

**NEW WEB SITE – [WWW.NCLBGRASSROOTS.ORG](http://www.nclbgrassroots.org) –
BRINGS INTO FOCUS GROWING LOCAL OPPOSITION
TO CONTROVERSIAL SCHOOL REFORMS**

*New Site Reflects Concern About “Disconnect” in NCLB Debate;
Local Stories of NCLB Woes No Longer Will Get Lost at National Level.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.///September 21, 2004///A powerful and unique Web site – <http://www.nclbgrassroots.org> – being launched today is intended to help national policymakers and the news media understand that the controversial No Child Left Behind (NCLB) school reforms are not working as intended and have sparked widespread local opposition.

Featuring more than 500 recent local newspaper articles that can be sorted by state and eight key NCLB topic areas, the ambitious Web site is being launched by Results for America (<http://www.ResultsForAmerica.org>), a project of the nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute. Articles collected in the Web site can be sorted by such issues as: federal intrusion in education policy; narrowing of curriculum; teacher flexibility; class size; funding burden; unintended negative consequences of NCLB; adequate yearly progress (AYP) reporting; and standardized testing.

Civil Society Institute President Pam Solo said: **“The national debate about NCLB is taking place in a way that is almost completely divorced from what is actually going on out there at the grassroots in the schools where NCLB is not working and is creating huge headaches and disparities. As a result, there is a big and growing ‘disconnect’ right now between the abstract national discussion of NCLB and how it actually plays out locally in concrete terms. Our new Web site gives voice to the mounting evidence that NCLB has a noble name, but that its merits as social policy begin and end there.”**

The impetus for www.nclbgrassroots.org first arose during the course of Results For America’s February 2004 survey that parental support for NCLB is thin and does not hold up when parents are given the alternative of considering other common-sense changes for schools. (See highlighted survey results below.)

Solo added: **“NCLB is the most far reaching social policy enacted in the last 35 years. The effects of this policy have been largely ignored by both political parties as the debate in an election year has focused almost entirely on whether it has been adequately funded. Results For America is calling for a more open and full debate by all parties on the real effects this policy is having on kids, their learning, the teaching profession and families.”**

The CSI President added: **“This vast social experiment has neither helped with student drop-out rates nor has it done much to advance the real learning curve of the vast majority of the nation’s students. Local educators understand all of this. Now, it’s time to make sure that NCLB’s real-world impact also is understood by**

national lawmakers and journalists who tend to think and write about this issue in terms that have little to do with what is actually going on in America's classrooms."

RFA SURVEY RESULTS ON NCLB

According to the February 2004 RFA opinion survey, most American parents who know about "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) school reforms like the concept, but they also would oppose implementation of any of its punitive terms in their own child's school. In what was the first national opinion survey since NCLB implementation to zero in specifically on what the parents of school-age children think about the two-year-old initiative, RFA found that a third of all parents (34 percent) who have heard of NCLB see the school reforms as "punishing schools for failure instead of rewarding them for success," a quarter view it as "limiting learning by students" (25 percent), while fewer than half (46 percent) associate NCLB with "improving learning." The RFA survey also found almost no parental support (10 percent) for increased spending on the increasingly controversial school reform plan.

The survey found that many parents have major concerns when the focus shifts from the abstract concept of NCLB to the real-world specifics of the reforms, including high-stakes testing (only 51 percent support, with just 17 percent expressing "strong" support and 33 percent "somewhat" supportive) and taking funds from schools deemed to be "failing," particularly those of their children (only 19 percent supporting such a move). Significantly, most parents would prefer to see any additional federal education funds spent on smaller class sizes (52 percent), not enforcement or further implementation of NCLB (10 percent).

RFA is conducting a new survey of U.S. voters and their thoughts about NCLB and other approaches to school reform.

ABOUT RESULTS FOR AMERICA

Results for America is a project of the nonprofit Civil Society Institute, which is based in Newton, Massachusetts. The mission of the Institute is to serve as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business, that can help to improve society. Visit Civil Society Institute on the Web at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org>.

RFA seeks to shape and tap the tremendous amount of community-level knowledge, experience and innovative action that could solve America's problems in four key areas, including education reform. The RFA initiative for schools is entitled "Great Kids, Great Schools, Great Communities." Results for America supports investing in public schools, making sure parents have more of a say in their schools and creating conditions that will lead to learning and success for every child.

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