



The University of the State of New York • The State Education Department

Just the Facts for NY Parents

THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001 AN OVERVIEW

*The **NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT of 2001** is a federal law to improve education for all children. It holds schools responsible for results, gives parents greater choices, and promotes teaching methods that work. This overview will point out parts of the law that are important for parents to know.*

NCLB Gives Resources to Schools and School Districts

Title I

Title I, which is part of the NCLB law, is the largest federal elementary and secondary education program. Title I funds help educators improve teaching and learning for thousands of New York State students in economically disadvantaged communities. Because parents are so important for children's success, Title I schools and districts must have a plan to involve parents in becoming partners in their children's education. This plan is known as a Parent Involvement Policy. It is required at both the district and school level.

The NCLB law requires schools that receive federal Title I funds to ensure that all students meet challenging academic standards. It also requires other school programs that receive federal funds to improve student achievement.

NCLB Gives Schools Increased Responsibility for Results

Standards for Progress

All states must set academic standards for what every child should know. New York State already has high standards for its students. Each state must measure the progress of districts and schools in meeting those standards. Each district and school is expected to make **adequate yearly progress** toward achieving these standards.

Defining Adequate Yearly Progress

The NCLB law requires that every school strive to improve student achievement. Each state sets academic standards and yearly goals for achievement. NCLB's goal is that by 2014, all children should be achieving at their state's proficiency level in reading, language arts, math, and science. Adequate yearly progress is the minimum level of improvement school districts and schools must achieve every year to meet this goal.

Testing Every Year

State achievement tests measure how well students are learning in elementary, middle, and high school. Testing helps identify schools that are doing well and schools that need to do better. In New York, elementary and middle school students now take state achievement tests in English language arts (ELA) and math in grades 4 and 8. In high school, students take the Regent's examinations. By 2005-2006, the NCLB law will require every state to test students in grades 3-8 and in high school on what they know in ELA and math. By 2007-2008, students will be tested in science in grades 4, 8, and in high school, too. (New York State already meets the requirements for testing in science.) NCLB provides for reasonable accommodations in tests for students with disabilities.

School Report Cards

The NCLB law requires all states to publish report cards on school districts and schools. The report cards that New York State parents received in the past will now have more information as a result of this law. The report cards will not only show how well all students are doing, but will also show if there are achievement gaps among different groups of students based on economic background, race and ethnic group membership, English language proficiency, and disabilities. School report cards will also identify schools **in need of improvement** and show high school graduation rates and teacher qualifications. The report card should be available in languages parents can understand.

Consequences for Schools in Need of Improvement

If a Title I school does not show adequate yearly progress for two years in a row in the same subject and grade, then the school is identified as being in need of improvement. With help from its district and the New York State Education Department, the school must take action to improve the performance of its students. The school plan for improvement must include ways that parents can work with the principal and teachers to help the school improve.

NCLB Gives Parents New Options

Children who are in Title I schools in need of improvement are at risk of falling farther and farther behind in learning. NCLB gives new options to parents whose children are in Title I schools in need of improvement.

- **Public school choice** is a new option for students in Title I schools identified as in need of improvement. Parents may choose to transfer their child to a higher performing public school in the same district. Generally, the school district must provide transportation, though certain limitations may apply. Parents must apply for a transfer in writing. If there are more transfer requests than seats available in other schools, the district must have a method to determine which students will be transferred.

If your child's school is a Title I school in need of improvement that fails to make adequate yearly progress for an additional year, you have another option.

- **Supplemental educational services** are extra tutoring or other help for students who need to catch up in important subjects like reading, language arts, and math. These services take place outside the school day and in many different locations. Parents can choose services from a list of providers approved by the New York State Education Department. School districts and charter schools, not parents, pay for these services. However, parents must arrange transportation. There may be more requests for supplemental educational services than spaces available for students. In that case the district or charter school must have a plan for providing these services to students who are eligible to receive Title I services and show the greatest need. Students with disabilities may receive supplemental education services, too, if they have low scores on state tests.

NCLB Promotes Teaching Methods That Work

Higher Qualifications for Teachers and Paraprofessionals

For children to be successful, teachers must be well prepared. Today, some school districts employ teachers who are not well prepared to teach the grade level or subject they are assigned. This is a serious problem in schools that are struggling to meet their academic goals. NCLB requires that school districts and charter schools hire qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. It offers new resources so that teachers and paraprofessionals who are not qualified now can receive the training they need.

Teachers of limited English proficiency (LEP) students must be proficient in English. If a school provides a bilingual education program, teachers must be proficient in English and the native language. Teachers must be able to fully speak, read, and write in both languages.

Helping All Children Read Well

The NCLB law puts reading first for children in America's schools. Children who start school with strong language and pre-reading skills are likely to learn to read well. Children who read well in the early grades will do better in school in the later years. Too many children are not able to read well. This is especially true in schools that teach children who are economically disadvantaged.

Because reading is so important, the NCLB law is funding two new reading programs, Reading First and Early Reading First. They are based on scientific research that shows what kinds of reading instruction are most likely to get good results. Reading First will help kindergarten through third grade teachers improve reading instruction. Early Reading First will help preschool teachers get children ready to read well.

Help for Students to Learn English

Understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English are critical skills for all students. Students who are new to this country or come from homes where a language other than English is spoken may need special help to learn English. Under NCLB, parents of students who are limited English proficient (LEP) will get more information about bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs for their children. Parents have the right to make decisions about these programs.



*This is one of a series of NY parent information sheets about the federal education law **No Child Left Behind**. For more "...Facts," ask your principal or email the NY State Education Department at nclbnys@mail.nysed.gov or go to the web site at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/deputy/nclb/nclbhome.htm>. The federal **No Child Left Behind** web site has a page especially designed for parents at <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/parents/>.*