

For Immediate Release

Washington, DC, July 29, 2010

Contact: Claus von Zastrow, 202 296-5220 x115

Major Education Associations Call for Rigorous and Fair School Accountability Systems

WASHINGTON – Today, the Learning First Alliance, a partnership of 16 national education associations representing over ten million parents, educators and policymakers, released the following statement:

The Learning First Alliance supports the goal of rigorous and fair accountability systems for schools and districts. These accountability systems should accurately measure student and school performance and support continuous improvement of schools. Therefore, we recommend that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act promote improved accountability systems that:

- **Include measures of student growth.**
- **Require the use of multiple sources** of evidence of student achievement (such as writing samples, portfolios and capstone projects) and school performance that more fully determine student and school progress than do standardized assessments alone.
- **Reward progress and provide intensive support to struggling schools** rather than automatically and systematically punishing shortcomings.
- **Promote interventions that are based on the best available research or evidence**, including locally designed interventions that are research based.
- **Distinguish between school performance categories.** The most comprehensive interventions should be directed to the schools most in need of improvement. More targeted interventions should be available for the lowest performing students or subgroups in a school or district. These interventions should be positive supports developed locally and based on the specific improvement needs and capacity of the school and community in question.
- **Focus on building capacity for immediate and sustained improvement.**
- **Target interventions to the precise problems of a particular school**, barring sanctions that apply all-or-nothing measures such as the arbitrary replacement or reassignment of staff and forced alternative governance, unless a review of specific improvement needs warrants such steps and local capacity supports them.
- **Acknowledge shared accountability for student success.** Teachers, administrators, other school and district staff, parents, policy makers, community members, lawmakers, states and the federal government all share responsibility for ensuring that all children have excellent, equitable educational opportunities.

###

The Learning First Alliance is a permanent partnership of 16 leading education associations with more than 10 million members dedicated to improving student learning in America's public schools. Alliance members include: the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Association of School Administrators, American Association of School Personnel Administrators, American Federation of Teachers, American School Counselor Association, Association of School Business Officials International, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, National Middle School Association, National School Public Relations Association, National Staff Development Council, National PTA, National School Boards Association and Phi Delta Kappa International. The Alliance maintains www.publicschoolinsights.org, a website that features what's working in public schools and districts across the country.