school committees and in the school's parent organization. Work with those groups to help them be welcoming and supportive of new members.

• Recruit parents to be a part of school/district decisionmaking committees and meetings. Be sure they have information and background materials to be informed members.

• Document parent/community activities through visual portfolios that include sign-in sheets, flyers, pictures, etc.

• Invite families to participate in professional development training along with staff.

• Ask parents to evaluate parent meetings and parent/family workshops.

• Survey families/school community and school personnel to assess the effectiveness of your school's partnership program.

4. Create a district action team of administrators, teachers and parents. The parents must be leaders who are active in the schools, represent the diversity of students, and know the community. This action team should be responsible for developing and implementing a parent involvement plan as well as engaging families and community members in developing a district policy for parent involvement that applies to all schools, not just to schools receiving title I funds.

This team should design effective approaches to engage families, through the school parent association, focus groups and study circles, to obtain their advice about improving student achievement and to build their social and political connections.

5. Encourage districts to develop district-wide programs that support family involvement, such as family resource centers, professional development for families and school staff, and parent leadership training. Double the 1 percent minimum of their title I funds that districts are required to spend for parent involvement programs, and make clear that it's a minimum.

6. Create separate funding for district investment in early childhood programs that promote parent involvement and school readiness, modeled on the Child-Parent Centers in Chicago.

7. Require every State education agency to designate a high-level official to head an office for family and community engagement that will enforce the parent involvement requirements in the law. This office must have full responsibility to set standards and indicators for proficient school and district practices of family involvement, to make sure that districts fully engage families in improving schools and student achievement, and to offer information, technical assistance, and other resources to school districts, schools, and parent and community organizations, as well as other SEA staff.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to share my views. I encourage the committee to make sure that proven strategies for effectively engaging families are an integral part of every State, district and school improvement plan to improve the achievement of our most vulnerable children. Yes, we must continue to uphold the high standards for accountability set by No Child Left Behind, but we must also understand that we will not reach the goal we have set for our children unless parents are full partners in the effort to make it happen.

Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Anne. For the benefit of my colleagues, Ms. Henderson has to leave at 4:30 p.m., in about 20 minutes and Mr. Ritter will depart at 5 p.m..

Senator Gregg, do you have an opening statement or remarks?

Senator GREGG. No. Senator Enzi wished to be here, obviously. This is an important issue and he wanted to be here, but he has some issues of health in his family and he had to attend to those.

Senator REED. Senator Brown or Senator Murkowski, do you have statements or comments? Thank you very much. If anyone does have questions for Ms. Henderson, now might be an appropriate time. If not, then we'll recognize Mr. Ritter and then we hope we have time at the end of the testimony to respond.

Let me introduce Mr. Philip J. Ritter. Mr. Ritter has been with Texas Instruments for nearly 20 years, has led their public and community affairs department since 2001. Texas Instruments supports a number of programs in Texas and nationwide to improve science and math curriculum, offer more students advanced classes, prepare students for high tech jobs, help teachers incorporate technology into their classrooms, improve graduation rates in Texas and personally involve their staff in schools for mentoring. That's quite an impressive list, Mr. Ritter. Thank you for being here today. Please.

STATEMENT OF PHILIP J. RITTER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TEXAS INSTRUMENTS, DALLAS, TEXAS

Mr. RITTER. Thank you, Senator Reed and members of the committee. It is a privilege to be here. TI and a lot of other high tech companies are spending a lot of time with all of you on the Hill talking about innovation and competitiveness and what it means for our country and certainly it means things like investment of basic research. It means things like the right immigration policies,

R&D tax credit and so forth but as important as any of that is, getting K–12 education right and we see the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind as being absolutely critical to the competitiveness agenda that we all care so much about and we're strongly supportive of it.

As you mentioned, TI has been deeply involved at the State level on education reform, really going back to the mid-1980s when the Democratic Governor, Mark White, appointed Ross Peroe, Senior and Tom Luce to chair a Blue Ribbon Commission on Education Reform. It's really launched a lot of the philosophy in Texas that came into the national forefront through the original No Child Left Behind legislation and that philosophy and the way we see it is deeply rooted in data. It's deeply rooted in identifying best practices and deploying best practices, including strategies for parental involvement. It's about accountability. It's about campus-level leadership and particularly leadership by principals and it's about the professional development of educators.

Probably the most important outcome of No Child Left Behind is the ability to generate longitudinal data over time and really use that data to tease out what the best practices are and this capability has honed every significant education effort that TI has been involved in over the past 20 years.

Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we became very, very interested in early childhood education and we adopted, got very involved with Frasier Elementary School in South Dallas and we realized—and this is one of the poorest performing schools in DISD and we quickly realized after talking to the principals and the leaders in DISD that if we wanted to impact educational outcomes in that community, we needed to do something about early childhood education and so for 12 years, our Foundation worked with SMU to roll out a language rich early reading curriculum at the preschool that fed Frasier Elementary and we used the accountability system in Texas to generate data that proved that that investment in early childhood education had a long-term impact on kids, right on through the fifth grade and on into middle school.

We had the data to prove it and after about 10 years of that effort, we took that data to the Texas legislature in the late 1990s and it was the basis for the legislature investing over $80 million over 2 years in language rich, early reading curriculum.

So that's an illustration of the power of the accountability system, the data system that we have in place in the States and also encourage it at the national level, to inform best practices and command the investment of resources into things that work.

We're doing something similar right now in the math and science area with a middle school in Richardson, which is a school district just north of Dallas and we're very, very encouraged by the results there. We've got an effort underway as well with the Dallas Independent School District to see how the accountability system, how the data can be used for systemic improvement across a large urban school district.

It's been frustrating to us that you can get outstanding results at a handful of campuses inside an urban school district but we've never figured out how to use this system in a systemic way to lift up an entire urban school district. So that's the effort that we've

got underway today in Dallas and we could not do that if we didn't have this particular policy framework in place.

So without this framework that is in No Child Left Behind, results are difficult to measure. Best practices are harder to identify and the data to justify investments in things that work is much more difficult to obtain and we'd strongly encourage your reauthorization of this legislation. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ritter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PHILIP J. RITTER

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Texas Instruments (TI) is a company with a 76-year history of innovation. While our business portfolio has changed over the years, we have always been a company of engineers and scientists. TI is the world's third largest semiconductor company. Semiconductors are the enabling technology of the information technology industry and are responsible for unprecedented productivity gains across all sectors over the last several decades. Chips drive everything from computers to cell phones, to MP3 players, GPS systems, HDTVs, automotive safety, medical devices, and advanced weapons systems.

American innovation is a top policy priority for TI. The key elements needed for the United States to sustain its technology leadership are: investing in basic research, welcoming the world's brightest minds, extending the R&D tax credit—and perhaps most importantly—improving math and science education. The reauthorization of No Child Left Behind is an element in ensuring that our children have the skills to compete in the global economy.

HISTORY OF COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

The importance TI places on K–12 math and science education is due in part to our corporate culture and to the changing skills and levels of education we require of our technical workforce. TI founders understood the need for highly skilled engineering talent to support the company's growth and competitiveness. As a result, they founded what later became the University of Texas at Dallas in 1961 to help supply the North Texas region and the company with master's level graduates in engineering. Today, the vast majority of our investment in higher education is directed toward research or the development of a technical workforce in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Our hiring challenges and our involvement in public policy at the local, State and national levels, however, made it clear to us that in order to support long-term growth and improve our competitiveness in a worldwide marketplace it was imperative to invest in the K–12 education pipeline. And we have been doing so now for many years. In addition to the direct benefit of developing a highly qualified workforce, TI believes that having a high quality education system helps to strengthen the overall quality of life in our plant site communities. Today, TI's corporate philanthropy is largely focused on education. Each year we make financial contributions totaling millions of dollars in grants and other gifts to schools, colleges and educational programs.

Our involvement in education advocates systemic reform on the local, State and national levels to close the achievement gap and improve student performance. Particularly in preschool and K–12 education, TI seeks opportunities for fundamental change by developing programs with measurable success that can be replicated elsewhere. In recent years, TI's educational K–12 philanthropy has placed increasingly more emphasis than ever before on core areas, such as math, science and engineering, to help foster our next generation of high-tech innovators.

TI has long been a leader in the effort to advance assessment and accountability processes in the Texas public schools, an approach that has been nationally recognized. TI served as a corporate co-chair of the business coalition to pass No Child Left Behind and is a member of the Business Coalition for Student Achievement supporting NCLB reauthorization. The BCSA calls for making science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and readiness for college and the workplace priorities under NCLB.

While semiconductors are the key source of revenue for the company, TI's Education Technology business is also focused on improving math achievement for all students by fostering quality education instruction in mathematics education. I will also discuss some of its activities and the way in which it has embraced the letter and spirit of No Child Left Behind.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

TI hires employees with skills at different levels, but our needs are evolving. Because of the continuing complexity of the design process and other technological advances, more is expected from engineering graduates in terms of the breadth of their engineering coursework exposure and experiences at all levels of higher education—BS, MS and Ph.D.

Semiconductor manufacturing has migrated from the era of placing a high value on manual dexterity on the assembly line to one of mental dexterity on the clean room floor. A TI manufacturing specialist must have a basic knowledge of math and science skills. Our technicians must have an associates' degree in semiconductor manufacturing technology and pass a comprehensive test that covers basic electronics, applied physics and basic chemistry.

Finding individuals with the right skills set, particularly at the engineering level is a challenge. This will soon be exacerbated as the baby boomer retires. This one demographic change is expected to reduce the U.S. science and engineering workforce by half. Today only 17 percent of U.S. college students receive undergraduate degrees in science and engineering, compared to 52 percent in China and 41 percent in Korea.

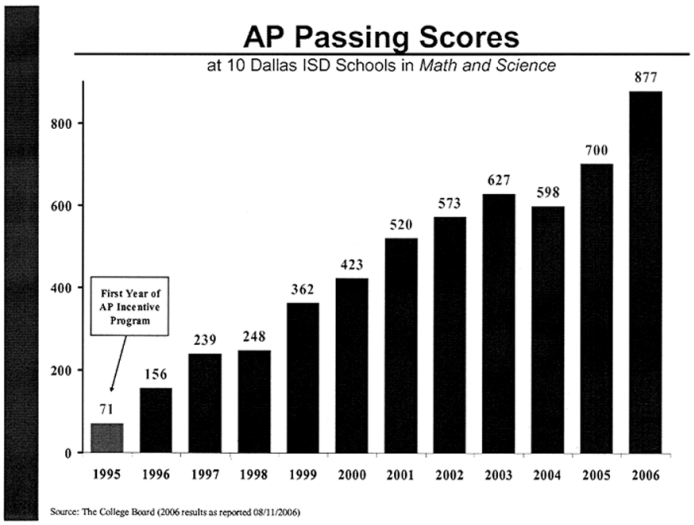
The semiconductor industry depends on electrical engineers to design and develop the chips. In 2006, over half of the master's degrees and 71 percent of the PhDs in electrical engineering from U.S. universities were awarded to foreign nationals. The number of U.S. bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering has remained relatively flat and has declined since 1983. U.S. citizens and permanent residents enrolled in graduate degree programs in the physical sciences and engineering are only 2.7 percent higher than in 1983.

We need to address student interest and skills in these fields at all stages of the pipeline, from K–12 through university and graduate-level. Strong math skills are a gating factor for majoring in science or engineering.

STRATEGIES FOR DRIVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

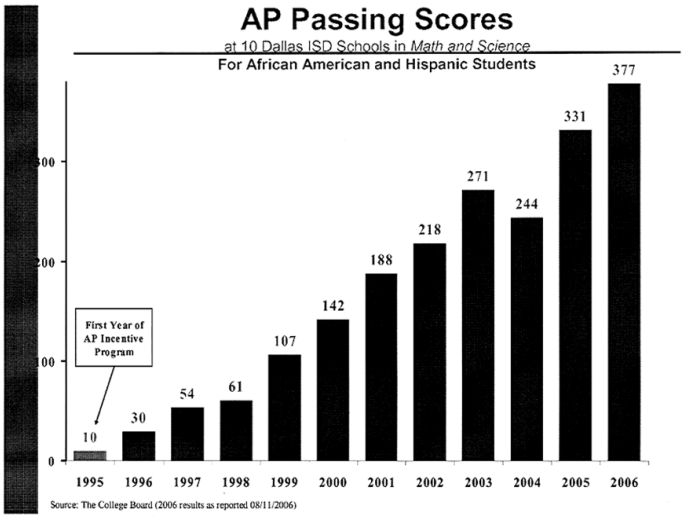
TI and its Foundation support several education programs, but I will discuss a few that speak most clearly to strategies that engage communities in improving education.

Advanced Placement Strategies, Inc. is a non-profit organization that works with Texas schools and the private sector to plan and manage Advanced Placement (AP® and Pre-AP® incentive programs for teachers, students and schools. The program was created by the O'Donnell Foundation and has been supported by the Texas Instruments Foundation for several years. Exxon Mobil recently provided significant new funding to this program which has garnered considerable attention. It also serves as the basis for the Administration's request for an expansion of Advanced Placement funding. The program is designed to encourage students to take more rigorous college-level course work in high school, which prepares them for success in postsecondary education, as well as high-tech careers. The program provides financial incentives to teachers and students that are based upon achieving academic results, namely passing the AP test. Other program components include Pre-AP teacher preparation and support; student support, including tutoring, prep sessions and summer academies; and student exam fees for AP and PSAT® exams.



As a result of the AP Incentive program operated in the Dallas Independent School District, the 10 DISD Incentive Schools have seen the number of passing scores for all students in math and science grow 1,135 percent from pre-incentive program levels (from 71 students passing in 1995 to 877 passing in 2006).

In addition the number of passing scores for African-American and Hispanic students in math and science have grown 3,670 percent from pre-incentive program levels (10 students passing in 1995 to 377 in 2003).



TI Math Scholars.—Underscoring our commitment to build tomorrow's workforce through higher education, the TI Foundation just recently announced a $1.1 million gift to establish the TI Math Scholars program at the University of North Texas Dallas Campus. The program's goal is to encourage more students, especially underrepresented groups such as minorities and women to seek bachelor's degrees in mathematics and teacher certification. Scholars must agree to teach in the Dallas ISD (priority) or other southern Dallas County school districts for a minimum of 2 years upon graduation. The TI Math Scholars program will provide a focused degree plan in mathematics with high-quality instruction combined with direct student support initiatives. Full tuition, fees and a book allowance will be awarded to full-

34476-1.eps 34476-2.eps

time students enrolled in the program. Our goal is 30 students for the 2007 fall semester.

The Infinity ProjectSM is a math and science-rich engineering curriculum for high school students created in collaboration between the Institute for Engineering Education at Southern Methodist University and TI. It is achieving success by helping change student attitudes towards math, science and engineering by exciting students about real world technology applications that are relevant to their lives, such as cell phones, MP3 players, digital special effects in movies and much more. This full-year curriculum is helping both students and teachers answer the age-old question, "Why do I need to learn this math?" By linking fundamental mathematical concepts found in algebra 2 (like polynomials and matrices) to the fascinating and cool applications, students are better prepared and motivated to pursue higher level math and science courses and to consider pursuing engineering and technical degrees.

A hallmark of the program's early success has been the open communication between the Infinity Project and classroom teachers as the curriculum was developed and as it continues to be implemented. That two-way "give and take" has provided a deep understanding of student, teacher, principal and district administrator needs.

The Infinity Project is in its seventh year and has been introduced in several schools across Texas and in 33 other States. Today, the program has numerous corporate sponsors and enjoys support from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and several universities across the country including George Mason, Purdue, Rose-Hulman, Santa Clara University, University of Michigan, University of Central Florida, University of Arizona, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology, as well as several Texas institutions. Early data indicates that 40 percent of the students who complete the course say they are interested in pursuing engineering in the future. Nationally only 2 percent of the graduating high school population goes on to receive an engineering degree. We hope that Infinity will help boost those numbers. In a pilot study conducted in 2006 in a large urban high school, students taking the Infinity Project course had a 20 percentage point gain in their passing rate on the State-mandated math assessment, versus a 7 percentage point gain in the student population.

Recently, at the urging of TI and other Infinity partners in Texas, the Texas State Board of Education recently voted to require students to complete successfully 4 years of math and sciences to earn a high school degree under the recommended "college prep" curriculum. And for the first time the board approved engineering as a course option which will fulfill one of the required science graduation credits.

Middle School Math Intervention: Middle school is a critical time for math instruction. TI believes strongly that all students must be prepared to take and pass algebra as a basic skill.

TI's Education Technology division has developed a systemic intervention with the Richardson Independent School District that has yielded promising results of a scalable, replicable program for improved student math performance and decreasing the achievement gap. Richardson school district is highly diverse with roughly 35 percent of the student body Caucasian, 31 percent African-American, 26 percent Hispanic and 8 percent Asian. Over 91 languages are spoken by the students.

