

**THE FORENSICS FILES**



Compete Prepared

Resolved: That, on balance, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has improved academic achievement in the United States.

THE  
FORENSICS  
FILES

THE PFD FILE

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## Topic Overview

Resolved: That, on balance, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has improved academic achievement in the United States.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is the most significant educational initiative of the Bush administration. The goal of the legislation was to increase performance of schools by increasing accountability in education. It follows a standards-based educational reform movement that focuses on measurable results to gauge the quality of schools. The testing standards and the tests themselves are created and administered by the individual states. The program requires schools to keep test score data on various demographic groups to ensure that certain groups are not discriminated against in their educational system. Students can choose to change schools if their current school fails to meet the standards set forth by the Act.

The eighth anniversary of the Act's passage passed in January 2009, and this has prompted journalists and the media to reexamine the Act and evaluate if it has been effective at raising academic achievement. This is the basis for the current resolution.

The most critical factor that you must be familiar with in terms of the wording of the resolution is the phrase "academic achievement." This phrase has not been widely defined, but the internal standards of NCLB indicate that the standard for academic achievement is test scores. However, others argue that academic achievement should be measured by preparedness and achievements after high school. Either way, it is important that you clearly define what you mean by this phrase since it is the central evaluative term for this resolution.

Pro: The major improvements that supporters of NCLB point to are increased accountability and access to additional resources for struggling schools. The Act testing and reporting requirements of the Act aim to increase accountability. In particular, it aims make states accountable to the federal government. The Act also mandates resources to close gaps between different groups and to increase reading skills. Schools that do not meet standards are given extra resources such as tutors to help the students master essential skills. Additionally, supporters of the program point to increased test scores and decreased gaps between ethnic and social groups.

Con: On the con side, remember that you don't have to prove that the Act has been detrimental, rather you just have to prove that it hasn't been beneficial. The most significant arguments against the Act are that it encourages teachers to teach to a test. Many argue that students are not actually gaining knowledge and understanding, but are only learning how to test well. Further, the Act has provisions that punish schools that do not meet the required standards. These schools need more assistance, not punishment to raise their scores and results. The Act also fails to take into account the different environments that different communities face. This may have actually led to an increase

in segregation in the United States because the Act lets students move to higher-performing schools, and these tend to be affluent, schools in predominantly white neighborhoods. So, many less affluent students are stuck at low-performing schools while more affluent students are able to attend higher performing schools. This creates a cycle in which teachers want to teach at the better schools, especially because teachers at low-performing schools risk losing their jobs.

Both sides have reasonable arguments that advance their respective position. Remember to impact back to the standard of academic achievement in order to show that your side is correct.

## Definitions

### Balance

1. To equal or equalize in weight, number, or proportion
2. To weigh in or as if in a balance
3. To bring to a state or position of equipoise
4. To bring into harmony or proportion

Source: *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 11th Edition*

### Balance

1. To weigh in or as in a balance
2. To compare as to relative importance, value, etc.
3. To counterpoise or counteract; make up for; offset
4. To bring into or keep in a state of equilibrium or equipoise; keep steady; poise
5. To bring into proportion, harmony, etc.
6. To make or be proportionate to

Source: *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Ed.*

### Balance

1. A state of equilibrium or parity characterized by cancellation of all forces by equal opposing forces
2. The power or means to decide
3. A state of bodily equilibrium
4. A harmonious or satisfying arrangement or proportion of parts or elements, as in a design

Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*

### No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

1. Public Law 107-110. President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act* into law on January 8, 2002. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and will help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

Source: *President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education Report*

### No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

1. NCLB was signed into law January 8, 2002. It is the latest revision of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The overall purpose of the law is to ensure that each child in America is able to meet the high learning standards of the state where he or she lives.

Source: *World Class City Schools*

## No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

1. Attempts to improve performance of American K-12 schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools, as well as providing parents more flexibility in choosing which schools their children will attend. The law has drawn criticisms and lawsuits against the Bush administration by some school district and educational organizations that state that the law is flawed and underfunded.

Source: *Scientists in Schools*

## Improved

1. To enhance in value or quality
2. To increase the value of
3. To use to good purpose

Source: *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 11th Edition*

## Improved

1. To use profitably or to good advantage
2. To raise to a better quality or condition; make better
3. To make (land or structures) more valuable by cultivation, construction, etc.

Source: *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Ed.*

## Improved

1. To raise to a more desirable or more excellent quality or condition; make better
2. To raise to a more desirable or more excellent quality or condition; make better
3. To put to good use; use profitably

Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*

## Academic

1. Of, relating to, or associated with an [academy](#) or school especially of higher learning
2. Of or relating to performance in academic courses
3. Very learned but inexperienced in practical matters
4. Based on formal study especially at an institution of higher learning

Source: *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 11th Edition*

## Academic

1. Of colleges, universities, etc.; scholastic; scholarly
2. Having to do with general or liberal rather than technical or vocational education
3. Of or belonging to an academy of scholars, artists, etc.
4. Following fixed rules or conventions; pedantic or formalistic

5. Merely theoretical; having no direct practical application  
Source: *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Ed.*

## Academic

1. Of, relating to, or characteristic of a school, especially one of higher learning
2. Relating to studies that are liberal or classical rather than technical or vocational
3. Relating to scholarly performance
4. Of or belonging to a scholarly organization
5. Scholarly to the point of being unaware of the outside world
6. Based on formal education

Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*

## Achievement

1. A result gained by effort
2. A great or heroic deed
3. The quality and quantity of a student's work

Source: *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 11th Edition*

## Achievement

1. the act of achieving
2. a thing achieved, esp. by skill, work, courage, etc.; feat

Source: *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Ed.*

## Achievement

1. The act of accomplishing or finishing
2. Something accomplished successfully, especially by means of exertion, skill, practice, or perseverance

Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*

## United States

1. Country in central North America, consisting of 50 states.

Source: *Encarta® World English Dictionary, North American Edition*

## United States

1. Country North America bordering on Atlantic, Pacific, & Arctic oceans; a federal republic capital Washington

Source: *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, 10th Edition*

## United States

1. A republic in the N Western Hemisphere comprising 48 conterminous states, the District of Columbia, and Alaska in North America, and Hawaii in the N Pacific

Source: *Infoplease Dictionary*

## Pro Cases

Pro Case One:

“Across-the-board improvements were made in mathematics and in fourth-grade reading. Forty-three states and the District of Columbia either improved academically or held steady in all categories (fourth- and eighth-grade reading and fourth- and eighth-grade math).”

