

What is the *No Child Left Behind Act*?

Overview

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLBA). It changes the federal government's role in kindergarten through grade 12 education by asking America's schools to describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes. This law is designed to revitalize America's schools and is based on four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and focusing resources on scientifically proven teaching methods.

As the title of the law states, the goal is that no child be left behind and that every child receives a top-notch education. The NCLBA raises expectations for states, local educational agencies, and schools. All students are expected to meet or exceed state standards in reading and math within 12 years and have the skills necessary to succeed academically and in the real world.

Adequate Yearly Progress

Accountability is at the core of the NCLBA. States must clearly explain how they will minimize achievement gaps to ensure that every student in America achieves academic proficiency. Because this new law asks America's schools to "describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes," each state has been directed to create curriculum standards describing what a child should know and learn in each subject in each grade. Tests must be aligned with state standards and measure students' academic achievement. Another requirement is that scores on state tests be compared to scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to be sure levels of proficiency are similar on both tests.

Although states have flexibility in determining individual content standards, these standards must be challenging and apply equally to all students. Under the NCLBA, all states must have a performance goal of 100% of the students performing at the "proficient" level or higher by 2014.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is an individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. It is the minimum level of improvement that states, schools districts, and schools must achieve each year.

Reporting

Every state is required to report academic progress to parents, communities, and the federal government each year. This is done in a variety of ways, but the U.S. Department of Education ultimately requires that states provide annual state and local school district report cards to inform the general public of their progress.

In order to ensure that students are provided the best education possible, the NCLBA requires that schools provide services such as tutoring or after-school help to maintain AYP.

To learn more about NCLBA, visit the official Web site: www.ed.gov/nclb/