The RISD/TI middle school mathematics intervention identified and addressed the key components of the overall math education system, relying on research-proven math teaching methods, increasing teacher training on both math content and technology, increasing instructional time and implementing technology in a way that increases student engagement and gives teachers real-time feedback on which math concepts their students have mastered and those concepts the teachers need to spend more time on that students don't yet understand.

The first year program was targeted at students who had failed the 2005 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Independent evaluation research showed a very large effect size and a 33 percent pass rate on the TAKS vs. a 19 percent pass rate in a comparison group.

As a result of this promising first year experience, Richardson ISD is now working with TI to scale the model to more schools and more grade levels, and we are working with additional districts in Texas, Ohio, and Florida to further bring the model to scale.

As an education technology provider to schools, TI has taken the requirements and prescriptions of No Child Left Behind to heart, recognizing that technology used in the classroom must contribute to student achievement. TI recently provided testimony to the National Math Panel (which is scheduled to release its report later this year) that includes independent effectiveness research on the use of graphing technology in the classroom. Specifically, a meta-analysis of eight individual studies ad-

dressed the impact of graphing calculator use on student achievement and found strong evidence that student use of graphing calculators increased performance in algebra. TI is now conducting a 3-year randomized controlled trial study to further determine the effectiveness of various TI technologies and professional development in Algebra 1. It will be completed this year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost, we urge that Congress remain committed to and protect the integrity of the original law—with high standards, assessments aligned to those standards, greater accountability and highly qualified teachers as the formula for continuing to drive improvement. NCLB is making progress. Is it perfect? No. But it is fundamentally sound policy and should be retained.

Second, we must expand high-quality professional development opportunities for current teachers and create opportunities and incentives to draw more qualified people into the teaching profession. Teacher quality is a huge determinant in student achievement.

Third, Congress should support programs that would improve elementary, middle school math instruction, such as MathNow and the Math and Science Partnerships at the Department of Education and National Science Foundation. Effective programs such as the one I described in Richardson, for example, could be scaled under MathNow.

Fourth, at the high school level, we should create opportunities and incentives for more high school students to take and pass Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.

Finally, we in the private sector must also help by doing our part and ensuring that we are contributing positively to the goals of NCLB and math/science excellence. In that vein, we would like to suggest criteria for ramping public/private partnerships that we feel would help drive student achievement.

1. Require that the program demonstrate how it supports and/or builds upon State standards in mathematics and/or science. Programs that do not support or enhance State standards can be a distraction to schools trying to comply with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, particularly in low-performing schools. Mike Moses, the former Superintendent of Schools for the Dallas Independent School District called unaligned programs "random acts of kindness" that while well-intentioned, do not move the ball any closer to the ultimate goal.

2. Require programs that involve professional development to tie into the No Child Left Behind requirement ensuring that teachers are highly qualified. Study after study demonstrates that teacher quality is a key determinant of student success. Private sector efforts should support that goal.

3. Require that programs be replicable and identify the key elements for successful implementation.

4. Ensure that programs demonstrate some clear result, i.e., increased test scores, students taking tougher courses, etc. Soft metrics on the number of "students touched" or "teachers given professional development" are not sufficient.

America is at a crossroads, both in terms of how it responds to the competitive pressures of a worldwide economy and in terms of the focus and priority it gives to ensuring that all students are prepared with the math, science and literacy skills needed to succeed in that economy. Business, government and the academic establishments need to work together, now more than ever, to ensure that we are achieving the right goals and that we are equipping our children with the world-class education they need. This legislation can be an effective tool in aligning private sector resources around this objective.

I want to commend the committee for its tireless work in support of education excellence. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Ritter and we've been joined by Senator Clinton. I don't know if you have any opening remarks? Thank you very much.

Now let me recognize Daniel Cardinali and thank you for observing our 5-minute rule. It's flexible but thank you and Mr. Cardinali and Kathy and Wendy, if you could do that also, I'd appreciate it. Your whole statements will be put in the record.

Mr. Cardinali has served as President of Communities in Schools since May 2004. He is responsible for the day-to-day operations and provides guidance to a network of 200 local nonprofits and 14 State

offices. Communities in Schools annually provides mentoring, tutoring, before and after school programs and other services to about one million students in 3,000 schools nationwide. So thank you very much for joining us, Mr. Cardinali.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL CARDINALI, PRESIDENT, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS, INC., ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Mr. CARDINALI. Thank you, Senator Reed and members of the committee. It's an honor to be able to testify today with you all. I just wanted to highlight a little bit about Communities in Schools' 30 years experience and where we're drawing from for our remarks today.

We are in 27 States and the District of Columbia working with over a million young people and a quarter of a million parents or guardians in about 3,200 public schools. The goal of our organization is to keep young people in school so they graduate on time and to close the achievement gap. It is from this 30-year experience today that we want to comment on why we believe something called Community-Based Integrated Student Support Services are an integral part of solving the drop-out problem and helping close the achievement gap.

These recommendations that we will make today—three—are really rooted in good, sound education practices and good fiscal responsibility. As you all are well aware, every 9 seconds, we lose a student. Every day, we lose 7,000 students and on an annual basis, we lose about 1.2 million students who do not graduate on time. That would be like this year, losing the city of Philadelphia completely or the city of Dallas next year.

So to say that we have a drop-out problem is to understate the crisis that we're facing. The good news is that there have been enormous strides in improving public education. Increased accountability system, increased support to teachers and rigor of teachers and certainly increased rigor in the classroom.

It is, however, Communities in Schools and those of us in the Community-Based Integrated Student Service provision sector—it is our opinion that all of these strategies are utterly necessary but insufficient for improving public education unless an integrated strategy be included to provide student support services, particularly for those most at risk.

We know, out of our experience and the research is certainly clear that the most rigorous curriculum and highly qualified teachers will not be able to be effective if the basic social service needs of young people are not met. We know and the research bears it out that providing the right nonacademic social service interventions, students have a much better chance at improving academically, especially those that are most at risk.

So what is this effective strategy for working with at-risk young people? We call it Community-Based Integrated Student Supports. It is a simple notion. They are interventions that work to improve student achievement by linking community resources with the academic and social service needs of students.

There is a fair amount of growing evidence and we've heard it today that the link between academic achievement and integrated

student support services actually improve academic performance for at-risk young people.

So what is the magic of community-based integrated student support services? It is that there is a single point of contact in the school. We call it a site coordinator. It is someone who is dedicated to working with principals and teachers to identify the most at-risk young people and to identify the best community-based resources that have a proven track record and linking those resources to improve student achievement.

The goal is not just to improve student achievement, however. It is to free teachers up to be highly qualified educators and not social workers and it is to unfetter principals to lead the school transformation at their school. Communities in Schools have spent the last 30 years helping pioneer and refine the whole group of folks, community-based integrated student support services. So it is from this experience that we humbly make three recommendations to the committee.

The first is that there be funding for site coordinators to be placed in schools across the United States. We'd like to call it the Keeping Pace Act, which highlights this recommendation as the centerpiece of its recommendations.

The second recommendation we'd like to make today is that when a school goes on the list that needs improvement or for not making AYP, that community-based integrated student support services be a required consideration by the superintendent and principal to improve that school.

The final recommendation today we'd like you to consider is supporting a national initiative that provides training and technical assistance, research and evaluation and ultimately credentializing, to ensure that there is a healthy community of regulated community-based service providers, ensuring that student achievement is a forefront of their activity.

I'd like to close by saying thank you again for the opportunity to testify and it is our recommendation that community-based integrated student support services be an integral component of any of the work you do regarding the reauthorization of NCLB. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cardinali follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL J. CARDINALI

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Kennedy, Ranking Member Enzi, and members of the committee, thank you for the invitation to testify today. So much of our national dialogue concerning our Nation's epidemic dropout rate and persistent achievement gaps centers on the challenges we face and not the solutions that can meet those challenges. Today, I want to shift the discussion and focus to a proven solution—time-tested, research-based, scalable, and illustrated in the lives of millions of students every year. I want to talk about community-based, integrated student services and the need for Federal policy to embrace this strategy among others being pursued to ensure educational success for all students. My name is Dan Cardinali and I am the President of Communities In Schools, the Nation's largest dropout prevention organization.

For 30 years, Communities In Schools has worked to connect community resources with the students who need them most. Whether students need tutoring, homework help, eyeglasses, adults who believe in them, or just a safe place to be, Communities In Schools finds the resources and delivers them right inside the schools where young people spend their days. Communities In Schools reaches low performing students and students at risk of dropping out of school [collectively "at-

risk students"] in 27 States and the District of Columbia in more than 3,250 schools. Our model, serving students through community-based, integrated student services, has proven to work for all types of communities—urban, rural, and suburban—and at all levels of the elementary and secondary pipeline. Eighty to ninety percent of our tracked students show improvement in academic performance, behavior, and attendance. During the school year, the number of suspensions among our tracked students is reduced, and the rate of promotion to the next grade level also increases.

Today, I'd like to address three points regarding this model of student and school support:

1. A description of the model—what it means operationally for schools, how it is implemented, and how it meets the needs of at-risk students.
2. The undisputed evidence that the model works—the national data, the educational research, and most importantly, the stories of success that illustrate how community-based, integrated student services actually make the difference in lives of students throughout our country.
3. The ways in which Federal law should embrace this effort—integrating this proven strategy into the accountability requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act when that legislation is reauthorized.

I hope that when I conclude my remarks, the committee will better understand the wisdom—educationally *and* fiscally—of making modest investments that have the power to transform students' and families' lives by *systemically* addressing our Nation's dropout and achievement gap crises.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED, INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICES MODEL

Let me begin with a brief description of the community-based integrated student services model. Community-based, integrated student services are interventions that improve student achievement by connecting already existing resources in the community—such as mentoring, physical and mental health services, career and college guidance, service-learning, and after-school programs—with public schools to help meet the social, emotional, physical—as well as academic—needs of students. By bringing existing services, parents, and volunteers into schools to work with educators, student needs can be met on an individual, case-by-case basis and through schoolwide programs. Through the efforts of a single point of contact (which we refer to as a school site coordinator), student needs are assessed, and research-based connections are made between students and targeted community resources.

If it's this simple, one might ask, "Why aren't all schools pursuing these resources and services?" In part, the answer lies in the fact that the existing resources in a community that are available to help students and schools are frequently in place, but they're in the wrong place. They are scattered all over town, difficult to access, and open for limited hours. Each support system—an afterschool program, a doctor's office, a mentoring program—has its independent bureaucracy, and requires its own paperwork and systems. Moreover, these systems aren't coordinated in a way to ensure that the delivery is coordinated and personalized to a student's specific needs. The community-based, integrated services model connects these services to schools and students in an organized way in order to assist students effectively and efficiently.

For example, consider Tara, an 11-year-old struggling in middle school. She needs physical and mental health care, an afterschool program, and tutoring. She has a single mother who works for an hourly wage—meaning she doesn't get paid if she doesn't go to work—and doesn't own a car. To make all the appointments, Tara's mother has to take multiple days off work and some of the services from which her daughter could benefit aren't even possible to access, due to cost or distance from their home or public transportation. In short, getting her daughter access to needed services is frustrating and a serious financial hardship, not to mention a logistical nightmare. But in the community-based integrated services model, the school becomes the delivery point for all these services. What's more, there's a dedicated person whose job it is to ensure that services are delivered in a personal, accountable, and coordinated way. (A graphic in Appendix A illustrates how the model works.)

Finally, it is important to recognize that the community-based, integrated student services model does not fundamentally represent yet another new program on top of others. Rather, the model coordinates *existing* resources in order to maximize their impact and create better outcomes for students. It takes services that often exist in silos, uncoordinated, and difficult to access and leverages them through connections to students in need. Critical to the success of this model are volunteers. For example, Communities In Schools' heavily engages volunteers—about 50,000 annually in recent years— as well as existing community-based service organizations. For this reason, these initiatives are extraordinarily cost-effective, typically requir-

ing $400 or less per year for each tracked student. In addition, each $100 of public resources that Communities In Schools uses leverages $82 of private resources! In short, it's not about how much money is spent; it's about leveraging and spending existing resources better.

THE PROVEN EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY-BASED INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICES

Extensive research reflects that community-based, integrated student services are necessary components of effective, school-based efforts to increase graduation rates and improve student achievement. More than 70 percent of the students served by Communities In Schools are poor and of color—groups most at risk of dropping out. While the national dropout rate is 4.8 percent, the dropout rate for African-American and Latino students is between 6 and 7 percent. As we know, dropping out is not an isolated event. It is a cumulative process associated with well-recognized risk factors. Our research demonstrates that only 2 percent of students who were tracked as potential dropouts and provided community-based, integrated services actually dropped out of school, cutting in half the national dropout rate.[1] These services have been evaluated with respect to their impact on the risk factors most frequently associated with high school dropouts and significantly:

- Improve student attendance in school (in our study 82 percent of students had better attendance);
- Reduce behavior incidents (in our study 86 percent had improved behavior);
- Reduce incidents of suspension (in our study 85 percent had fewer suspensions);
- Improve academic achievement (in our study 89 percent improved academics);
- Improve school retention (in our study 98 percent remained in school); and
- Raise graduation rates (in our study 85 percent of eligible seniors graduated).[2]

Moreover, independent research has verified the effectiveness of the community-based, integrated student services model. For instance, a comprehensive evaluation of nine school sites in three New England States that participated in a community-based school environment education project showed growth in teacher enthusiasm and skill, increases in student engagement and learning, academic achievement, and knowledge about the social and natural environment.[3] Further, 92 percent of schools participating in a separate integrated learning environment program found that students academically outperformed their peers in traditional programs as measured by standardized tests, classroom behavior problems reduced by as much as 95 percent, and attendance increased.[4]

We also know that this model is grounded enough in research and theory, yet flexible enough, to work in diverse environments. Communities In Schools affiliates serve all types of students in all types of schools and communities—urban, suburban, and rural. Students in these programs range from native Alaskans to migrant children to disadvantaged youth and every type of child in between. In Alaska, our relatively new Communities In Schools affiliate works to serve more than 1,600 students in 19 schools of various sizes all across this vast State, from Juneau to Nome. In North Carolina, Communities In Schools affiliates make a difference for 80,000 students at 411 school sites from Charlotte to Cape Fear. And in Texas, more than 440,000 students are directly connected with services in more than 630 school sites.

Beyond the data points, the impact of these services can be most vividly seen in the lives of actual students. For instance:

- Martha is a current student in one of our affiliates in central Texas. She is 15 and is repeating the 9th grade. Earlier in the year, she was debating dropping out of school and was failing all of her classes. But her problems weren't just academic. Martha had had a series of abusive relationships with boys and wasn't getting along socially with other students. She struggled at home, too, at one point even running away. After a referral by a teacher to Communities In Schools, a site coordinator in her school helped connect Martha with a tutor, arrange for a psychological evaluation in a timely way (the wait was usually 3 to 6 months), and, once she was diagnosed with depression, facilitate therapy for her and for her family. She also

[1] Extrapolated from findings of Communities In Schools, "Connecting Kids with Community Resources," 2004–2005 Results from the Network report. *http://www.cisnet.org/media/pubs.asp.*

[2] Extrapolated from findings of Communities In Schools, "Connecting Kids With Community Resources," 2004–2005 Results From the Network report. *http://www.cisnet.org/media/pubs.asp.*

[3] PEER Associates, "An Evaluation of Project Co-Seed: Community-Based School Environmental Project, 2003–2004" (Antioch New England Institute and the Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative, December 2004).

[4] The State Education and Environmental Roundtable (SEER). *http://www.seer.org/pages/research. Cited in materials from the South Carolina EIC School Network.*

participated in a community organization, Safeplace, which offers a program for teens who had been in abusive relationships. With the help of these interventions and her caring site coordinator, Martha has undergone a 180-degree transformation. Today, she's working hard in school, at her family and personal relationships, and is back on track.

• In Philadelphia, 22-year old Rasheedah Phillips is a graduate of Temple University and a law student. Rasheedah's journey has been characterized by her determination and the support she received from Communities In Schools. After becoming pregnant as a freshman in high school, Rasheedah was referred to Communities In Schools to participate in the Education Leading to Employment and Career Training, an initiative administered locally as a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and Communities In Schools. She participated in the Teen Parent Classrooms program which provides pregnant and parenting teens with academic, health, and social service supports they need to complete their education and transition to work or postsecondary education. Through this program, Rasheedah drew on the support of staff members, counselors, and social workers who encouraged her and kept her and her daughter healthy and on track to graduate. Her daughter, now 7 years old, has a mom who has completed her first year of law school.

• Acton Archie graduated with honors from North Carolina State and has a good job in the information technology field, but such a bright future was by no means guaranteed. Acton moved 12 times in 12 years and grew up in a rough neighborhood. His father had been murdered when he was five and his mother was a drug addict. Acton had already been in trouble when he became involved with Communities In Schools, where mentors helped Acton focus on improving academically. He participated in Communities In Schools' ThinkCOLLEGE program which helps students find scholarships and qualify for higher education. Acton won two scholarships that helped him to attend college. He now works as a business analyst.

