

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

NCLB is the name for the most recent reauthorization by Congress of the elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which has governed federal education funding since 1965. NCLB lays out ambitious goals for student achievement and teacher quality and includes several opportunities for parents to be involved in efforts to improve their child's education. The law also sets out some unyielding requirements for student achievement gains and teacher qualifications that if not met; carry strong consequences for schools and school districts.

Testing:

All students in grades 3--8 must take a statewide test every year and once in grades 10--12 by the 2005 school year. This means that states must develop new tests or modify existing tests to ensure that they match up with the state's standards in mathematics, language arts and reading, and can test at the appropriate grade levels.

Goals For Progress Or Adequate Yearly Process:

Each state must set what the law calls adequate yearly progress, or AYP, which is the minimum level of improvement that must be achieved each year. The goal is to get all students to achieve at a proficient level by the 2013-2014 school year.

Additional Academic Support:

School receiving Title 1 funds that do not show yearly progress for all subgroups of students for two consecutive years will be identified as "needing improvement." Parents must be informed within 30 days of the point when their child's school is identified with this label. Students in these schools are eligible to transfer to another public school, and in most cases the district pays transportation costs. In addition, parents must be consulted in the process to develop or revise the school improvement plan. If a school needing improvement does not show progress for three years, then families at that school can request tutoring, enrichment or other academic support, which the law calls "supplemental educational services."

Desegregation of Data:

NCLB requires that test scores be disaggregated, or broken down by the following subgroups of students: race and ethnicity, gender, limited English proficiency, migrant status, disability and income.

Teachers:

NCLB also contains requirements for teachers in Title 1 schools. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, all new teachers and professionals in Title 1 programs must be "highly qualified," as defined by their state. The definitions outline standards for a teacher's level of education, the certifications needed and the knowledge to be demonstrated. By the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers and paraprofessionals must be able to demonstrate the required qualifications.

Safety:

Schools must develop mechanisms to assess the safety of the school and to report this to parents.