

EDUCATION and NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Requests:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)/ Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- Ensure that No Child Left Behind values experiential education by encouraging school districts to facilitate museum visits to help teach the curriculum.
- Retain the arts in the definition of core academic subjects of learning.
- Expand connections between museums, educators, and students, and remove barriers that prevent schools from taking full advantage of museums' unique human and material resources.
- Continue to expressly include museums in applicable sections of ESEA/NCLB – including Arts in Education, Teaching American History, Technology, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Professional Development.
- Expand the explicit inclusion of museums in other ESEA/NCLB programs, including Title I, when and where appropriate and justified.
- Support a stand-alone program for creating positions within school districts responsible for ensuring that museum resources are well utilized.
- Recognize holders of advanced degrees in museum education as qualified to work directly with students.

Arts in Education

- Include the arts in all Department of Education research and data collection regarding "core academic subjects."
- Reauthorize the Arts in Education programs of the U.S. Department of Education.

Environmental Education

- Support the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R. 3036 in the 110th Congress)

Introduction:

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was the name given to the new law that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the principal federal education policy for kindergarten through high school. It was signed into law (Public Law 107-110) on January 8, 2002. NCLB was designed to re-focus federal policy on reading, with strong accountability provisions, including annual standardized testing (developed by each state) for all students in certain grades. Schools that do not achieve test scores showing "Adequate Yearly Progress" in tests focused on reading and math are subject to a host of recriminations.

Almost immediately after NCLB took effect in 2002, school districts began devoting more time to reading and math at the expense of other subjects.

Talking Points:

No Child Left Behind Has Affected Museums

- NCLB has had unintended consequences relating to art, science and history education instruction, and museum visits have decreased as a result.
- More than one third (36 percent) of all school districts have cut elementary social studies instruction – by an average of 76 minutes a week – while arts education is down at 16 percent of the schools and science at 28 percent of the schools.

Museums are Critical Partners in Education

- Museums spend more than \$1 billion annually on educational programming.
- Each year, museums provide more than 18 million instructional hours to students and educators, including the following:
 - Educational programming for students
 - Museum staff visits to schools
 - Traveling exhibits in schools
 - Professional development for teachers
 - More than 90 million visits each year from school students
- In some states, museums write part of the educational curriculum for the entire state school system.
- Museums often design educational programs in math, science, art, literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, geography, and social studies in coordination with state and local curriculum standards.
- Educational museum visits reach students in ways that textbooks and classroom instruction cannot. Experiential learning in museums activates students' curiosity and imagination.
- In recognition of the strong role museums play in the education of children, museums are expressly included in several sections of ESEA/NCLB – including Arts in Education, Teaching American History, Technology, and Professional Development.

The Partnership between Museums and Schools Must Be Strengthened

- The partnership between museums and schools has served and benefited students, teachers and communities immensely.
- Many museums already participate in 21st Century Community Learning Centers and magnet and charter school programs (under the rubric of “community-based organizations”). However, museums must be included as eligible entities in these programs for clear association and recognition to be drawn by state and local education agencies and other key stakeholders in education.
- Positions that have been established within school districts with the responsibility of ensuring that museum resources are well utilized have proven extremely successful.
- Educators report a desire to continue educational visits to museums, but are under increased pressure to show improvement on standardized tests.
- Budgetary constraints, fuel costs and other factors are leading school officials to approve fewer educational visits to museums, to the detriment of both students and educators.