Because I agree with The Department of Education, I must agree with the resolution, “Resolved: That, on balance, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has improved academic achievement in the United States.”

The fundamental purpose of schooling is to adequately prepare students with the skills necessary to succeed. Prior to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, numerous schools were underperforming in critical areas such as reading, writing, and math. NCLB has improved academic achievements in all of these areas.

### **Argument One: Since implementing NCLB, reading and math scores have shot through the roof**

The Department of Education explains,

<U.S. Department of Education. “No Child Left Behind Act Is Working.” December 2006.

<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

“For America's nine-year-olds in reading, more progress was made in five years than in the previous 28 combined. America's nine-year-olds posted the best scores in reading (since 1971) and math (since 1973) in the history of the report. America's 13-year-olds earned the highest math scores the test ever recorded.”

Improved instructional guidelines coupled with yearly assessments have transformed once poorly performing schools into great institutions of learning. These marks in reading and math are not anomalies; scores have either maintained or improved each year.

The Department of Education further explains,

<U.S. Department of Education. “No Child Left Behind Act Is Working.” December 2006.

<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

“The state-by-state Nation's Report Card results, released in October 2005, showed improved achievement in the earlier grades in which NCLB is focused. In the last two years, the number of fourth-graders who learned their fundamental math skills increased by 235,000—enough to fill 500 elementary schools!”

### **Argument Two: NCLB has greatly minimized the learning curve for students in urban areas**

The Department of Education explains,

<U.S. Department of Education. “No Child Left Behind Act Is Working.” December 2006.

<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

“The Nation's Report Card Trial Urban District Assessments for Reading and Math, released in Dec. 2005, showed students in select urban school districts improving faster than their peers over the last two years. Fourth-graders in 8 of 10 urban districts made larger gains in math than the national average. Fourth-graders in 7 of 10 urban districts made larger gains in reading than the national average. Eighth-graders in 7 of 10 urban districts made more progress in basic math skills than the national average.”

Once they become designated as an underperforming school, it is nearly impossible for an urban area school to recuperate academically and perceptually. NCLB has solved both of these problems, increasing test scores and attracting valuable teachers to areas with promise.

**Argument Three: NCLB has greatly minimized the learning curve for non-whites**

The Department of Education explains,

<U.S. Department of Education. “No Child Left Behind Act Is Working.” December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

“Reading and math scores for African American and Hispanic nine-year-olds reached an all-time high. Math scores for African American and Hispanic 13-year-olds reached an all-time high.

Achievement gaps in reading and math between white and African American nine-year-olds and between white and Hispanic nine-year-olds are at an all-time low.”

A tremendous shift from the previous “do nothing” policy, NCLB takes an active role in combating racial barriers to proper instruction.

Pro Case Two:

“Several critical elements in No Child Left Behind ensure that schools are held accountable for educational results so that the best education possible is provided to each and every student. The three most critical elements to understand are: academic content standards, academic achievement standards, and assessments. These provide the foundation for an accountability system that ensures that students reach high standards.” Because I agree with The National Center on Educational Outcomes, I must agree with the resolution, ““Resolved: That, on balance, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has improved academic achievement in the United States.”

State assessments for schools and teachers have failed at guaranteeing students an adequate education. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act has made schools more accountable to the public by implementing stricter standards as well as yearly reviews.

**Argument One: NCLB has made sure that each school performs adequately**

The National Center on Education Outcomes explains,

<National Center on Educational Outcomes. “Accountability for Assessment Results in the No Child Left Behind Act.” August 2003. <<http://cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/NCLBdisabilities.html>>>

“School accountability is based on measuring each school’s success in educating all of its students. The primary measure is progress toward the academic content and achievement standards assessed on state assessments. The No Child Left Behind accountability system is defined in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a way to measure the improvement in achieving standards for all students each year. Schools and states are held accountable for improvements on an annual basis by public reporting (as well as individualized reporting to parents), and ultimately through consequences if adequate results are not achieved.”

NCLB has made schools more transparent to the public. Poorly performing students are typically the product of lousy teaching or disinterested administrators; NCLB exposes and deals with both.

**Argument Two: NCLB really means that EVERY student is accounted for**

The National Center on Education Outcomes explains,

<National Center on Educational Outcomes. “Accountability for Assessment Results in the No Child Left Behind Act.” August 2003. <<http://cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/NCLBdisabilities.html>>>

“All students are to be assessed and included in accountability determinations for No Child Left Behind, and results must be reported for all students and also for specific subgroups of students – each major racial ethnic group, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. States and districts must be able to show that at least 95% of all students, and of the students in each subgroup (including the disability subgroup), are included in assessment results in order to meet the accountability requirements. The 5% allows for absenteeism and other events not under the school’s control.”

NCLB makes sure that each student receives the attention they deserve. This has produced major academic improvements and illustrates how previous assessment standards were inadequate.

**Argument Three: If a school is performing poorly, NCLB allows students to receive supplemental education or to change schools completely**

Brian Gill explains,

<Brian Gill. "School Choice and Supplemental Education Services: Interim Report." State and Local Implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*: Volume IV. 2008.

<<http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/RP1332/>>>

“A key aim of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is to provide new educational options to parents whose children are attending Title I schools identified for improvement, by allowing them to enroll their children in other schools or in supplemental education services (SES), such as tutoring. (Title schools are those that receive federal funding because they have a high percentage of students from low-income families.)”

No longer are students stuck in underachieving schools. This particular provision in NCLB has motivated teachers and administrators to do their best.

## Con Cases

Con Case One: “Like previous federal initiatives, it has instead highlighted the limits (and potential dangers) of expanding federal power.” Because I agree with Dan Lips, I must disagree with the resolution. Resolved: That, on balance, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has improved academic achievement in the United States.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has caused a decrease in standards and resulted in a less educated, less prepared population.

### **Argument One: Children are not prepared for high school or college under NCLB standards**

Eddy Ramirez and Kim Clark explain,

<“What Arne Duncan Thinks of No Child Left Behind” US News and World Report. February 5, 2009

<<http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/2009/02/05/what-arne-duncan-thinks-of-no-child-left-behind.html>>

“The subsequent item on his agenda will be fixing the Bush Administration's No Child Left Behind law. His opinion of it: "I think we are lying to children and families when we tell children that they are meeting standards and, in fact, they are woefully unprepared to be successful in high school and have almost no chance of going to a good university and being successful.””

Students in the United States are not prepared to compete against students in other countries for access to prestigious colleges and universities. NCLB is contributing to this gap.