• Robert Guy moved around a lot during his growing up years and struggled to find his place. In order to move forward in school and in life, he needed to focus on improving his grades and study skills. Communities In Schools helped him through its non-traditional high school, the Classic City Performance Learning Center in Athens, Georgia. There, surrounded by supportive staff—including a learning facilitator and advisor—teachers, and other students, Robert thrived. He worked hard to improve his grades and study skills and became a leader in the school. In 2 years, his efforts helped him to win a scholarship to Morehouse College, where he is pursuing his undergraduate degree and on the Dean's list.

These are just four stories of the thousands that illustrate the way in which community-based, integrated student services can help students excel and achieve their dreams. For every student like Martha, Rasheedah, Acton, and Robert, however, there are thousands more who need that assistance.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the bipartisan Commission on No Child Left Behind in its recently released report, *Beyond NCLB: Fulfilling the Promise to Our Nation's Children*, concluded:

> We believe it is crucial to address students' behavioral and social needs in addition to their academic needs. Therefore, we recommend requiring schools to determine the availability of social services and mental health services for their students while developing the school's improvement plan. Schools . . . should fully understand all needs of their students and the resources to meet those needs. Academic interventions can be more effective when coupled with an assessment of the mental health and other needs of students.[5]

And, just last year, the Appleseed Foundation conducted a national study that involved a 9-month investigation in 18 school districts in six States, where (among others) more than 100 school district and school leaders and teachers were interviewed and where nearly 30 parent focus groups were conducted. Appleseed concluded in one of its five recommendations that districts and schools "should leverage their own limited support by engaging community organizations." Specifically, Appleseed found:

[5] The Commission on No Child Left Behind. *Beyond No Child Left Behind* (2007). *http://www.aspeninstitute.org/site/c.huLWJeMRKpH/b.938015/k.40DA/Commission__on__No__Child__Left__Behind.htm/*, 94.

> [There is] nearly universal acknowledgement by educators, parent groups and community groups about the vital impact that supporting trusted community organizations can have in helping students and schools succeed.[6]

Thus, the report recommended that districts and schools should:

• **Evaluate student needs and available resources** . . . The first step in leveraging community support is evaluating the needs of students and the kinds of resources that are available to meet them.

• **Ensure that staff are charged with making community connections** . . . Districts and schools should clearly designate individuals who are responsible for making the necessary connections between community resources and student/parent needs.

• **Develop clear areas of responsibility and measure results** . . . [A]ny outreach and services coordination plan should be fully integrated and aligned with the district's overall accountability plan.[7]

THE IMPERATIVE FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

This basic framework proposed by the Appleseed study, which is aligned with the theory and operation of the community-based integrated student services model, should therefore be at the forefront of conversations regarding the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. With their passage over 5 years ago, the amendments to ESEA reflected in The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 focused on a number of core academic accountability measures, including the development of accountability systems with data transparency, more expansive use of standardized testing, and greater emphasis on teacher quality. However, while those areas of focus are vitally important, research and practice both tell us (as discussed above) that more is required to support students who are at significant risk of dropping out of school or not achieving academic success. And it is important to recognize that 5 years since the passage of No Child Left Behind, not only are the dropout crisis and achievement gap real, but they are, in the vast majority of cases, preventable. Thus, in short, Federal law addresses a necessary but not sufficient set of conditions and challenges that must be addressed if the goal of leaving no child behind is to be realized.

On January 31, 2007, Communities In Schools presented to Congress our major recommendations regarding the reauthorization of ESEA that addresses that gap. (I have attached a copy of our policy brief and these recommendations as Appendix B in my testimony.) In summary, Communities In Schools recommends that Federal law incorporate as a major element of reform community-based, integrated strategies in the three ways:

1. The establishment of school-based coordinators responsible for assessing and connecting student needs and community resources;
2. Expansion of the range of school improvement steps required of schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), including consideration of ways community-based integrated student services might be leveraged to support their efforts; and
3. Authorization of funding for a new national initiative that will establish and implement research- and evidence-based standards associated with community-based integrated student services in order to support the provision of systemic, replicable, and cost-effective services.

First, Congress should provide competitive grant funding for community-based, nonprofit organizations to provide integrated, school-based services to at-risk students with funding targeted toward support for dedicated staff in schools that can identify and match student needs and community resources to meet those needs. The effective and efficient delivery of community-based, integrated services to students depends upon this important staff foundation. This is why Communities in Schools is so pleased to support the legislation that Senator Kennedy has just authored, the Keeping PACE Act. For the first time in history, this legislation, if passed, would incorporate as part of ESEA key elements of a time-tested model to advance meaningful community and parental involvement in schools. Specifically, that legislation recognizes the importance of dedicated staff who are charged with the responsibility of connecting community resources with students in need, as well

[6] Appleseed Foundation, "It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act," (2006). *http://www.appleseednetwork.org/servlet/PublicationInfo?articleld=211,* 35.

[7] Appleseed Foundation, "It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act," (2006). *http://www.appleseednetwork.org/servlet/PublicationInfo?articleld=211,* 35.

as the wisdom of a Federal investment in the community sector—all with key elements of accountability that would drive program operations and the evaluation of outcomes.

Second, Congress should expand the range of support for schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In basic terms, we must move to a system of differentiated consequences for schools not making AYP, so that the support or intervention provided to those schools is directly aligned with and proportional to the actual schools' needs—and therefore more likely to help the school achieve its improvement goals. I know that you have heard from many charged with implementing Federal law about the vital need to take this step, a point on which we concur.[8] Communities In Schools is asking that all schools be required to evaluate and, as appropriate, pursue the effective and efficient delivery of community-based, integrated student services when they do not meet State performance goals over time. This focus should be a central—and required—element of school improvement planning for schools that are struggling to meet the needs of their students.

Third, Congress should authorize funding for a new initiative that will establish and implement a national framework for research- and evidence-based criteria to guide the provision of systemic, scalable, cost-effective, and educationally sound services. The delivery of community-based, integrated student services in schools nationwide should be guided by criteria and standards that govern the delivery of training, technical assistance, certification, and evaluation services for community-based organizations that provide integrated student services to at-risk youth. For the purposes of educational effectiveness and fiscal efficiency, we believe that Congress should authorize a national initiative that:

- Establishes systemic, replicable, and research-based support for the local provision of community-based, integrated student services;
- Ensures that the Federal investment adheres to well-developed, research- and evidence-based models, and that students are receiving high-quality, effective, and cost-efficient services and interventions;
- Provides school coordinators, who play a critical role in making connections between community resources and students in need, access to high-quality technical assistance and training; and
- Evaluates programs based on national standards.

CONCLUSION

The role of community organizations in schools offers tremendous potential to improve the lives of students *and* to leverage the public's current investment in education. Strategies to integrate student services are effective ways of reaching students and helping them to achieve their fullest potential. Given the private sector volunteer commitment associated with these services, those strategies are also fiscally smart. Congress should, therefore, take action by providing systemic funding and structure to ensure that community-based student services can effectively leverage and maximize the impact of other Federal investments in education.

Indeed, the cost of inaction is very high. If we fail to address the dropout epidemic and achievement gaps, the consequences will affect not only individual students, but also our Nation's economic prosperity and national security interests. The American Youth Policy Forum estimates that "[i]ncreasing the high school completion rate by 1 percent for all men ages 20–60 would save the United States $1.4 billion annually in reduced costs associated with crime." In addition, "dropouts are also substantially more likely to rely on public assistance. The estimated lifetime revenue loss for male dropouts ages 25–34 is $944 billion. The cost to the public of their crime and welfare benefits is estimated to total $24 billion annually.[9]

The simple truth is that many students who are at risk of dropping out or failing to achieve their highest potential have the talent, intelligence, and potential to

[8] *See Recommendations to Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act,* Council of Chief State School Officers (2007), "The reauthorized ESEA should encourage a full range of rewards and consequences for districts and schools that differ appropriately in nature and degree, based, for example, on whether schools miss AYP by a little versus a lot. CCSSO urges Congress to amend NCLB Section 1116 to permit States to exercise appropriate judgment and differentiate both accountability determinations and consequences based on sound evidence. This includes targeting interventions to the lowest performing students/subgroups that do not meet AYP and maintaining consequences (without escalation) where schools are demonstrating significant plans and progress in addressing identified underperformance." *www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/ESEA_rec_final.pdf,* 4.

[9] American Youth Policy Forum, "Every Nine Seconds in America a Student Becomes a Dropout," Excerpted from Whatever it Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (2006). *http://www.aypf.org/publications/EveryNineSeconds.pdf,* 3.

achieve, but they need assistance to address challenges that stand in their way. And this assistance extends beyond the classroom. This is why Federal law should include systemic support for comprehensive reform strategies that include community-based, integrated student services.

Let me conclude by quoting Heather Weiss, the Director of the Harvard Family Research Project, who has said:

> "The question we must ask is, in addition to quality schools, what nonschool learning resources should we invest in and scale up to improve educational outcomes, narrow achievement gaps, and equip our children with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the complex and global 21st century?" Disadvantaged students often need more than the best teachers or the most rigorous curriculum in order to succeed—they need additional supports that will reinforce and leverage the investments of educators in our schools." [10]

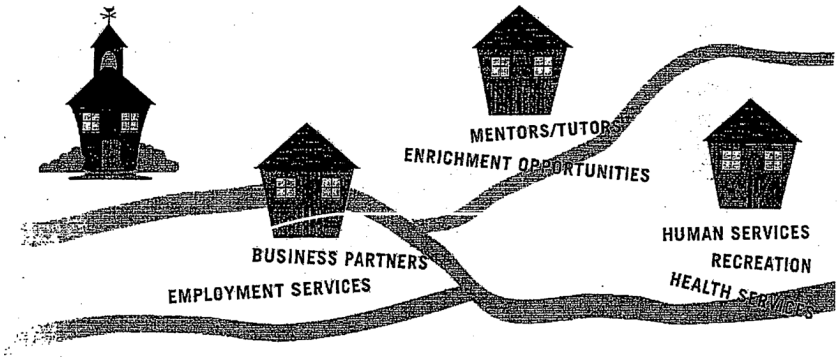
I hope that Congress and this Administration will conclude, as Ms. Weiss has, that "[n]ow is the time . . . [for] action."

I want to thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. Senator Kennedy and Senator Isakson, I want to thank each of you for your support in this vital sector. I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

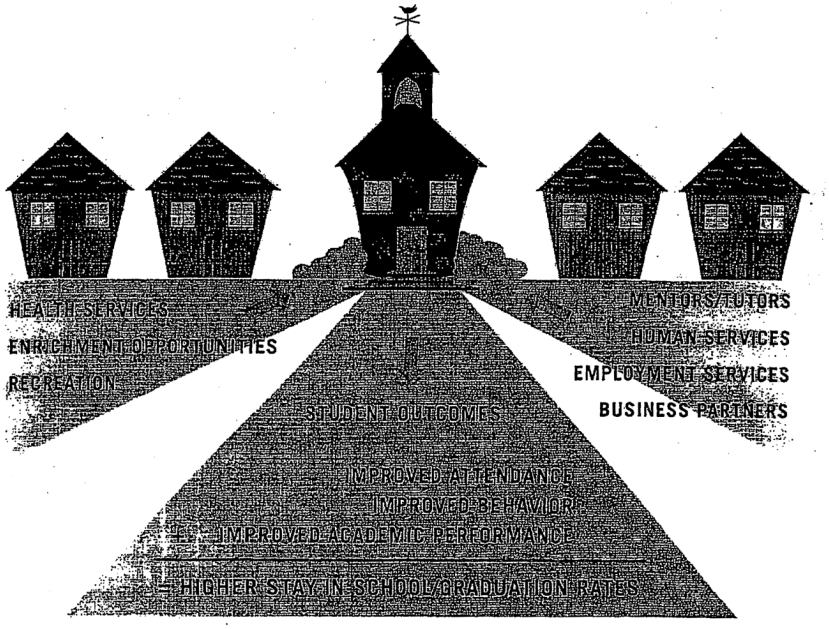
[10] Heather Weiss, "From the Director's Desk," The Evaluation Exchange, 10 (1), (2005). *http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue29/director.html,* 1.

APPENDIX A

MOST COMMUNITIES HAVE FRAGMENTED RESOURCES



CIS STRATEGICALLY CONNECTS AND ALIGNS RESOURCES



APPENDIX B

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

A NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVE: SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED, INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICES IN THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

The dropout epidemic in the United States merits immediate, large-scale attention from policymakers . . .

—Bridgeland, et al., The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts (2006)

I. INTRODUCTION

What Are Community Based, Integrated Student Services?

Community-based integrated student services are interventions that improve student achievement by connecting community resources with both the academic and social service needs of students. Such interventions focus programmatic energy resources, and time on shared school and student goals. Through the efforts of a single point of contact, individual student needs are assessed and research-based connections made between students and targeted community resources.

Research and experience indisputably reflect the continuing crisis in education: America's youth are dropping out of school in record numbers, and gaps in student performance among low-income and minority students continue to widen. In the wake of a call to action by educators, business leaders, and government officials, attention to these issues has generally focused on (and been limited to) academic issues. Notably, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has focused nearly exclusively on core academic accountability measures—standardized testing and related accountability systems, teacher quality, supplemental educational services, and the like.

Those areas of focus are, indeed, vitally important, but they do not reflect the research- and practice-based reality that more is required to support most at-risk students. They do not reflect the reality that at-risk students often need more than the best teachers or the most rigorous curriculum in order to succeed—they need additional supports that will reinforce the work of educators in the schools. More specifically, these areas of focus do not reflect the positive impact that community-based, integrated student services have on at-risk students and their families. One recent national study found a "nearly universal acknowledgement by educators, parent groups and community groups about the vital impact that supporting [and] trusted community organizations [could] have in helping students and schools succeed." [1]

In thousands of schools throughout the country, organizations provide community-based, integrated student services as a way to help at-risk students—and their schools—succeed. These services, ranging from providing mentors to meeting health and counseling needs, vary by student, but by definition are systemically linked to school-based efforts to meet the health, safety and counseling needs of at-risk youth. They include an array of student-specific support services centered on the establishment of:

a. A one-on-one relationship with adults who mentor or help guide students;

b. A safe place for students to learn and develop before, during and after the school day;

c. Connections to health professionals and counselors;

d. Connections with college and career counselors—as well as internship opportunities—that can help students envision their potential for achieving significant goals; and

e. Connections to community service and service-learning opportunities." [2]

Despite overwhelming evidence of the need for—and positive impact of—community-based, integrated student services on student learning outcomes,[3] Federal law has not included support for comprehensive reform strategies that include these services. And, too few schools have resources to provide them. Thus, as put cogently by the director of the Harvard Family Research Project, many years of research confirm that "[n]ow is the time . . . [for] action. The question we must ask is, in addition to quality schools, what nonschool learning resources should we invest in and scale up to improve educational outcomes, narrow achievement gaps, and equip our children with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the complex and global 21st century?" [4] The simple answer is that we must, as a nation, invest in more comprehensive, proven and cost-efficient strategies that will help reduce dropout

rates and close the achievement gaps. Supporting community-based, integrated student services is one critical step in that direction.

II. WHAT RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE TELL US: FACTS ABOUT COMMUNITY-BASED, INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICES

1. The dropout epidemic and the pervasive achievement gap, both of which disproportionately affect low-income and minority students, are the central, unmet challenges facing public education in America.

• "For the nation's ethnic and racial minorities, particularly Hispanics and African Americans, the consequences of dropping out are . . . daunting. There is a high school dropout crisis far beyond the imagination of most Americans, concentrated in urban schools and relegating many thousands of minority children to a life of failure." [5]

• A half-dozen recent studies report "little progress" in closing the achievement gap, and the "landscape" reflects that the gap between African-Americans or Hispanics and white students is widening over the course of 12 years in school.[6]

• "It is clear that minority students and poor students have disproportionately faced conditions that are hindrances to achieving at levels reached by majority students, from birth to school completion—if, in fact, they complete. At different points along the way they will, on average, be behind white children in their cognitive development." [7]

2. The failure to comprehensively address the dropout epidemic and the corresponding achievement gaps among students will result in continuation of the status quo—with adverse consequences affecting America's economic prosperity and national security interests.

• "Increasing the high school completion rate by 1 percent for all men ages 20–60 would save the United States $1.4 billion annually in reduced costs associated with crime." [8]

• "Dropouts are substantially more likely to rely on public assistance than those with a high school diploma. The estimated lifetime revenue loss for male dropouts ages 25–34 is $944 billion. The cost to the public of their crime and welfare benefits is estimated to total $24 billion annually." [9]

• "The United States would save $41.8 billion in health care costs if the 600,000 young people who dropped out in 2004 were to complete 1 additional year of education. If only one-third of high school dropouts were to earn a high school diploma, Federal savings in reduced costs for food stamps, housing assistance, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families would amount to $10.8 billion annually." [10]

• Societal costs of students dropping out—including welfare and crime costs—make it "crucial to have a national focus on the identification and broad use of efficient and replicable dropout prevention . . . programs?" [11]

3. The American public has identified the need to improve schools and student performance as a national priority.

• "[There] is virtually an undisputable agreement that education is a good thing, indeed an irreplaceable element in achieving success in the current and future marketplace . . ." [12]

• "The adverse impact that dropping out of school has on both those who drop out and society itself has long been recognized . . . Given the multiple adverse consequences associated with dropping out, lowering the dropout rate has long been a goal of educators and legislators." [13]

4. Efforts to eliminate the epidemic of students dropping out of school and the pervasive achievement gaps among students will succeed only if they are comprehensive and student-centered. In addition to classroom-based reforms, schools must ensure that a definable range of community-based, integrated student services are provided.

