

“Is No Child Left Behind Effective For All Students?”
Parents Don't Think So

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October 22, 2012

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Abstract

Since its ratification (NCLB) has received both praise and criticism from educators and parents. The No Child Left Behind Act is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that was passed in 1965. The purpose of this article is to discuss the pros & cons of *No Child Left Behind* and the core requirements for its’ implementation. The law states that if school’s don’t not make AYP for three years in a row, they must provide free tutoring and supplemental educational services. Educators and parents feel that the No Child Left Behind Act has many unsolved issues and parents have expressed concerns as to whether or not their children are not truly learning or “taught to the tests.” School districts also share in this frustration due to inadequate funding. Congress has not provided the funds needed to implement the necessary services mandated by the law and therefore has created an added burden on the states.

It was proposed by law makers because of nationwide concern of the state of education in our country. Its purpose was to close the achievement gap between students by making schools more accountable, and offering parents more choices in their child’s education. Since its ratification (NCLB) has received both praise and criticism from educators and parents.

The No Child Left Behind Act is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that was passed in 1965. NCLB requires any schools receiving any types of federal funding to administer some type of standardized test to their students every year. The purpose of the testing is to measure student achievement, and to make sure students are meeting the core requirements established by their states. The hope of NCLB is to have all students scoring proficient on standardized testing by the time the 2013-2014 school year arrives.

Any public school receiving Title I funds are required to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) (NCLB; pg.22; section 1111b2b). Each state establishes what they consider to be AYP and must apply it to every school in the state. AYP must be reasonable and establish guidelines for continuous and substantial improvement. States must establish measurable yearly objectives (NCLB; pg22 section 1111b2c). Schools that do not make AYP for two years in a row are

labeled “in need of Improvement.” They are provided technical assistance, parents may choose to send their child to a different school, and the school must come up with a plan to improve over the next two years (NCLB pg.54 sec.1116b). If a school does not make AYP for three years in a row, they must provide free tutoring and supplemental education services (SES) (NCLB pg. 61sec 1116b8a).

A school who fails to meet AYP for four or more year is considered under corrective action and the state board must make serious changes to the school. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, all schools must employ only “highly qualified” teachers no later than the end of the 2005-2006 school year. A highly qualified teacher is considered to be a certified teacher, who is proficient in the subject he or she is teaching (NCLB pg.81 sec. 1119a). Schools must only employ paraprofessionals who have completed at least two years of college, obtained an associate’s degree, and can prove through testing that they are capable of assisting in reading, writing and math (NCLB pg.82 sec.1119c1). The No Child Left Behind Act has also made other changes to Title I programs. It was supposed to give states more flexibility in how they spent their federal funds. NCLB set up the “Reading First Program”, which was designed to help states set up reading programs for children in the grades K-3. The programs had to be based on scientific research and were aimed at poverty stricken areas (Education Week).

Since its’ ratification in 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act has been praised, but mostly criticized. Many parents have praise the NCLB Act, because it allowed them to get their children out of failing schools and move them to better ones.

Parents in most states have also seen their children's test scores improve over the years. As a result of NCLB more resources have been added to classrooms. Many teachers now have multiple computers in the classroom and have been trained on how to use the new technology installed in their classrooms, such as Smart boards, Mobis, and Elmos.

Most educators and parents feel the No Child Left Behind Act has many problems. Many states are not meeting the goals set forth by the act, and argue the goals are unattainable. In an effort to improve test scores many states have cut out their arts programs and in some cases have cut "nonessential" subjects such as social studies, foreign language, health, and science. Parents have expressed concern that their children are not truly learning; instead, they are being "taught to the tests." Most school districts are frustrated because Congress has not given them the funds to provide the necessary services demanded by the act. In every year since its passing, lawmakers have cut funding for programs related to the No Child Left Behind Act. "Reading First" established by the law, has seen drastic budget cuts.

Many teachers and parents believe the No Child Left Behind Act is biased against diverse and disabled students. Many of the schools losing their federal funding, due to their failure to show AYP, are schools that are racially diverse or have poverty stricken students. Special education teachers argue NCLB contradicts the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Children with individualized education plans (IEP) are forced to take standardized tests on their grade level.

Many teachers argue that this is not fair because these students are not tested in the least restrictive environment. They also argue that the tests might be way above where these students are academically. Moreover, many English as a second language (ESL) students struggle with taking the standardized tests.

Since the day it was passed educators, lawmakers, and parents have called for reform to the No Child Left Behind Act. Congress has yet to reform or reauthorize it. President Obama has urged Congress to reform NCLB, and has asked that they have a new bill on his desk by the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. It has not happened. In order to relieve some of the pressure the states are feeling, President Obama has granted waivers from NCLB to several states.

The president along with the Secretary of Education also initiated “Race to the Top” as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. “Race to the Top” is a program initiated by the Obama administration to encourage schools to make reforms themselves to their education system. States get points based on the performance based standards of their teachers and principals, meeting national standards, privatizing education, creating charter schools, and making their schools more technologically advanced.

It is clear something needs to be done about the state of education in our country. NCLB had many good ideas, such as, schools need to have accountability for the students they teach.

Likewise, teachers should be highly qualified and parents should have choices on where they send their children to school. However, NCLB behind has its faults. NCLB treats education as an assembly line. This is contrary to the belief that each child needs to be treated as an individual and have their education tailored to fit their specific needs. The No Child Left Behind Act has clearly identified problems with our educational system, but very few have been rectified.

Therefore, the question remains, is *No Child Left Behind* effective for all students?” The nation’s next report card will supply the answer.

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