### **Argument Two: Educational quality is dropping across the board because of NCLB**

Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico writes,

<“Opposing view: NCLB fails our schools” September 7, 2007. USA Today. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2007/09/opposing-view-1.html>>

“I have a one-point plan for No Child Left Behind: Scrap it.

NCLB has failed. It has failed our schools, it has failed our teachers and it has failed our children. The Bush administration claims victories, but upon closer scrutiny it becomes clear that the White House is simply dressing up ugly data with fancy political spin. Far from leaving no child behind, President Bush seems to have left reality behind.

Just look at the facts. The National Assessment of Educational Progress shows a slight narrowing of the racial achievement gap over the past three years. This narrowing, however, is due to a decline in overall reading scores, not to improvements in minority student performance.”

Academic performance across the board has dropped thanks to NCLB. At best, academic achievement has remained constant, at worst, it has declined substantially.

**Argument Three: NCLB has reversed many steps in educational achievement**

Annette Fuentes explains,

<“No Child Left Behind should be re-examined” La Prensa February 6, 2009. < <http://www.laprensa-sandiego.org/current/Fuentes.020609.htm>> >

“The achievement gap between whites, blacks and Hispanics —as well as with rich and poor students— was well known before NCLB and it does nothing to close the gap,” says Fair Test’s Robert Schaeffer. “You don’t need to set up a system that punishes schools instead of helping them and creates pressures for classrooms to become test prep centers.”

Opposing high-stakes testing does not mean throwing out all testing. We still need to assess student achievement and provide needed intervention. But as Schaeffer notes, test score gains nationally rose faster before No Child Left Behind, not after. As a reform strategy, it’s been a dismal failure.

By its own yardstick, it should get no more funding.”

NCLB is not advancing by any measure. It punishes school when it should be helping them and it has created more problems than it has solved.

Because NCLB has reversed the progress that the education system had achieved over the last 20 years, and has decreased academic achievement, I must urge a con ballot.

Con Case Two: “If a school needs help, we should help that school. We shouldn't punish it, as NCLB mandates.” Because I agree with Gov. Bill Richardson, I must disagree with the resolution. Resolved: That, on balance, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has improved academic achievement in the United States.

NCLB has increased group- resentment and left children lacking in critical areas. NCLB has severely undermined the education of children in the United States.

**Argument One: NCLB has increased the dropout rate among low-performing demographic groups**

Caroline Grannan writes,

<“The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

“Because the No Child Left Behind Act ranks schools according to test score thresholds of children in every demographic subgroup, a “failing group of children” will know when they are the ones who made their school a “failing” school. They risk being shamed among their peers, by their teachers and by their community. The No Child Left Behind Act has renamed this group of children the school’s “problem group.” In some schools educators have felt pressured to counsel students who lag far behind into alternative programs so they won’t be tested. This has increased the dropout rate.”

This resentment and isolation raises institutional barriers that we have worked for decades to bring down. NCLB has reversed the path of progress and continues to undermine academic achievement.

**Argument Two: NCLB has encouraged segregation**

Caroline Grannan writes,

<“The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

“The No Child Left Behind Act exacerbates racial and economic segregation in metropolitan areas by rating homogeneous, wealthier school districts as excellent, while labeling urban districts with far more subgroups and more complex demands made by the law as “in need of improvement.” Such labeling of schools and districts encourages families with means to move to wealthy, homogeneous school districts.”

Racial and economic segregation is promoted by NCLB which decreases academic achievement for all people because students are less exposed to diverse ideas and experiences.

**Argument Three: The program has left children lacking skills in important areas**

Bob Hertzog explains,

<“Let's Drop the Failed "No-Child-Left-Behind" Program” January 17, 2008. Anderson Free Press.  
<<http://www.andersonfreepress.net/node/5567>> >

“It encourages a narrow teaching focus. Schools should be teaching kids many things: math and reading, of course, but also history, science, citizenship, health habits, arts appreciation, self-discipline – conflict resolution. Schools faced with sanctions for weakness in only one discipline will naturally divert resources from other areas. This is exactly what is happening in our public schools today and it is one reason why the NCLB program should be dropped.”

Schools focus time and resources on the areas that are tested. This means that students who are interested in other things are discriminated against. Additionally, this ignores the other needs of students and the skills that are necessary in the changing economy.

Because NCLB has encouraged discrimination at multiple levels, I must urge a con ballot.

## Pro Extensions

### **NCLB benefits children, empowers parents, supports teachers and strengthens schools**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

All children are counted under NCLB, and schools are responsible for making sure every child is learning. Parents are given unprecedented information and new options for their children, which may include free tutoring. Teachers utilize assessment data and scientifically based teaching methods to improve classroom instruction. Schools identified as in need of improvement receive extra help and resources to raise student achievement.

### **Multiple studies and reports show that student achievement is rising across America**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

The long-term Nation's Report Card (NAEP) results, released in July 2005, showed elementary school student achievement in reading and math at all-time highs and the achievement gap closing.

### **Since implementing NCLB, reading and math scores have shot through the roof**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

For America's nine-year-olds in reading, more progress was made in five years than in the previous 28 combined. America's nine-year-olds posted the best scores in reading (since 1971) and math (since 1973) in the history of the report. America's 13-year-olds earned the highest math scores the test ever recorded.

### **NCLB has greatly minimized the learning curve for non-white students**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

Reading and math scores for African American and Hispanic nine-year-olds reached an all-time high. Math scores for African American and Hispanic 13-year-olds reached an all-time high.

Achievement gaps in reading and math between white and African American nine-year-olds and between white and Hispanic nine-year-olds are at an all-time low.

**Sustaining NCLB guarantees that children will continue to learn fundamental skills**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

The state-by-state Nation's Report Card results, released in October 2005, showed improved achievement in the earlier grades in which NCLB is focused. In the last two years, the number of fourth-graders who learned their fundamental math skills increased by 235,000—enough to fill 500 elementary schools!

**The success of NCLB is not an isolated incident; achievements can be seen nation wide**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

Across-the-board improvements were made in mathematics and in fourth-grade reading. Forty-three states and the District of Columbia either improved academically or held steady in all categories (fourth- and eighth-grade reading and fourth- and eighth-grade math).

**NCLB has greatly minimized the learning curve for students in urban areas**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

The Nation's Report Card Trial Urban District Assessments for Reading and Math, released in Dec. 2005, showed students in select urban school districts improving faster than their peers over the last two years. Fourth-graders in 8 of 10 urban districts made larger gains in math than the national average. Fourth-graders in 7 of 10 urban districts made larger gains in reading than the national average. Eighth-graders in 7 of 10 urban districts made more progress in basic math skills than the national average.