• "Schools alone cannot resolve problems of violence, family crises, mental health challenges, and other child and family problems that naturally find their way to the school house door?" [14]

• Non-school supports "will not achieve the goal of making sure that children are successful" if they are provided in the "same old ways—piecemeal, in silos, disconnected from each other and from schools . . . To be effective, non-school supports must be "linked and aligned with each other and with schools to maximize their effectiveness in leveling the playing field for children." [15]

• "Intentional strategies" to link community partners with students and families in need "can overcome fragmentation" within a school and lead to positive student outcomes.[16]

• Evidence of positive impacts from these integrated approaches includes better family functioning and parental involvement, healthy youth development and improved social behavior, improved academic achievement and learning outcomes, and enhanced community life." [17]

• A review of 45 prevention and intervention studies addressing dropouts or school completion establishes that "there is no single best program; preventing dropout can occur in a variety of ways." "Student engagement" is a "key ingredient," with its focus on "promoting school completion through approaches that . . . involve multiple systems in the students' lives, occur over time, and are individualized to meet student needs." [18]

5. Community-based, integrated student services, which provide vital support in mitigating the risk that students will drop out of school and in improving student achievement, permit school and district officials to focus their energies on issues central to classroom learning.

• "Adolescents who participate regularly in community-based youth development programs (including arts, sports, and community service) have better academic and social outcomes—as well as higher education and career aspiration—than other, similar teens. We also know that when the core academic curriculum is tied to the community, removing the artificial separation between the classroom and the real world, student outcomes are improved." [19]

• "Through community-based observation, discussion, and problem solving, students acquire both facts and multiple perspectives against which to refine their existing knowledge and skills. Teachers also connect school-day learning with learning in before- and after-school, community-based, and work-study programs and value these venues as important opportunities for students to apply skills from across the curriculum." [20]

• "In community schools, educators do not operate on the assumption that the school has all the assets and expertise necessary to improve student learning. Instead, they collaborate with partners who demonstrate they are committed to results that are important to the school system and the community. Schools are transformed into much more than just a portfolio of programs and services. They become a powerful agent for change in the lives of young people and their families and improve the climate of the entire school." [21]

6. Well designed and implemented community-based programs effectively leverage non-public resources and are cost effective.

• One national nonprofit organization, with a 30-year history of providing at-risk youth with community-based, integrated services, serves nearly 1 million young people nationwide in more than 3,000 schools, by leveraging the help of 53,000 volunteers and 14,000 community organizations so that:

- Only 5 percent of all human resources are paid staff, and
- On average, each paid staff member serves nearly 300 students.

In addition, through its focus on management of resources, each $100 of public resources leverages $82 of private resources. [22]

7. The No Child Left Behind Act currently fails to strategically address the importance of schools and districts leveraging community-based, integrated student services to improve student achievement and the success of schools.

• "The United States does not have a coherent youth policy to prevent at-risk youth from becoming disconnected and to help disconnected youth become productive members of society. Instead we have a patchwork of fragmented and often poorly funded programs at the Federal level that do not have common objectives or accountability measures. Nor do State and local areas typically have comprehensive youth policies." [23]

• "Although the Federal Government has expressed considerable interest and funded some discrete projects, its efforts have been limited. The movement toward school-linked services will not be successful, or even successfully evaluated, without a decision . . . to make a deeper commitment to . . . this approach." [24]

> "*Schools need to provide a wide range of . . . intensive assistance strategies for struggling students in schools—[including] . . . counseling, mentoring, tutuoring, service learning, . . . and more—and provide adult advocates in the school who can help students find the support they need . . . Schools also need*

to . . . enchance their coordination with community-based institutions and government agencies."

—Bridgeland, et al., The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts (2006)

III. FEDERAL LAW SHOULD PROMOTE COMMUNITY-BASED, INTEGRATED STRATEGIES THAT:

- Improve achievement of at-risk students;
- Support schools in need; and
- Leverafe significant non-federal resources.

1. The effective and efficient delivery of community-based, integrated student services to at-risk students depends upon the existence of dedicated staff in schools who can identify and match student needs and community resources to meet those needs. Thus, Congress should provide competitive grant funding for community-based, nonprofit organizations to provide integrated, school-based services to at-risk students.

Congress should provide funding to support competitive grants to community-based nonprofit organizations, which will (in collaboration with districts and schools) hire and support school-based outreach coordinators who will be responsible for identifying student needs and connecting available community resources to meet those needs. Funding should be available to support the efforts of title I districts that have identified high-poverty, low performing schools in need of significant community-based resources, which have also failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress. Funding should be targeted toward nonprofit organizations working with schools that have:

- Leadership committed to establishing strong relationships with community organizations that can meet the needs of at-risk students;
- The clear need for community support for at-risk students and their families;
- The community capacity and willingness to support significant school improvement efforts; and
- Data systems that will permit meaningful evaluation of student outcomes and relevant investments over time.

This recommendation reflects current research and tracks the specific recommendation of one recent study recognizing that "districts and schools [should) . . . leverage their own limited resources by engaging community organizations" and dedicating staff "who are responsible for making the necessary connections between community resources and student/parent needs." [25]

2. The effective and efficient delivery of community-based, integrated student services should be a strategy that all schools are required to evaluate and, as appropriate, pursue, when they do not to meet State performance goals over time. Thus, Congress should expand the range of support for schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Schools that have failed to make AYP for 1 year and that are designated as "in need of improvement" should be required to, in their development of school improvement plans, include with specific goals and timetables:

- A plan for identifying students in the greatest need of support, along with the kind of academic and non-academic support those students likely need;
- A plan for identifying and coordinating community services that can provide support to identified students;
- A set of strategies designed to leverage community resources to meet identified needs of low-performing students; and
- Criteria upon which such efforts will be evaluated over time, inducting relevant student performance criteria.

For schools designated as "in need of improvement" for two or more consecutive years, districts should be required to provide technical assistance to enhance their efforts to implement school improvement plans that will improve student achievement, which include a focus on matching community-based, integrated student services with identified student needs.

All middle schools designated as "in need of improvement" for two consecutive years, and high schools that meet the same criteria that also have dropout rates exceeding 10 percent, should be required to develop individual student performance plans for students identified as significantly at risk of dropping out of school based on key factors (e.g., attendance, achievement, behavior, suspensions) in order to target access to an appropriate range of community-based, student support services.

3. The delivery of community-based, integrated student services in schools should be guided by research- and evidence-based criteria that reflect the provision of sys-

temic, replicable, cost-effective, and student-centric services. Thus, Congress should authorize funding for new national initiatives that establish and implement these criteria.

Congress should authorize funding for new national initiatives—administered by nonprofit organizations. These initiatives would combine research and evidence-based strategies, training, and technical assistance with certification and evaluation of efforts of community-based organizations. These community-based organizations are dedicated to meeting student needs, improving student achievement, and mitigating the risk of dropping out of school. In particular, those funds should be targeted to ensure that community-based organizations providing support for at-risk students are as effective in their interventions as possible and that they are working in ways that are most cost-effective.

The "most successful" school-community arrangements have a coordinator of community services "serving as part of the school's management team."

—Martin J. Blank, "Community Schools Creating Comprehensive Opportunities and Support for Children and Families," Boston Children's Institute of the Home for Little Wanderers. (2000)

There needs to be a "federal evaluation of [dropout prevention] programs and the sharing of the most innovative and successful programs that can be brought to scale."

—Bridgeland, et al., The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts (2006)

ENDNOTES

1. Appleseed Foundation, "It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act," (2006), 35.

2. William E. Milliken, "The Five Communities In Schools Basics" © 1992. The inter-relatedness of these strands is also central: "We know . . . that high quality, organized (out-of-school-time) activities have the potential to support and promote youth development because they (a) situate youth in safe environments; (b) prevent youth from engaging in delinquent activities; (c) teach youth general and specific drills, beliefs and behaviors; and (d) provide opportunities for youth to develop relationships with peers and mentors." Harvard Family Research Project, "Beyond the Classroom: Complementary Learning to Improve Achievement Outcomes," The Evaluation Exchange, XI (I), http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue29/theory.html,2. Common elements of successful dropout programs include "trying to increase the holding power of the school by creating meaningful personal bonds" and "connecting students to an attainable future." Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin, "Effective Dropout Prevention and College Attendance Programs for Students Placed At-Risk," Journal of Education Research for Students Placed at Risk, 3(2), (1998), 159–183.

3. Extrapolated from findings of Communities In Schools, "Connecting Kids With Community Resources," 2004–2005 Results From the Network report.

4. Heather Weiss, "From the Director's Desk," The Evaluation Exchange, 10 (1), (2005) http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue29/director.html,1.

5. Rima Shore, "Kids Count Indicator Brief Reducing the High School Dropout Rate," Annie E. Casey Foundation, (2005), http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/indicator_briefs/dropout_rate.pdf, 2.

6. Sam Dillon, Schools Slow in Closing Gap between Races (New York Times, Nov. 20, 2006) http://travel.nytimes.com/2006/11/20/education/20gap.html?n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/People/D/Dillon,%20Sam.

7. Paul E. Barton, "Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress" Policy Information Center; Education Testing Service, (2003) http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICPARSING.pdf, 36.

8. American Youth Policy Forum, "Every Nine Seconds in America a Student Becomes a Dropout," Excerpted from Whatever it Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth (2006) http://www.aypf.org/publications/EveryNineSeconds.pdf, 3.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Fashola and Slavin, "Effective Dropout Prevention . . .," supra.

12. Richard E. Berman, "The Future of Children, School Linked Services" Center for the Future of Children and The David and Lucille Packard Foundation, 2(1), (1992), 8.

13. U.S. General Accounting Office, "School Dropouts Education Could Play a Stronger Role in Identifying and Disseminating Promising Prevention Strategies,"

Report to the Honorable Jim Gibbons, House of Representatives, (2002), http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02240.pdf, 4–5.

14. Martin Blank, "Community Schools Creating Comprehensive Opportunities and Supports for Children and Families," Boston Children's Institute of the Home for Little Wanderers, http://www.thehome.org/site/pdf/4C2Blankpap.pdf, 100.

15. Harvard Family Research Project, "Beyond the Classroom: Complementary Learning to Improve Achievement Outcomes," The Evaluation Exchange, XI (1), http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue29/theory.html,1.

16. Blank, "Community Schools Creating Comprehensive Opportunities and Supports for Children and Families," supra.

17. Catherine Jordan, Evangelina Orozco, Amy Averett, "Emerging Issues in School, Family & Community Connections," Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, (2001), http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/emergingissues.pdf, 43–44.

18. Camilla A> Lehr, "Increasing School Completion: Learning from Research-Based Practices that Work," Research to Practice Brief 3(3), (2004), http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content__storage__01/0000000b/80/2e/17/a8.pdf, 1.

19. Martin Blank and Amy Berg, All Together Now: Sharing Responsibility for the Whole Child," Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, (2006), 7–8.

20. Atelia Melaville, Amy C. Berg, Martin J. Blank, "Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship," Coalition for Community Schools, 11–12.

21. Blank and Berg, "All Together Now: Sharing Responsibility for the Whole Child," supra.

22. Communities In Schools, "Connecting Kids With Community Resources, supra.

23. Jodie Levin-Epstein and Mark H. Greenberg, "Leave No Youth Behind: Opportunities for Congress to Reach Disconnected Youth," Center for Law and Social Policy, (2003), 4.

24. Berman, "The Future of Children, School Linked Services," supra.

25. Appleseed Foundation, "It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act," supra, 35.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Cardinali and I am particularly pleased to recognize Kathy Patenaude because Kathy is a Rhode Islander and she is one who comes with a great expertise on a multiple of challenging and very valuable tasks in Rhode Island. She is a career teacher, a high school biology teacher. She has been director of multidisciplinary teaching laboratories at Brown University. She is a parent advocate, school committee leader, someone who has seen all these issues from many different perspectives and currently, she is President of the Rhode Island PTA. Welcome, Kathy.

STATEMENT OF KATHY PATENAUDE, PRESIDENT, RHODE ISLAND PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, COVENTRY, RHODE ISLAND

Ms. PATENAUDE. Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chairman Reed and members of the committee. I wish to thank the committee for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the nearly 5,000 members of Rhode Island PTA and the 5.5 million PTA members nationwide. I am glad to see Congress working so hard for our children.

My name is Kathy Patenaude and I am the President of Rhode Island PTA. I have been a PTA member for more than 15 years and have served as a Local Unit President, as a Council President and as a Legislative Chair, Vice President for Leadership, President Elect and finally President for Rhode Island PTA.

Most importantly, however, I am the mother of a 19-year-old daughter, Kasey, who attended school in the Coventry Public School District and is presently a sophomore at Providence College.

As the President of Rhode Island PTA, I have first hand knowledge of the importance of parent involvement. Moving beyond the normal definition of involvement has been key in helping many of the schools across Rhode Island. Still, there is much work to do.

So how exactly has the parental involvement piece of No Child Left Behind played out in Rhode Island? From the PTA's perspective, we have seen some successes and some failures. Certainly, more and more parents across Rhode Island are becoming advocates for their children's education. Most parents know whether or not their child's school is low, moderate or high performing or whether their child attends a failing school.

The Rhode Island Information Resource Center, also known as PIRC, has led the charge in educating parents about school choice and supplemental services, however all schools, whether urban or suburban, struggle to engage parents as equal partners with teachers in schools in the education of their children.

School Report Nights have low attendance rates, mainly because parents find them tedious and boring. Typically, parents are assaulted with PowerPoint presentations, with chart after chart comparing their school's performance as compared to the State's average. It is a rare parent that is excited to sit through one of these type of presentations. There has to be a better way to inform parents of the data without boring them in the process. Teachers and administrators need to be taught in their pre-service training, how to engage their parents and community stakeholders. It can not be theoretical. They need examples of best practice and tools to succeed and most importantly, they need to believe that parent input is a necessary good and not a necessary evil.

Rhode Island PTA believes that parent engagement starts at the very beginning. Every child—not just a struggling child, needs a personal or individual learning plan and the parent or guardian needs to be part of this discussion. This personal learning plan needs to be updated yearly or at the very least, during the transition from elementary to middle to high school. This cannot be accomplished during the present structure of parent teacher conferences. The teacher, parent and child need to sit down together and develop this personal learning plan and this requires more than a typical 10-minute conference.

This is the kind of communication that No Child Left Behind envisioned—ongoing, meaningful and two-way. Often times, parent engagement is high at the elementary level and then drops off at the middle and high school levels. We need to dispel the myth that our students do not want their parents involved in their schools once they leave the elementary level. Parents who are involved at the elementary level cannot be allowed to walk away because there is no role for them at the middle or high school level.

These parents are the very folks that need to be trained to mentor other parents to be active advocates for their children. They need to be welcomed at middle and high school and not turned away with comments like, your children needs to cut the apron

strings. They need to grow up, sink or swim. It's time for you to let go.

Administrators need to change their opinion of why parent groups are necessary in their schools. Many times, active parenting groups are seen as fundraising arms for the building principal and are used to raise the extra they need to plug holes in their budget. This is not a good example of parent engagement.

If parents do not come to school, then schools need to know where the parents are and go to them instead. They need to partner with community agencies and bring those agencies under their roof. Schools should be community centers and hubs of activity for parents and students, open 24/7. For example, why do we have school libraries separate from our town libraries? Why don't we share these resources and let parents borrow books or use computers at either site?

Although e-mail communication has been a wonderful tool of communication between parents and teachers, many parents do not have access to computers at home. A digital divide is occurring. We need to partner with health care agencies, day care providers, fitness centers and safe-based organizations just to name a few.

Our teachers and guidance counselors need flex schedules so they can be available at times when parents are at home from work and spending time with their children and there needs to be a designated person in the school district, someone who is responsible and accountable for the parental involvement piece. It has to be part of their job.

Finally, parents cannot be treated as clients or patients that need to be fixed. The vast majority of parents want the best for their children. So do teachers. We believe that when this partnership between parents, teachers and children are successful, our children will succeed and be ready to face the challenges of the 21st century. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Patenaude follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHY PATENAUDE

Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the committee for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the nearly 5,000 members of the Rhode Island State PTA and the 5.5 million PTA members nationwide. I am glad to see Congress working so hard for our children.

