



## Listen to Parents! Parent Voices Weekly Education Fax July 25, 2013

### Survey: Parents oppose testing, school closings and “choice”

American Federation of Teachers survey shows most parents want **less testing, charter schools and school closings** and **more support for neighborhood public schools**.

From the AFT press release (<http://www.aft.org/newspubs/press/2013/072213b.cfm>):

Most parents with children in public schools do not support recent changes in education policy, from closing low-performing schools to shifting public dollars to charter schools to private school vouchers, according to a new poll released Monday by the American Federation of Teachers. Support for strong public schools over expanded vouchers and charters is widespread, with **77 percent** supporting this approach, and that support cuts across political and class lines.

Public school parents also soundly reject the austerity-driven policies being pushed in schools. More than two-thirds of parents see the following as reducing the quality of public education: teacher and staff layoffs; increased class sizes; school closings; high turnover rates; and cutbacks in art, music, libraries and physical education. And a **57 percent** majority feel there is too much emphasis on testing today.

**PAA's position:** This survey reinforces PAA's approach as detailed in our position paper on ESEA reauthorization, “What Public School Parents Want in a New Federal Education Law”  
<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/paa-reforming-esea/>

PAA opposes efforts to privatize public education through the expansion of charters, vouchers or other privately-run programs at the expense of regular public schools. We oppose the misuse and overuse of standardized tests to evaluate teachers, students or schools.

**PAA recommends** that Congress **listen to parents** and support policies and practices that have a track record of improving schools, and more reliable accountability and assessment practices. Specifically we suggest that a new ESEA include:

- a focus on providing sufficient and equitable resources in all public schools, so that every child can receive a high-quality education,
- improving schools rather than closing them, using evidence-based solutions backed by parents and other stakeholders,
- less standardized testing and more reliable accountability and assessment practices,
- programs that encourage the retention of professional, experienced teachers,
- a full range of parent involvement opportunities, including a stronger, democratically-elected parent voice in decision making at the school, district, state, and national levels, and
- the right of parents to opt their children out of standardized tests.

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