

What is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)?



How did NCLB become law?

- President Bush and the U.S. Congress passed the “No Child Left Behind Act” in 2001.
- Some parts of NCLB are new, but many parts changed existing sections of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
- Pennsylvania has passed laws to implement NCLB. Our state also agreed to continue taking federal funding for public schools. This means that all public schools and school districts in Pennsylvania must follow the NCLB rules.

Why did the U.S. Congress pass NCLB? Why is Pennsylvania going along with the new law?

- Congress passed NCLB to force public schools to make major changes within a short time. The federal government has influence over states and local school districts, because it gives them millions of dollars each year.
- Pennsylvania agreed to follow the NCLB rules, because our elected officials support the school reform goals of the new law. In addition, our state and local governments do not want to lose federal education funding.
- Pennsylvania public schools get about 500 million dollars each year in federal education funding. This is about 3.2 percent of total spending on public schools in Pennsylvania. Most of the money comes from state (38%) and local (57%) funds.

What are the main goals of NCLB?

Public schools must:

- Improve education for all children and give the same quality education to all children.
- Give the public accurate information about school performance. This includes data about the achievement of students each year in every school and district. The data must be broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, migrant status, English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged status.
- Eliminate the “achievement gap”. This means that schools must close the gap between low-achieving students and high-achieving students.
- Give students extra help to raise their academic achievement.
- Involve parents and community leaders in making these changes.

How does NCLB work?

STATE PLAN. The state makes an official NCLB plan. The plan describes how Pennsylvania will follow the NCLB rules. The U.S. Department of Education reviews and approves the plan.

LOCAL PLAN. Each public school and each school district make an official NCLB plan. The Pennsylvania Department of Education reviews and approves the plans.

See the other side for more information.

Education Law Center/Penna. School Reform Network – ELC/PSRN

Offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh

215-238-6970 www.elc-pa.org 412-391-5225

ELC/PSRN works with many parents and groups. Please call us for assistance with individual school problems or more general problems with the education system. We look forward to speaking with your group. If your child's rights are violated under any law, ask for legal assistance. ELC operates a HelpLine at the numbers above. The ELC website (www.elc-pa.org) contains fact sheets and information about other organizations and sources of help.

ACADEMIC SUBJECT GUIDELINES. All public schools must follow state guidelines for what students should learn in each subject. If teachers do not follow the guidelines for their classes, students may not do well on the standardized tests.

STANDARDIZED TESTS. All public schools must give standardized tests to all students. The tests show how each student is learning compared to others. Our state’s main test is the PSSA.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS. Public schools must give all students “highly qualified” teachers and paraprofessionals. Teachers must meet higher standards for knowledge and skills. Schools must send letters telling parents when their children have teachers who are not qualified.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS. The state uses the standardized tests to measure whether each school is making “adequate yearly progress” (AYP). In order to make AYP in each year, schools must increase the number of students who pass the standardized tests. The student passing rate for each school must increase at least ten percent every year. All students must have a passing score by the end of the 2113-2114 school year.

SUBGROUPS OF STUDENTS. Schools must help all students to pass the standardized tests. Schools will not make AYP if some student groups are left behind. The state measures academic progress for student groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, migrant status, English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged status. Schools must report this data to the public.

OTHER FACTORS FOR PROGRESS. Public schools must meet other annual requirements to make AYP. The other factors include: (1) the percentage of students taking the standardized tests; (2) the student attendance rate; and (3) the high school graduation rate.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT. Schools must involve parents in making reform plans, visiting their children’s classrooms, and demanding higher academic expectations for their children.

MANDATORY SCHOOL REFORM. When a public school does not make AYP, it must change the way it educates students. Mandatory school reforms become stronger over time when student performance does not improve. Schools must involve parents and the community in plans for school reform. The school district and the state must give technical assistance.

<u>Number of Years the School is Failing</u>	<u>Name of the School Reform Plan</u>	<u>The School Reform Plan Must Include These Items</u>
1 st year	Warning.	The school must make a plan to improve, but the state will not force the school to include specific items.
2 nd year	School Improvement I.	The school must make a plan to improve. The school must let students transfer to a better school.
3 rd year	School Improvement II.	The school must do everything from School Improvement I. The school must give extra tutoring to struggling students.
4 th and 5 th years	Corrective Action I & II.	The school must do everything from School Improvement II. The school must make major changes in curriculum, teaching, administration, school structure, and parent involvement.
6 th year	Restructuring.	The school must do everything from Corrective Action II. The school must take extreme action, such as firing teachers, becoming a charter school, or being run by a private company.

How can you get more information?

- See other ELC fact sheets about NCLB and many other education issues. Visit our website or call our offices. *Contact information is on the front of this page.*
- Call ELC for help with individual school problems for your children.
- Ask ELC to come speak with your community group or church.