**The assistance from NCLB has allowed schools to obtain sufficient science equipment which has bolstered scores**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

The Nation's Report Card Science 2005 Report found significant academic gains by fourth-graders. Overall, fourth-graders improved four points in science achievement over 1996 and 2000 levels, with the lowest-performing students making the largest gains. African American and Hispanic fourth-graders made significant gains as well, narrowing the achievement gap.

**NCLB makes schools more accountable to students and parents**

<National Center on Educational Outcomes. "Accountability for Assessment Results in the No Child Left Behind Act." August 2003. <<http://cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/NCLBdisabilities.html>>>

Several critical elements in No Child Left Behind ensure that schools are held accountable for educational results so that the best education possible is provided to each and every student. The three most critical elements to understand are: academic content

standards, academic achievement standards, and assessments. These provide the foundation for an accountability system that ensures that students reach high standards.

**NCLB ensures that students with disabilities are not forgotten**

<National Center on Educational Outcomes. "Accountability for Assessment Results in the No Child Left Behind Act." August 2003. <<http://cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/NCLBdisabilities.html>>>

Schools also must provide the accommodations and alternate assessments that may be needed by students with disabilities. Accommodations are changes to the assessment materials or procedures that allow for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills rather than the effects of their disabilities. The accommodations needed by students with disabilities are defined within their IEPs. Some examples of accommodations are simplifying or repeating directions, marking answers in the test booklet instead of on the bubble sheet answer form, taking the assessment in a quiet room or study carrel, or using frequent breaks. Alternate assessments are assessments designed to measure the performance of students with disabilities who are unable to participate in state and district assessments even with appropriate accommodations. Typically, these assessments are designed for students with complex disabilities.

**NCLB ensures that each school performs adequately**

<National Center on Educational Outcomes. "Accountability for Assessment Results in the No Child Left Behind Act." August 2003. <<http://cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/NCLBdisabilities.html>>>

School accountability is based on measuring each school's success in educating all of its students. The primary measure is progress toward the academic content and achievement standards assessed on state assessments. The No Child Left Behind accountability system is defined in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a way to measure the improvement in achieving standards for all students each year. Schools and states are held accountable for improvements on an annual basis by public reporting (as well as individualized reporting to parents), and ultimately through consequences if adequate results are not achieved.

**NCLB really means that EVERY student is accounted for**

<National Center on Educational Outcomes. "Accountability for Assessment Results in the No Child Left Behind Act." August 2003. <<http://cehd.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/NCLBdisabilities.html>>>

All students are to be assessed and included in accountability determinations for No Child Left Behind, and results must be reported for all students and also for specific subgroups of students – each major racial ethnic group, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. States and districts must be able to show that at least 95% of all students, and of the students in each subgroup (including the disability subgroup), are included in assessment results in order to meet the accountability requirements. The 5% allows for absenteeism and other events not under the school's control.

**If a school is performing poorly, NCLB allows students to receive supplemental education or to change schools completely**

<Brian Gill. "School Choice and Supplemental Education Services: Interim Report." State and Local Implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act*: Volume IV. 2008.  
<<http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/RP1332/>>>

A key aim of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is to provide new educational options to parents whose children are attending Title I schools identified for improvement, by allowing them to enroll their children in other schools or in supplemental education services (SES), such as tutoring. (Title schools are those that receive federal funding because they have a high percentage of students from low-income families.)

**Contrary to popular belief, the public overwhelmingly supports NCLB; a national survey conducted by The Winston Group, which polled 1,500 students, parents, and school administrators, illustrates the policy's popularity**

<The Winston Group. "Standards, Accountability and Flexibility: Americans Speak on No Child Left Behind Reauthorization." Educational Testing Service. June 19, 2007.  
<[http://www.ets.org/Media/Education\\_Topics/pdf/5884\\_Key\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/5884_Key_Findings.pdf)>>

Despite the American public's clear lack of knowledge about the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the strong misgivings of teachers and school administrators have about the legislation, the public and public school teachers and administrators strongly support reauthorization. Only 16% of the public and 13% of parents of school-age children oppose reauthorization. Given public school teachers' and administrators' strongly negative views of NCLB, it is somewhat surprising to see that a relatively small number — 25% of teachers and 22% of administrators — believe Congress should not reauthorize the law. The teachers and administrators are clear in calling for major changes in NCLB as it is reauthorized.

**NCLB has dramatically increased students' ability to learn reading at a younger age**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

Reading First and Early Reading First: President Bush proposed and signed into law the Reading First and Early Reading First initiatives as part of his unequivocal commitment to ensuring that every child can read by the third grade. These programs enable more children to receive scientifically-based reading instruction programs in the early grades.

**NCLB has created more oversight of state education policies**

<U.S. Department of Education. "No Child Left Behind Act Is Working." December 2006.  
<<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/importance/nclbworking.html>>>

When President Bush entered office in January 2001, only 11 states were in full compliance with previous federal education accountability standards. On June 10, 2003, President Bush announced that all 50 states have approved accountability plans under NCLB.

### **Previous issues concerning funding will be solved by the recent economic stimulus package**

<Antoine Morris. "No Child Left Behind Funding Gets Big Increase in House Stimulus Bill."  
[Civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org/archives/2009/02/045-nclb-funding.html). February 2, 2009. <<http://www.civilrights.org/archives/2009/02/045-nclb-funding.html>>>

With [passage of the \\$819 billion economic stimulus package](#) in the House of Representatives on January 28, the nation's primary and secondary schools will receive a large increase in funds for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which was enacted in 2002. Parents, civil rights advocates, and school district administrators have long criticized the federal government for inadequately financing NCLB, the main law that provides federal funds and sets standards for primary and secondary education. Several provisions of NCLB, such as annual standardized tests and additional training for teachers, are not funded by the federal government, so states and local school districts face the burden of finding money to pay for these requirements in their already-tight budgets. Included in the \$140 billion allocated for education spending in the stimulus package are: \$12 billion in the next two years for Title I schools, those schools that have the greatest concentration of low-income children; \$1 billion for schools that consistently fall behind in meeting their testing goals under NCLB; and \$20 billion for renovation, repairs, and other improvements for primary and secondary schools. With the \$14 billion already allocated in the 2009 federal budget, the additional \$13 billion in stimulus spending over the next two years for Title I represents a nearly 50 percent increase from current levels.

