

## Weaknesses of NCLB

1. Costs associated with yearly testing of every child
2. Reliability and validity of a single high-stakes test
3. Testing children with identified disabilities
4. AYP of children whose first language is not English
5. Sacrifice of curriculum not tested; teaching methods not aligned with bubble-in testing

### Suggestions for PA Legislature

#### Costs:

Send a clear message to the federal government that Pennsylvania will expect exemptions from NCLB without the critical fiscal support necessary to make it work.

#### Reliability and Validity:

1. Support PDE in its efforts to align the PSSA with the PA Standards.
2. Weight standards so that fewer standards are tested.
3. Ensure teachers know what will be tested so that how standards, curriculum and assessment are aligned in the PSSA are transparent.
4. Focus on delivery as well as on content standards: that every child has an opportunity to learn what will be tested.

#### Testing children with disabilities:

1. Ensure that alternative ways to test the same content exist for children with identified disabilities.
2. Work to establish exemptions that meet the spirit of the law exist for children with identified disabilities so that these children and their teachers do not experience undue frustration with a system that treats all children as exactly the same.
3. Work to establish guidelines for AYP that allow children with disabilities to achieve at high yet attainable levels.

#### English Language Learners

1. Seek an exemption for ELLs that allows them to remain in the sub-group for two years after they develop English proficiency so that AYP can be demonstrated.

#### Broad and Interesting Curriculum

1. Provide support to teachers to help them align standards, the curriculum and tests so that classrooms are active, inviting and meaningful to students.
2. Ensure that key areas of the curriculum that are not specifically tested (such as art, music, history) are not ignored.
3. Ensure that the test provides opportunity for students to give longer and more thoughtful answers so that higher order and critical thinking skills can be encouraged, taught and tested rather than relying solely on easily scorable but reductionistic test items.