

## **NABE's Principles on the Reauthorization of NCLB**

The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) has the mission to advocate for equitable, high quality education for approximately 5 million English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled in our country's public schools. By promoting excellence in Bilingual Education programs, NABE fosters the development of bilingual skills and academic success for ALL students. In this regard, NABE supports strong accountability and reliable assessment that accurately demonstrates ELLs' linguistic progress in both the native language and English, as well as content area achievement. Similarly, NABE promotes that ELLs be served by highly qualified professionals, trained in bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) methodology, and encourages schools and school districts' efforts to provide optimal educational services and community support.

As Congress prepares the reauthorization of NCLB, NABE urges legislators to consider the following principles to enhance the current educational practices for ELLs and to ensure accountability that rewards success and supports educators to help students learn:

States and districts:

1. Should develop valid and reliable alternate assessments (both formal and informal), in both English and students' native language, that will yield accurate indicators of progress in the English language and content areas among the diverse ELL population which includes Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), new immigrants, over-age learners, and students with disabilities;
2. Establish the criteria of ELLs' participation in standardized assessment programs, in English, based on the student's English language proficiency that is at least at the advanced level (as measured by a valid and reliable instrument) and not on the length of time he/she has attended U.S. schools;
3. Promote the use of native language as a proven instructional methodology for academic achievement;
4. Support the use of native language as a vehicle for accurate assessment among students taught content in their native language;
5. Develop research-based effective accommodations, such as the linguistic modifications of test items with excessive language demands, for students transitioning into taking tests in English. Assist LEAs in implementing such accommodations;
6. Allow Individualized Education Programs (IEP) teams to determine the appropriate assessments (regular, alternate, or modified) for each ELL participating in Bilingual/ESL Special Education programs;
7. Specify that ELLs, regardless of their English language proficiency, must have equitable access to the full range of services and educational programs that schools and school districts offer to their student population;
8. Ensure schools' accountability by reviewing their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based only on valid and reliable assessments that have been normed on our ELL student population, including research-based multiple measures and accurate

- data interpretation. Follow individual ELL's language proficiency and aggregate by age group for AYP (i.e. "growth model" accountability systems). Furthermore, AYP should be determined by multiple assessments and other relevant criteria determined at the local levels and not solely based on one standardized test score;
9. Increase funding for schools serving ELLs so they can address areas of need, i.e. professional development, acquisition and development of supplemental instructional materials, and parental involvement;
  10. Increase funding to ensure that all teachers and support personnel, including mainstream professionals, participate in professional development activities and support the development of state certification beyond the basic teaching credential focusing on best practices based on research for ELLs; and expand the definition of *Highly Qualified Teacher* to recognize the training of Bilingual and ESL specialists;
  11. Increase support and funding to teach English to parents in the community, as well as to help parents develop an understanding of the school's academic instruction, policies, and programs for their children;

NABE reiterates its firm commitment to promoting bilingualism for ALL students through their participation in high quality Bilingual Education programs. Further, NABE strongly urges legislators to assist schools in closing the achievement gap between ELLs and English proficient students nationwide by critically reforming NCLB.

*Submitted by NABE's Executive Board on June 2007*