### **NCLB has made sure that parents know everything about their school district**

<Candace Cortiella. "No Child Left Behind and School Choice Opportunities in Special Education."  
[Greatschools](http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2778). January, 2004. <<http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2778>>>

NCLB requires that schools make steady progress toward the ultimate goal of all students performing at a "proficient" level in reading, math, and science by the year 2014. This progress is defined as "adequate yearly progress," or AYP. Schools that fail to meet AYP goals for two consecutive years must be identified as "in need of improvement." The school district must promptly notify the parents of each child enrolled in any school identified as "in need of improvement."

Any Title I school designated "in need of improvement" must offer **all** children attending that school the opportunity to attend a school in the district that has met its AYP goals. If all schools in the district have been designated as "in need of improvement," the school district is strongly encouraged to establish agreements with other districts that would allow students to attend schools in those districts not deemed "in need of improvement." Parents must be provided information about the performance and quality of each school included in their choice options.

**NCLB has improved the education for children with disabilities**

<Candace Cortiella. "No Child Left Behind and School Choice Opportunities in Special Education."  
Greatschools. January, 2004. <<http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2778>>>

Students with disabilities (covered under the IDEA or Section 504) must be offered the opportunity to attend a school that has not been identified as "in need of improvement." Districts must ensure that such students are provided a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, in their schools of choice.

**NCLB ensures that students with disabilities have adequate transportation to school**

<Candace Cortiella. "No Child Left Behind and School Choice Opportunities in Special Education."  
Greatschools. January, 2004. <<http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2778>>>

The district must pay for or provide transportation to the new school for all students who request it, including students with disabilities. If the available funding is not sufficient to provide transportation to all students requesting a transfer, the district must give priority to the lowest-achieving eligible students from low-income families. However, districts may not limit the opportunity to transfer because of transportation funding limits.

**The NCLB standards are flexible enough to allow for the observance of obvious improvement and strict enough to ensure schools are performing well**

<Education World Online. "No Educator Left Behind: Safe Harbor." December 7, 2006.  
<[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml)>>

When students in a school are making significant academic progress, a "safe harbor" is allowed if students in the subgroups make a 10 percent reduction in the number of students who are not proficient. For example, if students in a particular subgroup are 30 percent proficient and achieve a 7 percent increase in the number of proficient students (which is a 10 percent reduction in the percentage (70 percent) of students not proficient), then they would be deemed to have made adequate yearly progress and the school would not be identified as in need of improvement. This provision has the added advantage of requiring larger gains for the subgroups farthest from proficiency while allowing for smaller gains for those closer to proficiency, where gains are harder to achieve.

### **NCLB has allowed academics to flourish without sacrificing other activities**

<Education World Online. "No Educator Left Behind: Safe Harbor." December 7, 2006.  
<[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml)>>

It is possible for schools to offer physical education, arts, and other classes while ensuring that their students reach grade level in reading and math. In fact, thousands of schools are proving it every day, meeting their adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals without sacrificing these important courses.

For example, under Pennsylvania law, students in all grades are required to take physical education, and that has not changed with the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Meanwhile, academic performance continues to rise. Sixty-nine percent of Pennsylvania's fifth graders were proficient or advanced in math last year, up from 53 percent in 2001-02; for reading, 64 percent made the grade, compared to 57 percent four years ago.

### **NCLB greatly reduces the risk of dropping out of school**

<Education World Online. "No Educator Left Behind: Safe Harbor." December 7, 2006.  
<[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml)>>

So what can be done about it? First and foremost, we must address the needs of students struggling with reading and basic math. Too often, students fall behind before they drop out, many when they're young. Then they are unable to catch up in the more fast-paced middle school and high school years. The No Child Left Behind Act has brought high standards and accountability to grades 3 through 8, disaggregating test score data so that children who fall behind do not get hidden by the averages and fall through the cracks. For younger children, including preschoolers, we have the Reading First and Early Reading First programs, which are educating 1.5 million kids in proven, research-based reading methods.

Such early intervention combined with annual assessments will give even struggling students the incentive they need to keep going and stay in school.

### **NCLB makes schools accountable for attendance rates**

<Education World Online. "No Educator Left Behind: Safe Harbor." December 7, 2006.  
<[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml)>>

Children who are chronically absent are at higher risk for falling behind academically or dropping out altogether. Attendance policies are made at the state and local levels. However, there are many things schools can do to encourage better attendance. For instance, the No Child Left Behind Act requires that localities keep detailed records of truancy, and it supports drug and violence prevention activities designed to reduce truancy and improve attendance rates in school.

**NCLB reduces the problem of overcrowding in the classroom**

<Education World Online. "No Educator Left Behind: Safe Harbor." December 7, 2006.  
<[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/NELB/NELB146.shtml)>>

The Department of Education provides \$3 billion in federal funding under No Child Left Behind for improving teacher quality. One way these funds can be used is for class-size reduction efforts, depending on the needs of the local community. Placing a highly qualified teacher in every classroom is our ultimate goal under the law, which pledges a quality education for every single child.

## Con Extensions

### **NCLB is premised on flawed notions that federal action can drive educational reforms**

<Dan Lips. "No Child Left Behind has failed" San Angelo Standard-Times. January 2009. <http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2009/jan/19/dan-lips-no-child-left-behind-has-failed/>>

"NCLB was premised on the idea that the federal government can drive meaningful education reform in American schools. But like previous federal initiatives, it has instead highlighted the limits (and potential dangers) of expanding federal power.

Despite federal spending increases of nearly 50 percent, NCLB hasn't spurred significant improvement in America's schools.

The Bush administration points to modestly higher NAEP test scores to argue that NCLB has boosted academic achievement across the country. But a broader look at historical test scores suggests that the improvement that has occurred since 2002 follows a general trend in modestly rising scores since the 1990s. And it's a big leap to attribute any improvement to federal reforms, especially when one looks at NCLB's limited policy impact."

### **States have lowered standards so that more students can pass**

<Dan Lips. "No Child Left Behind has failed" San Angelo Standard-Times. January 2009. <http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2009/jan/19/dan-lips-no-child-left-behind-has-failed/>>

But, ironically, it has also created a strong incentive for states to lower standards and make tests easier to pass. Scholars Paul Peterson and Rick Hess have documented that this is already happening.

As the Bush administration leaves, the Right has an opportunity to return to conservative principles in the education debate by working to limit federal power and pushing for academic transparency and aggressive reform at the state level.

### **Reform should happen that the state level**

<Dan Lips. "No Child Left Behind has failed" San Angelo Standard-Times. January 2009. <http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2009/jan/19/dan-lips-no-child-left-behind-has-failed/>>

Unlike federal intervention, effective state-level reform can deliver significant progress, as Florida is proving.

In the most-recent Congress, conservatives on Capitol Hill offered a plan to let states opt out of No Child Left Behind's program requirements if they agree to meet basic federal guidelines like maintaining state-level testing and public reporting.

