



NACSA Notes

*Vol. II, No. 3
November 8, 2004*

This NCLB-focused edition of *NACSA Notes* reports on:

- 1) 'Leading Indicators' on the Implementation of NCLB in the Charter School Sector
- 2) NCLB Title I Accountability and Charter School Authorizer Obligations
- 3) **Project Announcement: Aligning NCLB and Charter School Accountability Systems**

NACSA to support State Department of Education and Authorizer Teams Creating Best Practice Models in Aligning NCLB and Charter School Accountability Systems.
Responses to the Project's Request for Proposal Due December 15, 2004

'Leading Indicators' on the Implementation of NCLB in the Charter School Sector

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly known as No Child Left Behind ("NCLB"). This federal legislation was positioned as a comprehensive approach to holding all schools, including charter schools, accountable for performance. While NCLB's mantra, a demand for academic performance, is very much aligned to the charter school concept of accountability for results, the charter school community worried early on that the strict uniformity of NCLB would inhibit the realization of the charter school concept that performance goals and measures should reflect the unique goals and mission of individual schools.

Last spring, following two years of experience under the NCLB regime, NACSA conducted a survey of charter school authorizers and state departments of education to determine the '[leading indicators](#)' on the implementation of NCLB in the charter school sector. The survey found that while authorizers believe NCLB is helping them hold charter schools accountable for performance, a number of the same concerns raised when the law was first enacted still linger. The adequacy of resources for carrying out NCLB-related functions, balancing charter schools' autonomy while ensuring they make NCLB-required performance improvement, and coordinating multiple systems of oversight continue to challenge authorizers as they carry out their oversight responsibilities.

These survey results suggest both that NCLB accountability is real in the charter school sector and that there is still much work to be done to ensure authorizers implement effective oversight for holding charter schools accountable to NCLB-imposed and charter-specific outcomes.

References

NACSA. [NCLB 'Leading Indicators' Surveys of Charter School Authorizers and State Education Agencies: Final Report](#), July 30, 2004.

Paul Herdman, Nelson Smith, and Cynthia Skinner. [Policy Brief: Charter Schools and the New Federal Accountability Provisions](#), March 2002.

NCLB Title I Accountability and Charter School Authorizer Obligations

The U.S Department of Education has released updated non-regulatory guidance on [The Impact of the New Title I Requirements on Charter Schools](#). This guidance provides helpful clarification regarding the Department's expectations of charter school authorizers in implementing sanctions in charter schools identified for improvement, and describes the resources that may be available to support authorizers in carrying out those responsibilities.

In response to this Guidance, NACSA has issued a [Policy Brief](#) that reports and makes recommendations on the obligations of authorizers in implementing NCLB Title I accountability in the charter schools they oversee. The Guidance confirms that state departments of education play a primary role in designing state-specific plans that define how NCLB will be implemented in their respective jurisdictions. The Guidance reiterates, however, that the role of the SEA should not duplicate or undermine an authorizer's responsibility to hold the schools it has chartered accountable for performance. In fact, the Department anticipates that authorizers will play a critical role in implementing NCLB accountability provisions in the schools it has chartered.

In defining the roles and responsibilities of SEAs and authorizers for charter school accountability, it comes right down to a very simple rule learned in kindergarten: share (information and resources). Authorizers and SEAs should work collaboratively to create a seamless system for holding charter schools accountable for performance and allocate resources made available by the U.S Department of Education under Title I for these purposes.

As part of our federally-funded *Building Excellence in Charter School Authorizing* Project, NACSA will be working with select SEA-authorizer teams to address and resolve key NCLB implementation challenges. To learn more about this opportunity, see our Project Announcement below.

References

NACSA. [Policy Brief: NCLB Title I Accountability and Charter School Authorizer Obligations](#), September 2004.

U.S Department of Education. [The Impact of the New Title I Requirements on Charter Schools, Non-Regulatory Guidance](#), July 2004.

NACSA Project Announcement: Aligning NCLB and Charter School Accountability Systems

NACSA is pleased to announce a unique opportunity for state department of education and charter school authorizer teams to participate in a federally funded project for aligning NCLB accountability provisions with charter school accountability systems. Made possible through a grant from the U.S Department of Education, participating teams will receive expert technical assistance and guidance for developing, implementing, and documenting model practices of NCLB implementation in the charter school sector. Teams will be selected through a competitive process as outlined in the project's [Request for Proposal](#). Proposals must be submitted by December 15, 2004. Please direct questions regarding this project to Rebecca Cass (rebeccac@charterauthorizers.org).

To subscribe to or unsubscribe from this list, send an e-mail to info@charterauthorizers.org with “NACSA Notes” in the subject line. Please direct any comments, questions or suggestions for **NACSA Notes** to info@charterauthorizers.org.

NACSA Notes is distributed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, a membership association of educational agencies across the country that authorize and oversee charter public schools. NACSA promotes the development of high-quality educational options and is dedicated to strengthening the capacities of authorizers to charter successful schools. For more information about NACSA’s aims and initiatives, visit our website, www.charterauthorizers.org.