My name is Kathy Patenaude and I am the President of the Rhode Island State PTA. I have been a PTA member for more than 15 years, and have served as a local unit president, as a council president, and as the legislative chair, vice president for leadership, president-elect and finally president for the Rhode Island PTA. Most importantly though, I am the mother of a 19-year-old daughter, Kasey, who attended school in the Coventry Public School District and is presently a sophomore at Providence College.

In 2 years, the Rhode Island PTA will celebrate its 100th anniversary. We are a vibrant and growing organization; our membership increasing by nearly 7 percent this year alone. The national PTA organization is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year and stands today as the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States with members in 25,000 local, council, district, and State PTAs in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Department of Defense Dependents Schools overseas.

Since its founding in 1897, PTA has reminded our country of its obligations to children and provided parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child. PTA strives to provide parents with the best tools to help their children succeed in school and in life. But PTA does not act alone. Rather, PTA works in cooperation with many national organizations, governmental agencies, and re-

sponsible corporate citizens on projects that benefit children and bring valuable resources to PTA members.

For more than a century, PTA has been a strong, respected advocate for children's health, public education, and increased parent involvement in children's lives. Through consistent hard work, sometimes after years of perseverance, our voices have been heard. Ideas that grew out of local PTA meetings are now accepted as national norms: kindergarten classes, child labor laws, a public health service, hot lunch programs, a juvenile justice system, and mandatory immunizations. In addition, PTA provides practical resources and programs to assist parents and other volunteers in their advocacy efforts. Those resources and programs include Reflections arts recognition, the National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement Programs, Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification, leadership and advocacy training, resources on children's health and safety, and much more.

Mr. Chairman, numerous studies have documented that regardless of the economic, ethnic, or cultural background of the family, parent involvement in a child's education is a major factor in determining success in school. Successful parental involvement strategies vary from region to region, school-to-school, parent-to-parent. However, it is important that Congress find ways to help provide parents more opportunities to get involved. As you begin work on the upcoming reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, I ask that you pay special attention to the role our local communities have in trying to improve the academic achievement of all students.

As the President of the Rhode Island PTA I have first hand knowledge of the importance of parent involvement. Moving beyond the normal definition of involvement has been key to helping many of the schools across Rhode Island. Still, there is much work left to do.

As parents work longer hours they are often unable to commit the time to joining important organizations like the PTA. Priorities have shifted and it is harder now than ever for many families to provide a roof over their children's head much less volunteer in their classroom, read to them every night and check their homework. Through all of this however, the PTA and the many other parent organizations, continue to bring parents together—forming a network of help and assistance, empowering the community, and providing assistance to children and their families.

Improving parent involvement begins with the teacher. Training educators in how to not just bring the parent into the school but also helping them feel welcome in the school is very important. Most teachers already understand the importance of parent involvement. However, with such limited time in the day, and so many parents wanting their time, teachers hardly have the chance to go into the depth needed for a true, constructive discussion. The advent of e-mail has been very helpful in broadening the communication between parent and teacher; But e-mail needs to supplement not take the place of a face to face conversation.

It is time for schools and their administration to start to think differently. There are many ways in which to get families involved and specifically engage parents in their child's school work. Training teachers to take full advantage of every note they send home with the child, every parent-teacher conference, and every community-based activity within the school to promote parent involvement must be placed higher on the agenda. Teachers can be stewards of parent involvement. Improving the academic success of the child is a shared goal of both parents and teachers. It is time for them to be an effective team so their goals can become reality.

Another barrier that I find exists in Rhode Island, especially in the urban areas, is a lack of discussion with parents about the true academic future of their child. There seems to be little opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss the role that education plays in their child's life. If the parent-teacher partnership can, at an early age, impress upon the child why their education is so important, the student will be encouraged to stay in school. This will also help more parents to stay involved through the academic tenure of their child. The relationship of parent involvement certainly evolves as the child gets older. However the amount of involvement should never dissipate. By identifying academic goals, parent and child will have a better chance at becoming more actively engaged in the student's academic success.

As President of the Rhode Island PTA, I have the responsibility of coordinating with many other groups in order to help our members find the services they need. One group of great importance to the many urban areas in my State is Rhode Island's Parental Information and Resource Center or PIRC. They have been effective in areas that have even been difficult for PTA to reach. I hope this committee reauthorizes the PIRC program and provides additional resources to meet their growing need. PIRCs are critically important vehicles in promoting and encouraging parent

involvement. The following are just a few of the initiatives in which the Rhode Island PIRC has been involved:

• In Providence, the PIRC has partnered with the Providence School Department's Parent Engagement Office in designing and co-presenting parent engagement workshops to approximately 2000 Providence teachers.

• In Central Falls, the PIRC trains the Home-School Liaisons who, in turn, return to their schools with new skills and information to share with their parents and families.

• In Bristol/Warren, the PIRC led a team of educators and parents in developing Home-School Compact and school level parent involvement policies for title I schools.

• In Pawtucket the PIRC presents parent involvement workshops to teachers at Jenks Junior High and conducted a Family Friendly Walk-Through. These walk-throughs help schools to recognize and consider improving the friendliness of their schools so that parents and families feel more welcome and more likely to go to school events and actively engage in their child's education. The Family Friendly Walk-Through is a good starting place for schools to begin improving and expanding their parent involvement practices.

• The Rhode Island PIRC staff contributed to a standards-based calendar for all children entering kindergarten in several districts including Providence, Pawtucket, Warwick and Cranston. The calendar is for parents and includes activities for families to do together to improve children's readiness for entering kindergarten. This project was completed with a State library group and Childspan.

• They have widely distributed the U.S. Education Department's "Tool Kits for Hispanic Families" which includes information regarding No Child Left Behind.

• The Five Question Project. The Rhode Island PIRC helped create and disseminate five Question posters listing the five top questions to ask your child's teacher. These posters have been distributed to many schools around the State and it has become a district initiative in East Providence, Woonsocket, Central Falls, Providence and some of Pawtucket.

Mr. Chairmen, as you can see Parental Information and Resource Centers can have a major influence on promoting and initiating parent involvement in those areas that need it most. The PTA is proud to be a partner with the Rhode Island PIRC. As their role becomes more defined, I hope to help provide more assistance to the PIRC in promoting standards for family involvement and helping parents find the services they need throughout my State.

And finally Mr. Chairman, I would like to touch on the initiatives put forth by the national PTA organization to improve the parent involvement provisions within No Child Left Behind. While Congress cannot mandate parental engagement in every school, the government can help to provide parents multiple opportunities to be an active participant in their child's education. PTA's recommendations for the ESEA-NCLB reauthorization are built on four core principles:

(1) Better data through a more understandable delivery system

• The information from the accountability systems should be geared towards informing parents. The parents have the primary decision making responsibility for their child's education. If No Child Left Behind was supposed to provide parents with more options, how can they make the correct choice for their child's education if they are not armed with the proper information?

(2) More accountability to parents

• Each State needs to hold schools accountable for implementing their Parental Involvement plans. Mechanisms need to be put in place to help a school found to be "In Need of Improvement" in the area of parent involvement, to keep parents informed about their options, and to hold the district accountable to remediation plans for school improvement.

• Parents must be better informed of what is going on in their child's school. Whether its being an integral part of a schools parental involvement plan or making key decisions on how to improve the school, parents need to be at the table when these decisions are being made.

(3) Better resources to help teachers and parents

• Parental Information and Resource Centers and other existing State and local resources with expertise in parent engagement and community outreach should be better utilized as part of the solution when there is a need for school improvement in the area of parental involvement. These resources can not only disperse information and materials to parents but work effectively with schools that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress.

• Teachers need better preparation on how to engage and develop positive partnerships with parents to support active parent participation in their child's education through better preparation teachers can be stewards of parental involvement and support student achievement at home and school.

(4) Community Support

• Schools need to be an active, essential part of a community again. Partnerships between residents, businesses, and schools in the community must become involved and part of the solutions for our schools and our children. Each segment of the community served by a school must have a stake in every child's education and the new law must create incentives for this to happen.

Mr. Chairmen, members of the committee, I thank you for this chance to speak on behalf of the parents and children of Rhode Island and PTAs across the Nation. I believe in your efforts to improve the law to close the achievement gap, provide a better education for every child and support our children to be more competitive in a worldwide market place. People in every community across the country are trying to improve parent involvement. If this committee can see that by giving these partnerships more resources and more flexibility to provide innovative solutions, our children's academic achievement will rise. Thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to further discussions on this important issue.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Kathy. Now I'd like to introduce our final witness today and that's Wendy Puriefoy. Ms. Puriefoy has been the President of PEN since it was founded in 1991 and PEN is the largest network of community-based school reform organizations in the country, reaching 1,220 districts and 18,000 schools. Prior to working at PEN, she was Executive Vice President of the Boston Foundation. Thank you very much and welcome.

STATEMENT OF WENDY PURIEFOY, PRESIDENT, PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK, WASHINGTON, DC.

Ms. PURIEFOY. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the HELP Committee and my esteemed colleagues on the testifying panel, I am pleased and honored to offer Public Education Network's testimony on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind.

My name is Wendy Puriefoy. I am President of Public Education Network, a national organization of 80 local education funds that reaches over 11 million children in 16,000 schools, across 34 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The focus of our work is on the academic success of poor children in the public schools. Several Network members operate in the States of the Senators represented on the HELP Committee and I have included in my written testimony, the member list.

I commend this committee for taking testimony on this important and often neglected aspect of providing excellent public schools for America—parent engagement, community engagement and public engagement. They are not all the same things.

We all know by now that an isolated school is more likely to be a failing school. I also want the record to note that I commend Senator Kennedy for his early work and insights about the potential of NCLB.

Quality public schools and public engagement are at the heart of PEN's mission. PEN's member local education funds are themselves an example of a remarkably effective public engagement strategy that is first grounded in knowledge of good practice and second, in engaging the active and strategic support of community and key stakeholders within and outside of schools.

I also note for the record that new visions for public schools in New York State, New York City is working closely with the Department of Education there to launch small high schools, which increase the graduation rate of many poor and disadvantaged youngsters from school.

So the Network members in their communities are motivated to act to achieve the end result, which is a system of effective public schools providing a quality public education for every child. Knowledge of effective school reform practices and action must be joined for effective public engagement and for systemic reform to occur.

The Network and its members have been hard at work in helping to implement No Child Left Behind. We have written and distributed a guide on the law and its provisions for community involvement to 40,000 people. We've catalogued our local education fund experiences with districts. We've held 18 public hearings for 2 years across nine States with our LES members, the PTA, the YWCA and others and in fact, our Houston member held a hearing last evening in which 250 people attended and I attached for the committee the recommendations that came out of that hearing.

PEN has also conducted three public opinion polls with Education Week and launched an online survey that reached over 30,000 people. We've been working to help implement this law and our recommendations are based upon the public engagement efforts outlined above.

Our first recommendation is to improve competent teaching policies to better support teachers and assess their effectiveness. Our second is that schools need a student-focused, comprehensive accountability system that rewards progress and recognizes continuous improvement. We need to improve the use of school and district data and analysis to lead to more effective teaching and learning practices.

And on this point of data, many parents and members of the community told us at our hearings that we held across the country that they were not receiving enough information about No Child Left Behind. They went to the school and they would get one set of information. They'd go to the State and get another set of information but they couldn't get a straight story.

We want to expand the opportunity for shared accountability by including the community as partners and we want to see the parental involvement provisions strengthened and many have spoken about that today.

I have attached to our testimony, five pages of PEN's detailed recommendations and I would ask that the committee consider those recommendations during your reauthorization process.

But I would like to highlight the following examples for emphasis at this time. One is the PACE bill. It's an important start in recognizing how important community partnerships are—that is, those groups who are working outside of schools to help ensure academic success inside of schools and also providing students a place where they feel some sense of competency.

The effectiveness of the Parent Information Resource Centers are critical to the provision of useful technical assistance to school districts and accurate information for the public.

The public is an important factor in this, since less than—about 75 percent of the American public don't have school age children in school. We have got to find ways to draw the broad American public into providing quality education.

The parental provisions in section 1118 must be enforced and strengthened. Through PEN's members, our surveys and public hearings, we know that the schools are not taking the provisions seriously enough and we thank you, Senator Reed, for your support in this area.

The American public—you know, often the general public is deemed to be ill equipped to address the sophisticated matters of schooling. Many of us say, what does the public know? Well, in fact, many of the things that we heard from the public in our public hearings are corroborated by research and education advocacy communities.

Public education cannot exist as a valued public institution and quality public education will not be provided to all children in America without the knowledgeable, vigilant and active support of the American people. For many Americans, the No Child Left Behind Act provides the framework to address issues of excellence, the opportunity to hold their schools accountable and their public officials accountable and the opportunity to align and identify more resources to go to those proven academic and nonacademic strategies that make the critical difference in students' learning careers.

Significant changes are needed. We look forward to the work of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Puriefoy follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WENDY PURIEFOY

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, I am Wendy Puriefoy, President of Public Education Network (PEN), a national constituency of 80 local education funds (LEFs) in 34 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Local Education Funds work to build knowledgeable public demand and mobilize resources for quality public education. PEN is present in nearly 1,600 school districts that reach more than 11 million children (approximately 22 percent of the Nation's public school population). PEN believes every child in America has the right to a quality public education. This is especially true for children from low-income families. Many PEN members are located in States represented by members of this committee. Senator Kennedy knows about the excellent teacher professional development work of the Boston Plan for Excellence, along with the Mary Lyons Foundation in Shelburne Falls, and the Lynn Business/Education Foundation in Lynn. These funds represent the education reforms of both urban and rural low-income school districts.

Other LEFs in committee member districts are:

- **New York:** New Visions for Public Schools, New York, N.Y.; Good Schools for All, Buffalo, N.Y.
- **Maryland:** Delmarva Education Foundation, Inc., Salisbury, Md.; Fund for Educational Excellence, Baltimore, Md.
- **Washington:** Alliance for Education, Seattle, Wash.
- **Ohio:** Center for Leadership in Education, Elyria, Ohio; KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Cincinnati, Ohio; Partnership for Education in Ashtabula County, Ashtabula, Ohio.
- **Tennessee:** HC*EXCELL, Morristown, Tenn.; Partners in Public Education, Memphis, Tenn.; Public Education Foundation, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- **Georgia:** Great Schools Atlanta, Atlanta, Ga.
- **Arkansas:** El Dorado Education Fund, El Dorado, Ark.
- **Connecticut:** Bridgeport Public Education Fund, Bridgeport, Conn.; Hartford Education Foundation, Hartford, Conn.; New Haven Network for Public Education, New Haven, Conn.; Norwalk Education Foundation, Norwalk, Conn.; Stamford Public Education Foundation, Stamford, Conn.

And thank you, Senator Reed. for keeping parental involvement and community engagement issues alive in title I, which is so important to PEN's members. Our Rhode Island PEN member, the Education Partnership in Providence, is working on issues of teacher and teaching quality.

The focus of the committee's hearing today is on parent involvement and public engagement. The committee has requested that PEN join our other partnership witnesses this afternoon in addressing this topic as it relates to reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Our local education funds thank you for this opportunity to showcase their work. As our other witnesses will validate today, there are many leaders at the local level, whether they be PTA members, the 50-member National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, Communities in Schools, the 150 organizations that belong to the Coalition of Community Schools, faith-based organizations, or our own local education funds, who are the unrecognized heroes that daily engage school districts, parents and communities in pursuit of quality public education for every child.

PEN specifically brings the experience of our local education funds to this hearing because they represent one of the most structured, strategic, and sustaining strategies for public engagement in service of quality public education. Our LEF members work in partnership with their school districts to create quality public schools as well as with their communities to build the knowledge of what good schools can do for the quality of communities.

A sample of their programs include: upgrading science and mathematics instruction; supporting high quality teacher professional development that leads to measurable results; creating small high schools that enable students to graduate ready for work, college, and citizenship; and, providing scholarships for students to go on to college. Annually, they raise $200 million from foundations, corporations and individuals in their community's reform and improve their local public schools. Local education funds also have been successful in engaging their communities to pass bond measures totaling nearly $20 billion.

Mr. Chairman, I want to emphasize that local education funds across America represent two key components of successful public engagement: knowledge of what good schools should be and capacity—building with districts and communities to commit their citizens to excellent schools for America's children.

PEN's positions on NCLB and our recommendations emanate from the collective experience and knowledge of our local education funds and their constituents, within both school districts and communities. For our members, parent involvement and community engagement are not ends in themselves. Rather, public engagement is in service to achieve the larger goal of ensuring that every child has a qualified teacher, receives high quality instruction, and is provided the range of academic and social supports needed to complete high school ready for work and college. These goals constitute the "for what" of public engagement for PEN's members.

The following five areas surfaced through these public engagement efforts:

1. Improve competent teaching policies to better support teachers and assess their effectiveness;
2. Schools need a student-focused, comprehensive accountability system that rewards progress and encourages continuous improvement; and,
3. Improve the use of school and district data and analysis to lead to more effective teaching and learning.