This approach would allow state leaders to embrace various strategies according to local needs and priorities while making them more directly accountable to parents and taxpayers for improving results.

### **Education planning should be returned to local control**

<Dan Lips. "No Child Left Behind has failed" San Angelo Standard-Times. January 2009. <http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2009/jan/19/dan-lips-no-child-left-behind-has-failed/>>

In the new Congress, conservatives should continue this approach - it will be a good contrast to their liberal counterparts, who will undoubtedly continue to push to expand the federal government's role in education.

A good place to start would be to offer emergency flexibility and regulatory relief as an alternative to the growing calls for a costly federal "bailout" for states and school districts facing rising budget deficits.

### **Children are not prepared for high school or college under NCLB standards**

<Eddy Ramirez and Kim Clark "What Arne Duncan Thinks of No Child Left Behind" US News and World Report. February 5, 2009

<<http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/2009/02/05/what-arne-duncan-thinks-of-no-child-left-behind.html>> >

The subsequent item on his agenda will be fixing the Bush Administration's No Child Left Behind law. His opinion of it: "I think we are lying to children and families when we tell children that they are meeting standards and, in fact, they are woefully unprepared to be successful in high school and have almost no chance of going to a good university and being successful."

### **Educational quality is dropping across the board because of NCLB**

<Gov. Bill Richardson. "Opposing view: NCLB fails our schools" September 7, 2007. USA Today. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2007/09/opposing-view-1.html>>

I have a one-point plan for No Child Left Behind: Scrap it.

NCLB has failed. It has failed our schools, it has failed our teachers and it has failed our children. The Bush administration claims victories, but upon closer scrutiny it becomes clear that the White House is simply dressing up ugly data with fancy political spin. Far from leaving no child behind, President Bush seems to have left reality behind.

Just look at the facts. The National Assessment of Educational Progress shows a slight narrowing of the racial achievement gap over the past three years. This narrowing, however, is due to a decline in overall reading scores, not to improvements in minority student performance.

### **NCLB doesn't recognize successful schools that show huge improvements**

<Eddy Ramirez and Kim Clark "What Arne Duncan Thinks of No Child Left Behind" US News and World Report. February 5, 2009

<<http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/2009/02/05/what-arne-duncan-thinks-of-no-child-left-behind.html>> >

As the former leader of Chicago Public Schools, Duncan lived through what he called the unintended consequences of President Bush's No Child Left Behind law. Duncan supports the focus on accountability for student achievement, but he wants to make the law less punitive. "I know there are schools that are beating the odds where students are getting better every year, and they are labeled failures, and that can be discouraging and demoralizing," he says.

### **NCLB fails to add accountability because every state continues to have different assessment mechanisms**

<Eddy Ramirez and Kim Clark "What Arne Duncan Thinks of No Child Left Behind" US News and World Report. February 5, 2009

<<http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/2009/02/05/what-arne-duncan-thinks-of-no-child-left-behind.html>> >

Duncan also wants states to adopt academic standards that are more rigorous and aligned with those of other leading nations. "The idea of 50 states doing their own thing doesn't make sense," Duncan says, referring to the current patchwork of standards and tests. "I worry about the pressure because of NCLB to dummy those standards down."

### **NCLB punishes low-performing schools rather than help them improve**

<Gov. Bill Richardson. "Opposing view: NCLB fails our schools" September 7, 2007. USA Today. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2007/09/opposing-view-1.html>>

Review the figures, and you will see that our schools are not failing NCLB; the program is failing our schools. In some grades, reading and math scores have actually declined for Hispanics, African-Americans and others. The current pass-fail rating system is worse than meaningless — it's counter-productive. If a school needs help, we should help that school. We shouldn't punish it, as NCLB mandates.

### **NCLB was empty rhetoric without meaningful reform**

<Gov. Bill Richardson. "Opposing view: NCLB fails our schools" September 7, 2007. USA Today. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2007/09/opposing-view-1.html>>

We need to move beyond the empty rhetoric of No Child Left Behind. We must provide our public schools with what the National Education Association refers to as the three R's — Responsibility, Respect and Resources.

The key to this improvement is respecting teachers. I signed a law in New Mexico that pays teachers a professional salary. As president, I will fight for national average starting pay for teachers of at least \$40,000 a year.

**Schools need to be reformed to prepare for the new economy**

<Gov. Bill Richardson. “Opposing view: NCLB fails our schools” September 7, 2007. USA Today. <http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2007/09/opposing-view-1.html>>

Teacher salaries are just the beginning. Quality pre-K programs allow children to show up in first grade ready to learn. These programs must be available to all children. Finally, we need strong academic standards aligned with the needs of today's workforce. America's schools were designed for the 20th century economy — this is no longer sufficient. Our children need to graduate ready to engage with the New Economy, not the old one.

**NCLB has not been held accountable to its own standards**

<Annette Fuentes\_“No Child Left Behind should be re-examined” La Prensa February 6, 2009. < <http://www.laprensa-sandiego.org/current/Fuentes.020609.htm>>>

But from its beginning, No Child Left Behind has promised more than it can possibly deliver. It has failed to consider the reality of most classrooms, it has ignored how most children learn and it has underestimated the challenges teachers face. And if student scores haven't jumped up, it has strangled the schools' funding.

The arrival of a new Congress and a new president means the opportunity to enact real education reforms, not simply make a few adjustments here and there.

Obama and Congress should subject No Child Left Behind to the same idea of accountability that it has imposed on students, teachers, school districts and state education agencies.

**NCLB has reversed many steps in educational achievement**

<Annette Fuentes\_“No Child Left Behind should be re-examined” La Prensa February 6, 2009. < <http://www.laprensa-sandiego.org/current/Fuentes.020609.htm>> >

“The achievement gap between whites, blacks and Hispanics —as well as with rich and poor students— was well known before NCLB and it does nothing to close the gap,” says Fair Test's Robert Schaeffer. “You don't need to set up a system that punishes schools instead of helping them and creates pressures for classrooms to become test prep centers.”

Opposing high-stakes testing does not mean throwing out all testing. We still need to assess student achievement and provide needed intervention. But as Schaeffer notes, test score gains nationally rose faster before No Child Left Behind, not after. As a reform strategy, it's been a dismal failure.

By its own yardstick, it should get no more funding.

**NCLB sets unrealistically high standards**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>>>

While it is a civic responsibility to insist that schools do a better job of educating every child, we must also recognize that undermining support for public schooling threatens our democracy. The No Child Left Behind Act sets an impossibly high bar—that every single student will be proficient in reading and math by 2014. We fear that this law will discredit public education when it becomes clear that schools cannot possibly realize such an ideal.

