



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Tita Freeman
(202) 872-1260

THE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE RELEASES POLL THAT REVEALS PARENTS AND VOTERS SUPPORT NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Majority of parents expect states to identify one-third or fewer schools "in need of improvement"

Washington, DC — On the eve of the release of state-by-state lists of schools that “need improvement,” a poll commissioned by The Business Roundtable shows that majorities of parents and voters support the new reporting requirements in the No Child Left Behind Act. The opinion research conducted by Schneiders · Della Volpe · Schulman (SDS) is the first survey of its kind to test public support for one of the linchpins of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) — “disaggregated reporting of student achievement data.”

“You can't manage what you don't measure,” said Joseph M. Tucci, President and CEO of EMC Corporation, and Chairman of The Business Roundtable's Education and the Workforce Task Force. “No executive can run a business without accurate, granular data that explains what's working and what's not. Our school systems should be no different. Better reporting of student performance will allow educators, parents and policymakers to see where we need to improve and by how much.”

NCLB requires schools, districts and states to report student performance for the first time by income level, race, ethnicity, special needs and English proficiency. Each student group is required to make “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) and schools that miss growth targets will be identified as “needing improvement.” Previously most schools and districts reported an average of all groups of students, masking persistent achievement gaps in performance among different groups of students.

The national telephone survey of 853 parents and voters found strong support for the new accountability provision, but a general lack of awareness about achievement gaps among different groups of students.

- **Majorities of parents and voters believe the reporting requirements of NCLB are fair.** Fifty-six percent of parents and 59 percent of voters agree that a school should be labeled as “needing improvement” if even one group of students is falling behind.
- **Large majorities of voters and parents say they would be concerned to learn that specific groups of students are found to be falling behind.** Eighty to 90 percent of

parents say they would be concerned to learn that, while the majority of students in their communities were meeting requirements in reading and math, specific groups — such as African-Americans, English Language Learners, low-income or special needs students — were not.

- **Many parents and voters may be surprised to learn that schools in their own communities are not serving all students well.** More than two-thirds of parents and voters believe that all groups of students receive the same quality of education in their local schools. When asked to predict the number of schools that will be on the “needs improvement” list, 51 percent of parents and 44 percent of voters expect less than one-third of the schools in their state to be on the list. Early estimates indicate this number could be higher in some states.
- **Parents recognize that although a large number of schools may be identified, there are differences between the schools on the list.** Seventy-four percent want the “needs improvement” lists subdivided to make distinctions based on the amount of improvement needed by the schools. However, according to a media analysis conducted by KSA-Plus Communications for The Business Roundtable, these distinctions are not being delivered in news coverage. “Failing” was the predominant label used by reporters over the last two years to describe *all* schools that do not make AYP.
- **Society’s “moral obligation to provide a high-quality education to students” is the most compelling reason to strive for every student meeting state standards by 2014.** When offered a choice among four rationales, forty-three percent of parents and 40 percent of voters made it their first choice. Other reasons included the need for a stronger economy (25 percent of parents and 18 percent of voters), more accountability in spending taxpayer dollars (16 percent of parents and 26 percent of voters), and better preparation for work and citizenship (16 percent of parents and 17 percent of voters).

“This nation has a deep moral commitment to the principles of No Child Left Behind,” said John J. Castellani, President of The Business Roundtable. “Reporting achievement by student group will be eye-opening for many people. We must be clear, honest and bold about the data and use it to make changes to ensure that *all* students are performing at high levels.”

The Business Roundtable commissioned the national telephone survey to get an early signal about parent and voter understanding of the new accountability systems to help state leaders communicate effectively about the new changes. The poll represents a survey of 450 registered voters (margin of error is +/- 4.6 percent at the 95 percent confidence level) and 403 parents of public school children (margin of error is +/- 4.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level).

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The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading corporations with a combined workforce of more than 10 million employees in the United States and \$3.7 trillion in annual revenues. The chief executives are committed to advocating public policies that foster vigorous economic growth and a dynamic global economy.