Our members at PEN believe that the following two areas are necessary levers for achieving numbers 1, 2, and 3:

4. Expand the opportunity for shared accountability by including the community as partners; and
5. Strengthen the parental involvement provisions.

When NCLB was passed in 2002, PEN wrote and distributed over 40,000 copies of *Using NCLB to Improve Student Achievement: An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders.* In addition, in collaboration with NCPIE, PEN developed a special comprehensive online set of parent and community tools in an easy-to-print format comprised of over 22 action briefs, tips on how parents and community could be involved, information about the law and regulations, and a toolbox of resources.

During the past 3 years, PEN solicited feedback about the act's impact from its members, their communities, as well as through public hearings specifically aimed at parents, students, community activists and local businesses. Our work included:

- Two (2) surveys of all LEF directors across the Network;
- In-depth interviews with 12 LEF directors;
- Six (6) community focus groups;
- A town meeting at PEN's 2006 annual conference that sought input from LEFs;

• 18 public hearings nationwide with local education fund partners, as well as other partners such as the YMCA, PTA chapters, and the Intercultural Development Research Association; and

• Two (2) online web-based surveys that received input from over 30,000 citizens and three (3) national polls that asked questions about NCLB.

And most recently, a town hall meeting hosted by our member, Houston A+, was held last evening. I give you the report of that hearing today.

Based on the information we received from those sources, I would like to address my remarks related to the following:

1. Background of community and parental involvement in past title I reauthorizations and laying the context for our recommendations;
2. Assumptions and premises of parental involvement and community engagement;
3. Review of the NCLB national hearings that PEN has been holding since 2005, and a summary of support and concerns of community members around the country;
4. Identification of essential elements in building a community infrastructure and ownership for change, and developing needed leadership and capacity at all levels of the title I program; and lastly;
5. Recommendations from PEN's members for building on the current NCLB Act.

1. BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PAST TITLE I REAUTHORIZATIONS AND LAYING THE CONTEXT FOR PEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

PEN commends Senator Kennedy and Senator Enzi for holding this hearing. During the various reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act over the years, it has been rare that a committee hearing has been entirely devoted to the issues of parents and the community. I am reminded, Senator Kennedy, that it was your brother, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who in a Senate Education Committee hearing in the debates of the first ESEA passed in 1965, voiced the importance of low-income parents and the community in holding schools accountable. Although he faced some stiff opposition, he persisted in passing a requirement that parents should be involved in the development and allocation of funds in title I programs. Despite his belief in the goals of title I, he raised questions about who would hold public schools accountable for change, how that accountability would be framed, and what mechanisms would ensure that, given the opportunity, low-income parents and communities would have the same status and power as more affluent parents to demand a quality public education for their children. Congress and the then U.S. Office of Education agreed and added the parental involvement requirements in both law and in regulations. As a result, a national Title One Parents organization was instituted, TOPACs (Title One Parents Advisory Committees) were instituted at the local level, and parents were not only trained in parenting skills, but also in advocacy and organizational skills.

In 1978, as part of the Educational Amendments of 1978, it was through your leadership that you understood that low-income parents and families needed help, and that as the number of school-aged children began to decline, the number of adults who had parents in public schools also declined. As well, the family unit began to change and communities needed to share in this effort of school accountability. That year, you proposed language, and Congress added provisions for community education and involvement to title I. The Congress understood that the civic and service sector of each community was essential in partnering with the school if our children were to be successful.

But starting with deregulation of title I (Chapter I as it was then renamed) in the early 1980s, parental involvement became a "permissible" activity. It was no longer a required element of the law and the community education provisions were almost entirely stricken from the law. As a result, parent involvement and community engagement decreased considerably, and many schools chose to bar parents and community from title I decisionmaking, participation and partnership. When the Congress relented on title I requirements, so did State education departments and local school districts. While there were exemplary school districts and schools that chose to continue parental involvement programs, the decade of the 1980s saw most districts pay lip service to parental involvement, or reduce parental involvement to a set of fundraising tasks at the expense of equal participation and partnership.

Even the 1983 *Nation at Risk* report paid scant attention to parents or the role of the community in decisionmaking or sharing with schools the responsibility for accountability of performance and results. By default, the professional school community, education reformers, many policymakers, and special interest groups (with the exception of special education parents) relegated parents and community to the school public relations department, rather than making them equal partners in two

major areas of public education: (1) advocates and supporters of quality public schools for all children; and, (2) active participants in holding themselves, their policymakers, and schools accountable for performance.

Interestingly enough, it was in 1983 that the first local education funds were established with funding from the Ford Foundation. The foundation recognized that the challenges defined by the *Nation at Risk* report could not be effectively addressed, especially in low-income urban and rural communities, unless there were intermediary entities, independent of the school district and reflective of the broader community, that brought knowledge and pressure for change both within the school district and in the community at large. Since 1983, LEFs have grown in numbers. Through major initiatives funded by the Nation's largest philanthropies—The Ford, Walter and Lenore Annenberg, W.K. Kellogg, The Rockefeller, William and Flora Hewlett, Bill and Melinda Gates foundations, the Wallace Funds, and the Carnegie Corporation—these groups have evolved into a necessary player in their communites' civic infrastructure. They provide smart and critical knowledge about reform strategies, as well as partnerships to improve student achievement, while simultaneously building the case and the momentum for reform by engaging people within and outside of schools.

With the passage of the Improving America's School Act and the No Child Left Behind Act, parental involvement provisions such as the NCLB section 1118, the parent compacts, and roles for parents at the State and local school district levels have been added. However, these sections are not enforceable, and as a result, many districts do not implement these sections well, if they do so at all. Many districts may inform parents about the NCLB law and regulations, but are often deficient in implementing the intent of parental involvement effectively. The U.S. Department of Education reports that 10 of the 18 States monitored last year cited deficiencies in parental involvement implementations. Those deficiencies included: failing to include all of the elements of the parental involvement polices; schools using parent involvement polices without tailoring them to the needs of student and families; and, not having policies comply with section 1118 at all. The department found that in too many States, school districts were using standard templates to communicate with parents without taking advantage of the parent engagement opportunities presented by the law.

Another area of deficiency often cited by the department's monitoring visits is a lack of either State or school district evaluation of their parental involvement programs. And when it comes to partnering with either individual community members or community organizations, school outreach drops off dramatically. While parents are mentioned in the law over 200 times, very little role is offered for community organizations to share in providing support to low performing schools, advocating for change, or holding schools accountable. Many districts say they do not have the time or resources to implement a fully developed parent or community engagement program. In reality, this lack of oversight predates NCLB and has been a chronic deficiency of the law since the days of deregulation. All of these factors are reasons why the Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRCs) are essential in providing States and local school districts with the assistance they need in developing effective parent involvement programs. They are part of the State and local capacity needs that I will address later in this testimony, but they are well thought-out centers that help align the goals of NCLB with title I districts that need the knowledge and benefit of parental involvement expertise.

2. ASSUMPTIONS AND PREMISES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• Federal policy can and does make a difference in the execution of quality public education policy, applied to the parental involvement and community education and partnership provisions, with enforcement. There are still too many schools that shut out the community and parents in meaningful decisionmaking.

• Public schools that are responsive to the needs of parents and families, as well as students, can play a significant role in raising achievement. Parents need to be recruited as active partners in the educational process, but also in the process of "learning together" and supporting the learning changes necessary to develop a 21st century democracy as well as a 21st century workforce.

• Parental involvement alone is inadequate to improve the most difficult schools. Community members must also be involved in and responsible for providing the resources and funding support services, parental assistance, political pressure and accountability.

• Quality and valid data play a critical part in empowering parents and the community in pressuring for improvement and change. But the information must be

transparent, easy to understand, and most importantly, useful for purposes of school improvement, rather than to apply punitive consequences to schools. Senator Robert Kennedy raised this issue in 1965 when he commented on the balance between data and engagement.

• Providing data does not assure that the data will be used, or that the data will be interpreted accurately to make sound decisions about school improvement. But disaggregating data is essential in assuring that groups of low performing students will not fall off of the public radar screen of accountability.

• The re-authorization must recognize the role of community and community education in assuming responsibility for shared accountability and decisionmaking. Community educators, service agencies, local education funds, parent organizations and other groups need to coordinate efforts with the schools. They must be able to work across Federal and State funding streams to converge in providing services to the neediest of our children.

• Education based on high achieving results for all students cannot be accomplished by the school or the community alone. There appears to be a growing understanding on the part of both the community and schools that they need each other to succeed. Still, in many cases, community organizations and school districts do not know how to reach each other. Both need new models of practice, staffing, funding and behavior to be able to more effectively integrate their work to provide a seamless web of support for students.

• The Federal Government, State education departments and local school districts currently do not have the capacity to implement a comprehensive program of parent and community involvement. Unless engagement becomes a priority in the various levels of government, staff members are allocated to serve as the advocates or point people for engagement programs. As such, the community and parents are NOT seen as equal partners in the education decisionmaking process. If involvement is not seen as vital to providing quality schools as it is in providing a means of democratic accountability, the goals of NCLB will not be met.

• The "inside" or the school district, and the "outside," the community needs each other to succeed. Each serves different roles, and to the extent that these roles are inextricably related and integrated is to the extent that we no longer will have to use the terms "outside" and "inside."

3. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION PEN HAS GATHERED

One of the benefits of NCLB was to provide the opportunity to bring communities together to talk about critical issues of education reform via town meetings, hearings, online surveys, public polls, as well as through the opportunities provided by our own constituency of LEFs. In the course of these dialogues, issues such as school quality, equity, funding, teacher quality, assessments arose. The perspectives of average citizens—which are not usually sought in the policymaking process—are critically important for policymakers to understand as they consider amendments to the law. We promised the constituencies that we would compile their recommendations and concerns and bring them to Congress and the White House.

We have published reports on our findings for the past 2 years. Just last evening, one of our members, Houston A+, held a town meeting hearing. We promised the Houston participants that we would directly submit those recommendations to the HELP committee members. So Mr. Chairman, on behalf of Houston A+, I am attaching their recommendations to this testimony.

But in the composite, here are the results which offer a glimpse beyond the schoolhouse doors into some unintended consequences of the law and its implementation.

In particular, we heard the following:

• Citizens support the goals of the law, including increased accountability, but believe the existing NCLB accountability system is too thin. A single test shouldn't be used to judge school performance.

• We must (a) broaden accountability measures used to determine school performance, to include other indicators such as parent and community involvement, school funding, class size, services offered by the school, and, if the school is low performing, the measures that the school has taken to make improvement; and (b) explain to the public the meaning of the assessment results. Simply publishing a report of scores in a newspaper or Web site without explanation or context leads to frustration and skepticism.

• Participants liked the policy of disaggregating data, but many said they did not receive the data, or receive the data in a language or a format that they could understand.

• Many parents were not aware of section 1118, or said that they were involved in the development of the district or school parental involvement policies. Generally, most of the parents said that if they knew about section 1118, they had no means of enforcement in case the school did not implement the provisions.

• Participants told us they believe that while primary responsibility for student achievement lies with schools, schools can not do the job alone. Support should be provided for closer relationships between schools and helping institutions in a community, and accountability should be expanded across the community so students and families get the supports they need.

• The label of "low performing school" has unintended consequences. It is internalized by students, who feel their diploma is "worthless" if it comes from such a school. In addition, instead of causing a community to rally around the school to address its deficiencies, such labeling leads to the abandonment of schools by teachers, students, and community members, just when the school is most needy. Districts should provide an explanation to the public of what various labels mean to the district and to the students, parents, and public in that community.

• Information required by NCLB is not reaching parents. This includes both information that parents need to make decisions about their children's education, such as the availability of SES services. This often arrives too late to be useful, is full of jargon, and is not translated into families' home languages.

• Schools are held accountable on the backs of students. Students feel enormous pressure that is passed along by teachers and administrators who are worried about school performance. This pressure causes many to say they have become ill. Some have even dropped out of school.

• The determination of "highly qualified" teacher should be made on the basis of more than just paper certification. We heard over and over again that this is an inadequate proxy, and does not take into account the ability of a teacher to truly connect with and reach students so that they feel cared for, nurtured and motivated.

• Academic supports under the law are inadequate and offer false promises. First of all, parents want the option of tutoring services before the option to transfer to another school, and most do not want the transfer at all. They want their own schools to work, and they want to be involved in the plans to improve their current schools. SES services often are not provided as advertised. Services should be evaluated and service providers should be held accountable just as schools are held accountable

• Several of the issues raised concern the law's implementation. These concerns may not require legislative changes, but they do require the Federal Government to help increase capacity of States and districts, which are simply not set up to carry out many of the data collecting, dissemination, parental involvement provisions, along with other responsibilities under the law.

• Finally, the issue of sufficient resources must be addressed. The requirements of the law add additional fiscal burdens to States and districts that they should fulfill. However, many do not always have the resources necessary for such fulfillment.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND OWNERSHIP FOR CHANGE, AND DEVELOPING NEEDED LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY AT ALL LEVELS OF THE TITLE I PROGRAM.

In 2003, Public Education Network commissioned the independent research firm Research for Action (RFA) to conduct a study titled "*Crafting a Civic Stage for Public Education Reform: Understanding the Work and Accomplishments of Local Education Funds*," on the roles and accomplishments of LEFs. They also were asked to capture what generic elements are essential, even in those communities that do not have LEFs, in bridging community development with educational reform. As noted by civic and community organizers, it is much easier to build momentum for development efforts that focus on physical attributes—housing, downtown revitalization, recreational facilities that draw tourists—than it is to build momentum for education reform and change. The study also concludes that it is much easier for both the community and the school to demonstrate success if an effective LEF is present. To be sure, the role of the local education fund is two-fold (using the means of public engagement): (1) to build the demand for quality public schools by organizing the community to hold the major stakeholders, such as schools, school boards, policymakers, reformers, and the public accountable for quality public schools, and (2) to serve as the coordinator in providing or supporting the resources and funding necessary to assure that the school is successful. They create change through brokerage and relationship building, adding value to education reform and change. In short, they are vehicles for action.

The committee asked for strategies for effective community involvement. Instead of citing specific strategies, let me deviate a bit, and on the basis of the results from the RFA study cited above, let me review those components essential to community engagement and partnership. This is true for an LEF or any other intermediary organization. LEFs must possess the ability and expertise to do the following:

• Be recognized by the community and be able to define major issues and challenges that meet the needs of the public. As a result, there is no one model for engagement. For instance, regional LEFs such as the one in Mon Valley, Pennsylvania focus on the economic needs of their region, as well as in working with other LEFs in the State to bring students together and give their concerns voice. Others such as Achieve! Minneapolis focus on facilitating partnerships between businesses and schools, facilitating employee-student relationships, and creating mentoring programs.

• Develop a shared, focused school reform agenda that incorporates a wide agreement among the stakeholders about reform goals. Such an effort could include information gathering vehicles such as town meetings, hearings, community forums, and/or public opinion polls in valuing and acting on the public's concerns. The San Francisco Education Fund has concluded the first phase of a large-scale community engagement effort to learn more about what the community wants from its schools. The LEF, the San Francisco Unified School District, and two parent organizations began working on this engagement effort late in the fall of 2006. In 6 months, they reached over 900 parents, youths and community members over the course of 2-hour conversations. The groups were small and intimate—usually 8–20 people—and were conducted in English, Spanish and Cantonese. They were held in all but one residential zip code in San Francisco.

• Be independent from the local school district by organizing into a separate nonprofit organization and appointing a board that is reflective of the community, as well as representing the school district's diversity. This assures the idea that the LEF is not seen as part of the school bureaucracy and decisionmaking process, but does have expertise to link the community to work closely with the school district. An example is the LEF in Lincoln, Nebraska, which promotes family and community involvement in the schools through a series of grants that support the Lincoln Community Learning Centers. These grants encourage families, community organizations, and schools to work together.

• Coordinate and develop coalitions and cross-sector alliances around the shared agenda for reform based on civic and organizational trust. In some LEFs, these alliances consist of business partners and other "grass-tops" in the community. In other LEFs, grassroot representatives have joined the ranks of the LEF stakeholders. Building trusting relationships and alliances in diverse communities assures that all voices in the community can be represented. For instance, the Philadelphia Education Fund recognizes that school systems—especially those that serve urban districts and low-income families—cannot succeed without the support and engagement of their broad civic community. Their community includes parents, government and business partners, community-based organizations, social service entities, communities of faith, and individual citizens. As a program area, the fund implements its civic engagement agenda through the initiation, staffing and support of the Education First Compact, a broadly diverse group of citizens committed to supporting and improving public education in Philadelphia. The compact meets monthly to learn about and exchange perspectives on reform initiatives in the Philadelphia schools, and to support policies and strategies that hold the best promise for improving the culture and outcomes of local schools. The compact also works to help community-based organizations use their social, intellectual and political capital to leverage school improvement.