**NCLB doesn’t recognize the progress that students are making**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

The No Child Left Behind Act has neither acknowledged where children start the school year nor celebrated their individual accomplishments. A school where the mean eighth grade math score for any one subgroup grows from a third to a sixth grade level has been labeled a “in need of improvement” (a label of failure) even though the students have made significant progress. The law has not acknowledged that every child is unique and that thresholds are merely benchmarks set by human beings. Now, four years into implementation, the Department of Education has stated it will begin experimenting with permitting 10 states to measure student growth. Too many children will continue to be labeled failures even though they are making strides.

**NCLB has increased the dropout rate among low-performing demographic groups**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

Because the No Child Left Behind Act ranks schools according to test score thresholds of children in every demographic subgroup, a “failing group of children” will know when they are the ones who made their school a “failing” school. They risk being shamed among their peers, by their teachers and by their community. The No Child Left Behind Act has renamed this group of children the school’s “problem group.” In some schools educators have felt pressured to counsel students who lag far behind into alternative programs so they won’t be tested. This has increased the dropout rate.

**NCLB does not account for language barriers**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>>>

The No Child Left Behind Act requires English language learners to take tests in English before they learn English. It calls their school a failure because they have not yet mastered academic English.

**NCLB ignores important educational factors**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

The No Child Left Behind Act blames schools and teachers For many challenges that are neither of their making nor within their capacity to change. The test score focus obscures the importance of the quality of the relationship between the child and teacher. Sincere, often heroic efforts of teachers are made invisible. While the goals of the law are important—to proclaim that every child can learn, to challenge every child to dream of a bright future, and to prepare all children to contribute to society—educators also need financial and community support to accomplish these goals.

**NCLB ignores humanities and other important subjects**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

The relentless focus on testing basic skills in the No Child Left Behind Act obscures the role of the humanities, the arts, and child and adolescent development. While education should cover basic skills in reading and math, the educational process should aspire to far more. We believe education should help all children develop their gifts and realize their promise—intellectually physically, socially, and ethically. The No Child Left Behind Act treats children as products to be tested, measured and made more uniform.

**NCLB has encouraged segregation**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

The No Child Left Behind Act exacerbates racial and economic segregation in metropolitan areas by rating homogeneous, wealthier school districts as excellent, while labeling urban districts with far more subgroups and more complex demands made by the law as “in need of improvement.” Such labeling of schools and districts encourages families with means to move to wealthy, homogeneous school districts.

**NCLB lacked sufficient funding to meet its goals**

<Caroline Grannan “The moral failings of No Child Left Behind” examiner.com January 26, 2005< <http://www.examiner.com/x-356-SF-Education-Examiner~y2009m1d26-The-moral-failings-of-No-Child-Left-Behind-a-religious-view>> >

The late Senator Paul Wellstone wrote, “It is simply negligent to force children to pass a test and expect that the poorest children, who face every disadvantage, will be able to do as well as those who have every advantage. When we do this, we hold children responsible for our own inaction and unwillingness to live up to our own promises and our own obligations.” The No Child Left Behind Act makes demands on states and school districts without fully funding reforms that would build capacity to close achievement gaps. To enable schools to comply with the law’s regulations and to create conditions that will raise achievement, society will need to increase federal funding for the schools that serve our nation’s most vulnerable children and to keep Title I funds focused on instruction rather than on transportation and school choice.

**The program has left children lacking skills in important areas**

<Bob Hertzog “Let's Drop the Failed "No-Child-Left-Behind" Program” January 17, 2008. Anderson Free Press. <<http://www.andersonfreepress.net/node/5567>> >

It encourages a narrow teaching focus. Schools should be teaching kids many things: math and reading, of course, but also history, science, citizenship, health habits, arts appreciation, self-discipline – conflict resolution. Schools faced with sanctions for weakness in only one discipline will naturally divert resources from other areas. This is exactly what is happening in our public schools today and it is one reason why the NCLB program should be dropped.

**NCLB and state programs have conflicted with each other**

<Bob Hertzog “Let's Drop the Failed "No-Child-Left-Behind" Program” January 17, 2008. Anderson Free Press. <<http://www.andersonfreepress.net/node/5567>> >

Every teacher knows that, regardless of the skill of the teacher, some classes might be attentive and some classes might be distracted. This attentiveness or distraction might occur from semester to semester or sometimes from day to day. This being the case, accurate measurement of progress and improvement requires multiple forms of testing throughout the school year. The NCLB makes its analysis from one measurement per year. Researchers Thomas Kane and Douglass Staiger reported cases of schools being rewarded one year and punished the very next. There have been cases of schools being rewarded under a state’s system while in the same semester being punished under a federal system, or vice versa. This is one more reason why the NCLB should be dropped.

**NCLB has prioritized the needs of some students over the needs of other students**

<Bob Hertzog “Let's Drop the Failed "No-Child-Left-Behind" Program” January 17, 2008. Anderson Free Press. <<http://www.andersonfreepress.net/node/5567>> >

There is more than adequate evidence to show that, regardless of teacher effort or school practice, students who come from pleasant home environments do a great deal better in school than students who come from a difficult home environment. This puts poor, inner city schools at a severe disadvantage over schools in more affluent districts. One more reason why the NCLB should be dropped!

The NCLB program has a tendency to create a class of students that teachers call “bubble kids.” Bubble kids are those students with scores just below the minimum standard. These are the kids that, with an effort, can be brought up into the “adequate yearly progress level.” In some places, school policies require teachers to pay less attention to the proficient students and focus on bubble kids. Students who score far below the proficiency level are also ignored, because no matter how much effort teachers expend on them, they are unlikely to come up to proficiency.

**NCLB oversteps federal constitutional boundaries**

<Neal McCluskey and Andrew J. Coulson. “End It, Don't Mend It: What to Do with No Child Left Behind” September 5, 2007. Cato Institute [http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=8680](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=8680)>

We further conclude that NCLB oversteps the federal government's constitutional limits—treading on a responsibility that, by law and tradition, is reserved to the states and the people. We therefore recommend that NCLB not be reauthorized and that the federal government return to its constitutional bounds by ending its involvement in elementary and secondary education.

## Pro Blocks

A/T: States have lowered standards in order to adhere to NCLB

1. It is important that they have consistent standards, if that means that some states have to lower theirs in order to be compliant, then that is just a byproduct.
2. This is a common misperception, NCLB has actually made states more accountable to federal educational standards.
3. Even if this is true, the benefits of forcing states to ensure that all demographic groups are receiving quality educations.

A/T: NCLB has fragmented standards across the states

1. This is not true, rather states are simply given some control so that parents still have input in the education of their children.
2. There might be some problems with the system, but NCLB has still forced states to be more accountable in their educational practices.
3. Even if this is true, the base level standards have improved academic achievement, this is evident in the rise in test scores.

A/T: NCLB has unrealistically high standards

1. The NCLB standards are absolutely achievable. All Children should be able to read by 2014.
2. Even if they can't be met 100 percent, they are worth striving for. Education is a right that every child in the United States deserves, and there is no excuse for failing to deliver a quality education.
3. These standards must be met if the United States is going to be able compete in a global economy.
4. They aren't unrealistic, there are specific actions plans in place to help schools meet the goals set forth in the Act.

A/T: Important subjects are ignored by NCLB

1. NCLB focuses on the essential subjects and gives local organizations control of other functions in order to balance the need for federal oversight and local control.
2. This is not true, NCLB has a time table for adding additional subjects so that schools aren't overwhelmed by the changes.
3. Empirically denied, even schools with highly improved scores have not cut other non-NCLB programs or subjects.

## Con Blocks

A/T NCLB has raised students' scores

1. This doesn't mean NCLB has raised academic achievement; scores are rising because schools are lowering assessment standards
2. This isn't an outcome of NCLB but an outcome of more state and federal funding that has allowed schools to purchase adequate teaching supplies.
3. The national average may have risen but many states still face serious issues concerning underperforming students as well as drastically high dropout rates.
4. The two are not causal; scores are probably rising because a new generation of great educators.

A/T NCLB makes schools more accountable

1. NCLB rarely results in schools closing down; schools continue to teeter on the brink of failure
2. This does not mean NCLB has increased academic achievements. This oversight has compelled schools to lower standards so as to save face in the public.
3. This accountability is crippling schools. The standards mandated by NCLB are nearly impossible to meet and schools are suffering because of it.
4. If accountability is desirable then schools would be better off being monitored by their respective states. It's incredibly impractical to expect the federal government to properly oversee the schools from each state.

A/T NCLB has made reading a priority for younger students

1. Reading is important but NCLB is not the way to go about it. Instead of wasting of money on legislation and frivolous schools assessments, schools should receive direct funding for stocking their libraries and hiring better teachers.
2. This is not a product of NCLB; the newer generation of teachers and administrators realize how important reading is and have taken an active role in the classroom.
3. Reading is important but many schools have cut physical education and the arts so as to supplement their reading instruction.

A/T NCLB has minimized the learning curve for non-white students

1. This is less a product of NCLB and more of an effect of more dedicated teachers.
2. Today's students – white or otherwise – are simply more motivated to do well. Academic performance is key to college which is key to many professions.
3. This is not because of NCLB; many schools, especially those with a large non-English speaking population, have implemented fast track programs where students receive intense instruction in English as well as their core curriculum.

Pro Case One:

**Arg1: reading and  
math scores have  
shot through the roof**

The Department of  
Education explains,

more progress was  
made in five years  
than in the previous  
28 combined.  
posted the best scores  
in reading (since 1971)  
and math (since 1973)  
in the history of the report.

The Department of  
Education further explains,  
Report Card results, October  
2005, showed improved  
achievement in the earlier  
grades

**Arg2: NCLB has minimized  
the learning curve for  
students in urban areas**

The Department of Education  
explains,

students in select urban  
school districts improving  
faster than their peers over  
the last two years.

**Arg3: NCLB has  
greatly minimized  
the learning curve  
for non-whites**

The Department of  
Education explains,

“Reading and math scores  
for African American  
and Hispanic nine-year-  
olds reached an all-time high.  
Math scores for African  
American and Hispanic  
13-year-olds reached an  
all-time high.

Pro case 2

**Arg1: NCLB has made  
sure that each school  
performs adequately**

The National Center  
on Education Outcomes  
explains,

“School accountability  
is based on measuring  
each school’s success  
in educating all of its  
students. measure is  
progress toward the  
academic content and  
achievement standards  
assessed on state assessments.  
The No Child Left Behind  
accountability system is  
defined in terms of  
Adequate Yearly Progress

**Arg2: NCLB really  
means that EVERY  
student is accounted for**

The National Center  
on Education Outcomes  
explains,

States and districts  
must be able to show  
that at least 95% of all  
students, and of the students  
in each subgroup (including  
the disability subgroup), are  
included in assessment results  
in order to meet the  
accountability requirements.  
The 5% allows for absenteeism  
and other events not under the  
school’s control.”

**Arg3: If a school is  
performing poorly,  
NCLB allows students  
to receive supplemental  
education or to change  
schools completely**

Brian Gill

by allowing them to enroll  
their children in other  
schools or in supplemental  
education services (SES),  
such as tutoring.

Con Case One:

**Arg1: Children are not prepared for high school or college under NCLB standards**

Eddy Ramirez and Kim Clark

"I think we are lying to children and families when we tell children that they are meeting standards unprepared to be successful in high school and have almost no chance of going to a good university and being successful."

**Arg2: Educational quality is dropping across the board because of NCLB**

Gov. Bill Richardson

upon closer scrutiny it becomes clear that the White Far from leaving no child behind, President Bush seems to have left reality behind. to a decline in overall reading scores, not to improvements in minority student performance."

**Arg3: NCLB has reversed many steps in educational achievement**

Annette Fuentes

"The achievement gap between whites, blacks and Hispanics —as well as with rich and poor students— does nothing to close the gap," . "You don't need to set up a system that punishes schools instead of helping them and creates pressures for classrooms to become test prep centers."

Con Case Two:

**Arg1: NCLB has increased the dropout rate among low-performing demographic groups**  
Caroline Grannan

, a “failing group of children” will know when they are the ones who made their school a “failing” school. They risk being shamed among their peers, by their teachers and by their community. This has increased the dropout rate.”

**Argument Two: NCLB has encouraged segregation**

Caroline Grannan  
exacerbates racial and economic segregation in metropolitan areas by rating homogeneous, wealthier school districts as excellent, while labeling urban districts with far more subgroups and more complex demands made by the law as “in need of improvement.” Such labeling encourages families with means to move to wealthy, homogeneous school districts.”

**Arg3: The program has left children lacking skills in important areas**

Bob Hertzog  
Schools faced with sanctions for weakness in only one discipline will naturally divert resources from other areas. This is exactly what is happening in our public schools today and it is one reason why the NCLB program should be dropped.”