• Ability to be both an insider and outsider related to education reform and change. As opposed to advocacy groups which play mostly an outside advocacy role, the LEF is sometimes in the school camp, and sometimes outside of the school camp. Navigating this complex terrain requires special skills and understanding of how a school district operates, as well as how the community and civic sector operates. For instance, the Paterson, New Jersey Education Fund has trained 55 Paterson parents to be part of the Ask the Right Question Project. Collectively, these facilitators have delivered workshops to 900 of their peers. They hold strategic thinking workshops for other parents in their local schools to help them support, monitor and advocate for education. Many of these facilitators now play a key role in school governance, serving as home school council officers and school improvement team members.

• More and more LEFs are becoming involved in affecting and shaping education reform policy. For instance, the Voice for Public Education in Tucson, Arizona has been supporting funding proposals in Arizona, and they will hold a community

NCLB hearing to listen to the voices of their community. This LEF also is providing parent leadership training sessions in parent advocacy. In Mobile, Alabama, the Mobile Alabama Education Foundation encourages and trains parents to become effective advocates for improved achievement for all students in their communities. The foundation also sponsored over 50 town meetings and campaigned to pass one of the first funding increases for the Mobile Public Schools in recent history. The Education Fund in Paterson, New Jersey, is working with a coalition of State organizations to advocate for funding for the Abbott school districts through a major campaign of public information, advocacy, and media visibility.

• Ability to innovate and research new designs for increased student achievement. New Visions for Public Schools in New York opened 83 new, small New Century High Schools serving 38,155 students, or approximately 14 percent of the New York City high school population. The Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga, Tennessee has worked with the community to reduce teacher turnover by more than 50 percent, led a teacher professional development program responsible for 8 of Tennessee's 20 lowest scoring, highest poverty schools that has resulted in dramatic improvement in reading and mathematics, and have performed better than 90 percent of all of Tennessee's schools for 3 consecutive years.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CURRENT NCLB ACT

Mr. Chairman, PEN's members recommend the following issues regarding the reauthorization of NCLB: [1]

1. Improve competent teaching policies to better support teachers and assess their effectiveness.
2. Implement a student-focused, comprehensive accountability system that rewards progress and encourages continuous improvement.
3. Improve the use of school and district data and analysis that leads to more effective teaching and learning.
4. Expand the opportunity for shared accountability by including the community as partners.
5. Strengthen the parental involvement provisions.

I would like to thank the Chairman of this committee and the members for the opportunity to testify on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind.

Senator REED. Thank you very much and thank you all for excellent testimony. I will take about 5 minutes with some opening questions and then recognize Senator Gregg but I would—I'll stay here and I anticipate a second round. I know you have to leave, Mr. Ritter, but thank you.

First again, Kathy, thank you for your participation and attendance. In Rhode Island, we have the School Accountability for Learning and Teaching Surveys. The surveys actually try to assess the level of parent and community involvement. Can you give an indication of how effective those surveys are in informing parents and measuring this involvement?

Ms. PATENAUDE. I think they are very effective as long as the participation rates are high enough in the school. Unfortunately, the participation rates—not all parents respond to the SALT survey so it's hard to really validate the data sometimes.

The second piece is that even though the information is on Web sites and from our—you know, compiles all the data, parents typically don't go to those sites and look to see how their school is doing in relationship to other schools across Rhode Island. So I think it really behooves us to encourage parents and be very good leaders in making sure parents go to those sites, understand the data and actually use the data. There are some people doing some good work in that area to try to inform parents but parents have

[1] Please find attached PEN's No Child Left Behind position that is in a draft form. Due to the urgency with which this committee hearing was called, the PEN Policy Committee was unable to approve a final draft of PEN's positions before this hearing. We expect to have a final position to enter into the record by your requested deadline of March 30, 2007.

to look at the data and then, in fact, go to their school and say, "Why? Is such and such true or not true?"

Senator REED. Now, one of your suggestions is, I believe, is to have at least one person in each system who is responsible for parental involvement. I would presume that person would be trying to engage parents, just as you suggest.

Ms. PATENAUDE. Exactly. In fact, sometimes when you look at the data, even the written data that comes out and you see what parents really are saying about, let's say, your high school, it's amazing that a lot of parents don't know about it and yet we should be fighting for that and going to our principals and our administrators and saying, why aren't we doing better in this area? So if there is one person in the district responsible, then that is their job and they'll be the one on the forefront, hopefully, making sure that parents are informed and will, in fact, be engaged.

Senator REED. Thank you. We've been joined by Senator Alexander and Senator Isakson and also Senator Kennedy planned to attend but there was a delay in a hearing that prevented him from attending and he sends his regards and thanks to all the witnesses.

Mr. Ritter, you're going to have to depart at 5 p.m. so I want to get a question in and allow some of my colleagues also the opportunity if they wish. One of the issues that comes up and it was just mentioned by Kathy Patenaude is now, with computers, web-based instruction, web-based information—that this should be another way to attract parents into the school systems and keep them, particularly at the high school level.

Is Texas Instruments, because of your technology base, working along these lines to try to engage parents through web-based, Internet connectivity?

Mr. RITTER. Yes, Senator, we have been. We've been involved for 15 years with an organization in Texas—it started in Texas—called Just for the Kids. Just for the Kids is a nonprofit organization that was founded by Tom Luce who served up here as Deputy Secretary of Education for a time and the whole purpose of the Just for the Kids approach is to make data available and useful to parents but also business leaders, community leaders, elected officials and so forth, so that we can get accountability for results.

When you go to the Just for the Kids Web site and by the way, Just for the Kids formed a partnership with the Education Commission for the States and the University of Texas at Austin about 4 years ago to take their method of presenting data on the web to several States and after you passed No Child Left Behind, there was a need in several States to have a useful and accessible means of accessing the data. If you look at the National Center for Education Accountability Web site, you can go into a State, you can call up the data for your specific school and you can get information, not only on how your school campus is performing on the basic threshold requirements that are set in State standards but it also lets you know what the opportunity gap is between that minimal level of performance and the level of performance that you need to truly have kids move through the system and ready to go to college.

Those are sometimes two different things but I agree with the comment from Kathy about the need to train parents, teachers,

principals, business leaders—anybody who cares about educational outcomes in schools in terms of how do you look at data and how do you access it and what is a useful classification and I would recommend the NCEA Web site as a best practice in that area.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Ritter. I have additional questions, Mr. Cardinali and Ms. Puriefoy but I'm going to stop now and recognize Senator Gregg for his questions and we'll do a second round.

Senator GREGG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure and I appreciate the panel. I appreciate the information, and I thank you for your strong support of the No Child Left Behind as an initiative.

You know, when we did No Child Left Behind, it basically was a sequential event, the first sequence being that we wanted States and local communities to decide how much children should learn at certain age levels, how much they should know in two basic disciplines, English and math. Then, we wanted to have a system where we could test, the test being set up again at the local level, where we could determine whether or not children were reaching those levels.

Then, the third step, which was really the essence of the entire exercise, was to make that transparent so that parents would know whether or not their children were reaching the levels that had been set out as what a child in third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades should obtain.

Then, the fourth step was to empower parents once they had that information to take some action to do something about it if their child was not in a school that was working well and set up a system where hopefully schools would address the issue.

On this fourth step of having the parent be empowered, of course, we set up supplemental services and public to school choice and then, at the strong insistence of the Chairman, I would put in language relative to parental involvement in the school system. I recall very well those discussions and his assistance on that, which was appropriate.

But I think we haven't gone far enough. We had the option of taking the next step, which is the logical step, which is that if a parent determines that the school isn't working and the supplemental service isn't giving the child effective relief in bringing them up to speed, that public school choice be an option. Shouldn't the parent have the right to other choices for their child? Shouldn't there be portability of funds so that when a child is in a school system that has failed and the supplemental services have failed and the public school option has failed, there would be portability of funds so the child could move and the funds would move with the child. Isn't that the ultimate relief for a parent who has a child in a situation where they are simply not learning? I'd ask the panel.

Ms. PURIEFOY. What we heard in our hearing from across nine States and 18 hearings were that parents wanted the convenience and the community-building that a good school in their community could mean for their community. So for all the portability, transfer options—when you ask parents and when you ask the public at large at the end of the day what they want, they want schools in

their neighborhoods and in their communities to be effective and to work.

Senator GREGG. That's absolutely true. And if they have a Catholic school that is working and the public school isn't working, shouldn't they have the opportunity to send the child to the Catholic school that is working in the same neighborhood?

Ms. PATENAUDE. I'd like to speak to that and only in the fact that first of all, I think to take public funds away from public schools is not what we want to see happen. We, in Rhode Island—Rhode Island PTA, National PTA believes that public money spent in public schools is where we have to stay. If we're going to have good public education then the money has to——

Senator GREGG. But is the goal to educate the child or to maintain the bureaucracy?

Ms. PATENAUDE. I think that we need to find ways to make sure that the public schools——

Senator GREGG. So, the school has failed for 5 years, in order to reach this level. It's just not working. So, you're going to maintain the bureaucracy at the expense of the child? You're going to cycle another group of children through that school that's not working without giving the parent an option—is that the choice you're making?

Ms. PATENAUDE. I just have trouble—I have philosophical differences trying to take money out of public schools for Catholic or private schools.

Senator GREGG. Well, I understand the philosophical difference, but I'm asking whether or not we should sentence children to year after year of terms in schools that aren't meeting, by their own standards, their tests that they set up.

Ms. PURIEFOY. Well, the Nation has actually a great choice and that is to improve its public schools and that is what NCLB is working to do. If you look at poll after poll that canvases the American public and when the questions are put to them, they say they want a system of public education that works, is valuable for a Nation. Our founding fathers thought it was important. The American public continues to believe that it's important.

Senator GREGG. I think that's true, and I don't think there is any question but everybody wants a public system that works very, very well. But I think the issue is whether or not a society which is built on competition—you don't improve the public system by making it compete and giving at least the parent the ultimate option of giving their child an education when they are locked in a school system that is giving them a bad education. I appreciate your thoughts, though.

Ms. PATENAUDE. Just one final thing—how would you make the private schools accountable? Presently, public schools are accountable by some set of standards.

Senator GREGG. Well, you know, I guess I have a lot more confidence in the parent than you do. If the public school is failing and has been determined to be a failing school and the parent knows their child isn't learning what they are supposed to be learning because they are seeing the results and the parent makes a choice to go to another school system, I'm going to presume that parent figures that other school system is going to do a better job with

their child. It's just an issue of competence and parents versus bureaucracy, I guess.

Ms. PATENAUDE. Unfortunately, what would happen is, you would have probably the neediest of children remaining in the public schools because even if you had a voucher, a private school cannot take your child. In Rhode Island, we have, in the public schools in Providence, we have a Classical High School, which is a high performing high school and you have to take a test to get into the high school. So if you don't pass the test then you still are relegated to a public school.

Senator GREGG. But you shouldn't be relegated to a public school.

Ms. PATENAUDE. Well, it's true that any private school can tell your child that—we can't service your child. Your child has special needs, your child can't learn—whatever the problem might be.

Senator GREGG. I'm not sure—I'd like you to take time to come down here to the District of Columbia and take a look at what they've tried. Because they've actually tried this and it seems to be working. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thanks, Senator Gregg. Senator Alexander. We're going by seniority unless someone urgently needs to move ahead. All right, Senator Alexander.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ALEXANDER

Senator ALEXANDER. Thank you, Senator Murkowski. The U.S. Department of Education—what we've learned from No Child Left Behind seems to be that about 80 percent of schools did make adequate yearly progress. I'd call them high achieving schools although in a lot of cases, the State standards are not as high as we'd like for them to be and maybe in another 5 percent of the schools, children were not meeting their standards in one—this aggregated group so the evidence over the last 5-years plus the anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that we have schools—about 15 percent of the schools—we have children who seem to be chronically not succeeding and most of what I hear and what I've seen over the years is that those children have, for the most part, have not gotten at home what they need to get at home in order to succeed in school. There are many reasons for that but that seems to be the fact. So they arrive at school never having had a book read to them, never having gone to a birthday party, maybe hungry, et cetera. We can all go through the litany of things.

So it would seem to me that one of the lessons from No Child Left Behind in the first few years is that we might step back from the schools that are succeeding so well a little bit and make sure we're not interfering with their success by any heavy-handed Federal involvement. I don't mean less accountability, I just mean look carefully to make sure we're not interfering but that we should really break the mold in terms of these children, low-income children who seem to be coming from homes and live in areas where they are not succeeding.

I've seen in Memphis, for example, where we have the largest number of our low performing schools that children who go to charter schools, special schools—these are public schools, where they go longer during the day, where they have the better teachers, where those teachers are paid more, where the principals are paid more

based on their accountability, where the children go on Saturdays for half a day, where they go during weekdays and in a couple years, they are about up to where everybody else was in the third and fourth grades, otherwise, if we'd give them some help.

But one of the problems we have is when we get into the details of those break-the-mold ideas. We run into a lot of resistance from those who are part of the public school community. For example, paying teachers more for teaching well. We now know how to identify teachers who do very well in helping low achieving children. Why don't we pay them a good deal more so they'll go in these tough schools with these tough kids and spend longer times and help them get through the third grade.

Not all children fit into—we're back to the choice issue. I don't believe vouchers are a remedy to every problem but when I went to first grade in east Tennessee, my mother had an opinion about which of the two first grade teachers was better and made sure I got in the right class. Aggressive parents will do that, whether they are poor or they are not so poor. We were not rich.

I wonder why we wouldn't make it possible to do just almost anything we could think of to do to help low-income children achieve so they can catch up and get at the starting line.

One idea I had and suggested last year, based on some conversations I had in Nashville with families of such children is they weren't getting their music lessons because they had been squeezed out of the curriculum and the families didn't have enough money to buy private music lessons. So I suggested we give a $500 scholarship to all the families of low-income kids and let them spend it wherever they wanted to on an accredited program. That probably would be an after-school program or a music program or a catch-up program in English or a get-ahead program in math—whatever the family thought would be a good addition to whatever that child had. It would be what a family with money would do but with a family without money wouldn't do.

What would you think of an idea of giving a $500 scholarship to all low-income families and saying, in addition to wherever you're going to school, you can use this $500 for any accredited education program? Anyone have a thought about that?

Mr. CARDINALI. I think it is a fabulous idea, particularly because it is the low-performing kids, kids who are poor in the United States and often of color in the United States who not only don't have access to the resources that you mentioned but aren't encouraged by virtue of their circumstances, often. So public encouragement for enrichment, albeit I think music should be part of the public education curriculum. But in many cases, I think you're absolutely right, it is not. So in the event that it is unavailable through school to be provided that opportunity and again, I think coupling that opportunity with other kinds of social services that help stabilize that young person and open up horizons is an extraordinary opportunity.

Senator ALEXANDER. Anyone else have a thought?

Ms. PURIEFOY. I think that's on. I think it is a great idea. I think one of the things that is important is to assure that the school, in fact, is using the resources that it has effectively, making sure that it does have quality teachers, that the professional development in

that school is really—or those schools—is really effective, where teachers are really using data that is fed back to them early enough so that they can make a difference in the classroom. So that we're making sure that the places where we know student achievement is increased, that the resources are going there and I would say that if we made that $500 available, either to the family or to the school, it would be to ensure that that child was having access to a well-rounded education.

This is a way of introducing back into the public schools the need to have music, art, phys ed, great libraries—you know, all of the sets of things that when we all went to school, we had.

I would also add that this is not the first time America has dealt with children who didn't come to school ready to learn. This is what school does. It helps children use the best assets they have, which is their minds. And if we equip our schools with teachers and a rigorous curriculum and a means of feeding back and data, we'll be able to do a good job for our children.

Senator ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Alexander.

Senator Murkowski.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MURKOWSKI

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate all the questions and I appreciate the panel here this afternoon, a little bit of everything. I appreciate what you do with Communities in Schools and we've had an opportunity to talk about that and Mr. Ritter, to hear your comments and what Texas Instruments is doing.

I want to focus a little bit on some of the issues that you raised, Kathy. As a former PTA president, I listened very carefully to what you had to say about how parents are sometimes viewed. We were the fundraising arm for my boys' elementary school and they looked at the parents and they said, "OK, you guys are in charge of raising the money for the books for the library"— not, what can you do to help this school get on the right track, not what can you do to help within the classrooms, not what can you do to make sure that your son's achievement and the achievement of all the boys and girls in this elementary school are going to be what we want it to be.

You made the comment that teachers need better preparation on how to engage with the parents. I think some people, particularly those who do not have kids in school right now, would look at that and say, for crying out loud. Teachers, parents—you know, talk. Figure it out.

Our reality is that a lot of time, our teachers don't know how to deal with the parents and I think unfortunately, many times our parents just have no idea how to deal with the teachers and they don't know whether they are welcome there. They don't know how they can best be of assistance to their child and of assistance to that school. So you have these walls, these barriers that are built up and you don't have the communication that should go on.

And you're right—a parent teacher meeting, where you are sitting down and you're talking about how Nic did in math this quar-

ter, is not the time to be building these personal learning plans, as you referred to them.

We need to do more to help build this relationship. I'm looking at a possible amendment that would allow—not mandate but would allow schools to use some of their No Child Left Behind funding to provide for training—to improve the parent/teacher relationship, if you will. And I think that this is something that is really easy for us to talk about—the parent piece—but it's really not so easy to figure out how we make the best use of it.

I've got a school district in Anchorage, Alaska—it's the largest school district in the State. We've got over 83 different languages spoken amongst the children within the district. When we send out the required parent notices, under NCLB, we translate not only into Spanish but into Korean and Hmong. We've got a huge population of parents up there who are afraid to come into the school. So your point that it's not just about opening the school tonight for Parents in the Schools Night because you have, oftentimes, whole communities that are uncomfortable coming into this school.

So my question to you is, do you have any suggestions that you have utilized in Rhode Island or to the rest of you, about how you can get parents—not necessarily into the schools—maybe it needs to be a neutral territory but how you can do that and reach out to them so that they can be part of this piece that works better for the students, for the teachers and really, for the families. Are you doing anything that works? Because we've got some challenges.

Ms. PATENAUDE. I appreciate your comments 100 percent. There are lots of things going on across the country. Certainly in Rhode Island, there are some things going on that make schools friendly to parents because that is a big piece. I don't know about your experience or anybody else's experience—going through a school and saying, which door do I go into because all the doors are locked and there may be one door because of the way we have security problems now.

Schools aren't open anymore. And if there isn't a welcoming sign that says, welcome parents and we're glad you're here, that is a big problem for a lot of parents. So we do have what we call Family Friendly Walk-Throughs that our PIRC in Rhode Island—I think it is a national program, actually, that people from the outside stand at the curb and look at the school and say, "Okay, where do we go from here?" And they step and go in and they take a bunch a people with them—community partners, parents from the school, the teacher, the principal and they actually go out and go into the school and find—why does the school look unfriendly or does it look friendly? Then they provide a report to the principal and the teachers as to what they can do. They provide big signage, already premade, with the name of the school, welcomes parents. That alone is a big issue, especially for parents that typically are afraid to go into a school.

Senator MURKOWSKI. When you mentioned in your comments the idea of schools should be open 24/7, we've gotten to a point now where our schools are not open.

Ms. PATENAUDE. They're not.

Senator MURKOWSKI. They aren't open. We're afraid of the liability. We can't have any after school activities where you're not abso-

lutely 100 percent monitored all the way throughout. In so many of our villages where the school is—that is where the library is. It is where the gymnasium is for the whole community. But during summertime, that community gymnasium is shut down, that library is shut down. It's the only place where you've got Internet for the community and all of a sudden, because school is over, that internet access is gone. So we don't promote that attitude of openness and welcome because sorry, after school hours, we're shutting it down.

Ms. PATENAUDE. I think that's the importance of partnering with community agencies that do have staff that is there on Saturday and Sunday and after hours and having like say, the neighborhood health center under the roof of the school as opposed to down the block. I mean, it's fine if it's down the block but that doesn't really merge the two—the school and the health-based agency. So those kind of partnerships can happen and the school can work with the town and their finances and these other people. Then that's a marriage made in heaven as far as I'm concerned. Daycare providers should be, before and after school, allowed to be under those roofs without worrying and wondering what all the red tape is all about. So I think those kinds of partnerships really, if we work on them, they will work and parents should be going to schools to take out library books. They shouldn't have to go to the town library. They should be able to—our own students should be able to go in and use the computers in the library in the high school or the middle school and right now, because of resources and the lack of those partnerships, we probably don't see that happening as much as we should be.

But they are great ideas and I think if we work on it, we can get them done.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Mr. Chairman, I'm out of time but Mr. Ritter was waiting to respond to that.

Mr. RITTER. I wanted to mention an experiment that we're trying down in Dallas to leverage the business community and the nonprofit community toward the goal of parental involvement in the schools. The Dallas ISP, we have a circumstance where 48 percent of the kids who start ninth grade don't make it out in 4 years to the 12th grade and the number is 58 percent for the Hispanic kids. I'm on the Board of the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas and we launched a program 2 years ago called, Destination Graduation. It was seeded with $100,000 grant from the TI Foundation and what we did, was we gave that $100,000 to the United Way and we said, we want to put a drop-out prevention initiative in place at Samuel High School, which was the lowest performing high school in DISP, predominantly Hispanic and we asked United Way to go out and find the three best agencies in the community that do mentoring, parental involvement and college readiness.

So the United Way put out an RFP and it went to hundreds of community agencies and we got a sea of magnificent ideas in those three areas from our nonprofit community as they were competing for this grant money. We wound up awarding the grant to Big Brothers and Big Sisters for mentoring, to the Princeton Review for college readiness but on parental involvement, we gave the grant to a community-based grass roots organization called the Conciulio.

The Conciulio is an Hispanic service organization that knows how to go out and talk to Hispanic parents, many of whom have never been inside a school, who've never attended a parent/teacher conference, who don't have the slightest idea how to read a report card and they went out and trained the parents in terms of what they needed to do to support their kids.

In 1 year, the PTA at Samuel High School, grew from 3 parents to over 50 and the amount of financial aid that the students from Samuel received basically increased by a factor of 10 because parents were getting engaged and they were learning about things like financial aid and so forth. So the idea of using campus-based community collaborations like that and leveraging resources that are in the nonprofit community like the United Way and the interest that businesses have, like TI—and every community has got companies like ours—can result in some very, very effective results in the parental involvement vector.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you.

Ms. PURIEFOY. Could I add to this?

Senator REED. Go ahead, please.

Ms. PURIEFOY. There are three areas that you talked about. One is training. Parents need to have access to really good training. So it would be very useful for districts. One of our recommendations is to set benchmarks—What is an effective collaboration between a parent and a school? What does it look like?—determine the benchmarks and then be able to have some type of report card or assessment as to whether or not that's happening. So people are working off of a common agenda.

The second is that in the provisions of the law, many of those provisions are not being carried out. So one of the things that parents hear, by word of mouth, is—"Oh, don't go sit on that school council because nobody is going to pay any attention to you." So they have to have some sense of re-dress, that if it isn't working for them, they need a place where they can go file a complaint and be able to feel like they are getting something done.

Finally what I would say is we did an experiment and funded it, the Annenberg Foundation provided a grant for this. We helped to set up 19 Community Learning Centers in Lincoln, Nebraska. These Learning Centers were open to all people in the community. Parents used these centers to learn about what was happening in their children's school, to learn with their children, to be able to engage in all kinds of activities. It started building parent confidence in communities and that confidence began to be much more transportable to the schools.

So the school alone can't be totally responsible for developing better parent/teacher relationships. There is a whole set of organizations and agencies within communities that can help that to happen and we have a great experiment that happened in Lincoln and a very good experiment that frankly is happening in Providence now, looking at the whole out-of-school time strategy.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Senator Isakson.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ISAKSON

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had the privilege of going to public school. My wife taught public school and my kids all went to public school and I chaired the State Board of Education. I always said parents have three choices—private school, home school or public school and my job was to make public school the best choice. I think this hearing is about the single most important thing to break through the problems that we have.

I want to ask you a question, Ms. Patenaude—is that right?

Ms. PATENAUDE. Patenaude, yes.

Senator ISAKSON. Patenaude. I'm sorry.

Ms. PATENAUDE. That's okay.

Senator ISAKSON. When were you a local school PTA president?

Ms. PATENAUDE. In 19—let's see, it's got to be about 15——

Senator ISAKSON. OK. You're now President of Rhode Island?

Ms. PATENAUDE. Right.

Senator ISAKSON. In your judgment, has No Child Left Behind been successful in improving education of the title I students?

Ms. PATENAUDE. I think—I'm not sure—successful is a big word. It's been somewhat successful——

Senator ISAKSON. It means they're improving.

Ms. PATENAUDE. I think it's improving. I think yes, I think that's true.

Senator ISAKSON. OK, well, I happen to think so, too and I think it is because—I'm sorry Mr. Ritter is gone—one, there is a lot more transparency of the data. It is accessible to parents. I know there are issues about subnormal services in public school choice but the key to that was, it got the parent in the school and asked them to make a decision on the future of their child, which most of these parents had.

I have a belief that the biggest disability in America is not ADD, it's PDD—parental deficient disorder and I think those are parents that don't have a social/economic excuse. They just don't get involved and we need to do everything we can to get them involved and PTAs can do that.

But there are a lot of parents who, because they are a single mom, they're working two jobs and I don't like talking bad about them because God bless them, making the money to put the meal on the table is helpful and we need to do some positive things, which leads me, Mr. Chairman, to Communities in Schools.

I want to tell you a story. I was Chairman of the State Board of Education. Zell Miller was Governor of Georgia. He had beaten me and then appointed me to run education and he said, "Listen, I've got $2 million extra that I can put—if you could make one investment, where would you make it?" We were dealing with the drop-out rate, we were dealing with under-served schools and I had met the Communities in Schools people and I said, "I'll tell you what. They told me that for $1,625,000 they could make a difference in 21 school districts," which I thought was a pretty good return on the dollar and so I asked the Governor to put that in the budget and he did.

Today I think they are involved in 67 school districts and graduation rates are like 85 percent in those schools where before, in

some cases, they were less than 50. It's an engagement that deals with what—a lot of schools who do have the single working parent who can't be as engaged because of the stress and demands they have but they matched community services with student needs.

A lot of our kids' problems are, in my judgment, mentor-based and guidance-based and they provide a match for services that are available but are a mystery to the schools because they're worried about doing their job and are a great catalyst. So I want to commend Mr. Cardinali, who did not pay me to say that in any way. I happen to have a very positive experience with them and I think for those—particularly those systems where students have—the parents are a majority of single parents. They're working a couple of jobs. They have a very difficult time, rural poor or innercity-poor, it is a tremendous system and I commend them for what they do.

I do think we need in this reauthorization, to find any other areas we can put catalytic agents for parental involvement in. I agree with you that the schools are more closed than they should be. They need to be as open as they can be. I think Senator Alexander's idea about an additional educational enrichment is a terrific idea because there are so many things that could be made available to a child only, be it for the money being missing and things of that nature.

But I'd be interested in hearing just your general thoughts on anything we've missed in this hearing that you might have wanted to suggest, particularly with regard to getting the parents in the school. I'll start with you, Ms. Puriefoy. Have you missed anything that you haven't had the chance to say?

Ms. PURIEFOY. I don't think I've missed anything but here's what I'd like to add.

Senator ISAKSON. OK.

Ms. PURIEFOY. I would say that there is a difference between parental engagement and community engagement and public engagement. In the parental engagement, it is the distinct relationship that takes place between the parent or the guardian and the child to really be able to set the expectations for what a child should be doing.

Senator ISAKSON. That's absolutely irreplaceable.

Ms. PURIEFOY. And that is irreplaceable. The community engagement is really looking at the sets of relationships that take place outside of schools that often times deal with and provide an opportunity for children to demonstrate some level of success, often in a nonacademic setting but it transfers to lots of other places.

Public engagement, I think, is the broader involvement of people like me, who don't have kids in school, who are single. I'm not a double income—you know, no kids. I'm a single person and if I don't have a kid in school, then I can't be in the school. I'm suspect if I go to volunteer. If I go to volunteer in a community agency, that's a lot better because I can be a mentor to a kid.

But we need to create a resonating chamber in this country where we understand that the minds of Americans is our first and most important natural resource and that the only institution that can take quality public schools to scale are the public. And at the end of the day, if the resources are going to be provided, they will not be provided by parents alone. They will not be able to be pro-

vided by community agencies alone. It will be John Doe and Mary Doe who say, "You know what? This makes a difference to my life, to the quality of my life, to the level of civil discourse that does or doesn't take place in my community, to the ability for me to understand a ballot or live next door to somebody who understands how to read the referendum or to decide on what kind of healthcare they are going to want or to be able to understand the debate that goes on in the Senate about national security."

So I would say that at the end of the day, the engagement of the broadest possible segment of the American public is essential for us to do.

Senator ISAKSON. My time is up, I know but real quickly, Ms. Patenaude, did you have anything to add?

Senator REED. I would like the panelists to take as much time as they'd like to respond to Senator Isakson's question. I think it is excellent and anticipated my second round. So we can finish up.

Kathy.

Ms. PATENAUDE. What I'd like to say is that I truly believe and I think most parents do believe that they want the best for their children. And your comment about disengaged parents or parents that don't—are apathetic—I think you can use that argument with all of us who may be apathetic when we vote. That's a perfect example. People don't vote and yet, if you go to the neighborhood restaurant, everybody is talking about the politics.

Everybody has an opinion about what is going on at the Statehouse or in Washington and so do parents talk. They really do care about their kids and again, maybe the local person doesn't feel that they have a voice at the Statehouse or in Washington but you have to let them know that they do and the same thing with parents. If you empower parents, then they will go to the school and they will be engaged.

I do believe that if they feel they can make a difference in their child's education and that their school leaders are going to listen to them, their teacher is an equal partner with them, then instead of talking out in the parking lot and gossiping about something that's not really relevant, they'll go into that school and make a difference for their child and they will, in fact, pick up the baton and use it. So I really think that's where we're at. We have to educate and empower and make sure those parents get into the schools, just like we need more people to get out there and vote.

Senator REED. Mr. Cardinali.

Mr. CARDINALI. Thank you for the call out on Communities in Schools. I also want to pick up a question that Senator Murkowski asked regarding more effective practice and it kind of blends what I would like to say about parental involvement.

In Atlanta, Georgia as well as in Houston, Texas and Columbus, Ohio and a number of other places, Communities in Schools, I think, took the framework that Ms. Puriefoy put out and kind of blended it into an effective strategy and we call it Walk for Success. What it does is, a Community in Schools site coordinator, who is positioned in the school at the beginning of the year, works with the principal and the teachers, identifies where kids are, where their families are. They mobilize volunteers committed to public education and they walk the streets knocking on the doors of the

families' homes. In many cases, they break down the fear and the barriers that exist because parents may have failed school. They may not be English language speakers. They may have all sorts of pre-conceived notions about what happens or should happen or doesn't happen in the school and those volunteers begin the relationship with the parents.

What they discover is that there is a deep passion for their kids being successful and there is often a fear about how to help support that. So with kids who live in poverty and their families who live in poverty, there is often a need to reach out to those families, to stabilize them in affordable housing, living wage jobs and community engagement.

So our work often extends beyond just the parental involvement in a child's life or academic support—but stabilizing a family. And once a family is stabilized, there is a lower probability of that child moving from one school to the next, which is a direct predictor of drop-out—high mobility rates.

So when we talk about parental involvement, we're actually talking about family engagement and a holistic development, not just of the child's academic career but of that family's ability to be a support mechanism comprehensively.

I think I'd like to really challenge us to think about that, as we focus on the improving of public education. There are some opportunities in this blending of community involvement to be really focused on the ability to support kids, support families and improve public education in the process. And I think it's an exciting time. Thank you.

Senator REED. Well, let me thank my colleagues for excellent questions and the panel for excellent presentations. It was very informative and we really appreciate your effort and again, your patience for putting up with our schedule. I would like for the record to indicate that we will keep the record open for 2 weeks so interested parties can submit written testimony. So if you want to, follow up with additional written testimony and for Senators to submit questions for your response within the next 2 weeks. But thank you—again, to all of you. It was just an excellent presentation. I've learned a great deal, not only from the witnesses but from my colleagues. So thank you very much.

I will now adjourn the hearing.

[Additional material follows.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR ENZI

I would like to thank Chairman Kennedy for holding this important hearing. Parental and community involvement are critical pieces of No Child Left Behind. The education of a child is not the sole responsibility of a single parent, family member, teacher, principal, or community member. The education of a child is the responsibility of all—of parents, family members, teachers, principals, and community members.

A parent is a child's first teacher. Parents are the only constant in the continuum of our educational system. They are at the door when their child starts kindergarten and in the audience for their child's high school graduation. But, parents can only do so much, and we know that too many parents have responsibilities that keep them away from many of their child's experiences at school.

I believe that we all want the same outcome—to make sure that every student is prepared to be successful in the global economy. To accomplish this we will need a bipartisan, bicameral approach to reauthorization. I look forward to reauthorizing NCLB in the same spirit of bipartisanship, cooperation and optimism that characterized its original passage.

No Child Left Behind is working—we must continue the four key principles of the law and strengthen the law to support those key principles. One of those four principles is ensuring that parents have options and timely information.

Parents and community members are vital members of this process. We must continue to find effective ways to work together to improve not only academic achievement levels, but also the atmosphere at our Nation's schools. Successful schools are able to harness support from community members, organizations and businesses.

This is true regardless of where a school is located. One of the things that I will focus on is the impact of NCLB on rural schools. We need to make sure that what we do does not have unintended negative consequences on schools where there may be only 10 students and one teacher. These schools should not be penalized, when they are working within the law to ensure that all students receive the education they need to be successful. No rural school or student should be left behind.

The reauthorization must continue to support the involvement of parents, community members, and businesses. The Federal Government cannot provide everything a school needs to be successful, but we can work to ensure that partnerships are encouraged and assisted wherever possible.

[Whereupon, at 5:18 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

○