



A Guide
to Education
and
*No Child
Left Behind*



U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education

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Foreword

Education is one of the most important functions of government. It was a concern of the early settlers, and a focus of the Founding Fathers in writing the Constitution precisely because our democracy is dependent on an educated public. The Founders did not want education for the elite or for the many. They wanted education for all. John Adams once exclaimed: “Education for every class and rank of people down to the lowest and the poorest.”

The Founding Fathers were correct: Education is necessary for the growth and prosperity of our country. As education has become more inclusive and of better quality, it has enhanced American economic and political leadership.

The task of educating the people has historically been left up to state and local governments. In the late 18th century and into the 19th century, some states, such as Virginia, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, became known for the quality of their education systems. These school systems were the product of visionary contributions. Noah Webster worked to improve public education through writing dictionaries, spellers, readers, and histories. Benjamin Rush championed public education for girls. Horace Mann initiated efforts to improve the physical facilities of schools and to develop the first teacher training program. Thaddeus Stevens pushed through legislation



for public support of education in Pennsylvania. New York state set up the first public high schools. Other states followed, and soon public education was available for children across the country.

Recognizing the universal importance of education, the federal government assumed a larger role in financing public schools with the passage of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) in 1965. Through subsequent reauthorizations, ESEA has continued to assist the states. In 2001, the reauthorization included *No Child Left Behind*, which asks the states to set standards for student performance and teacher quality. The law establishes accountability for results and improves the inclusiveness and fairness of American education.

I hope this guide will be a useful resource for understanding the *No Child Left Behind Act*. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Department by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN.

Sincerely,



Rod Paige
Secretary

U.S. Department of Education

Satisfying the demand for highly skilled workers is the key to maintaining competitiveness and prosperity in the global economy.

Over the 10 years from March 1993 to March 2003, employment of persons ages 25 to 64 with master's degrees or higher increased by more than 3.2 million while employment of persons ages 25 to 64 with no more than a high school diploma increased by fewer than 460,000.¹

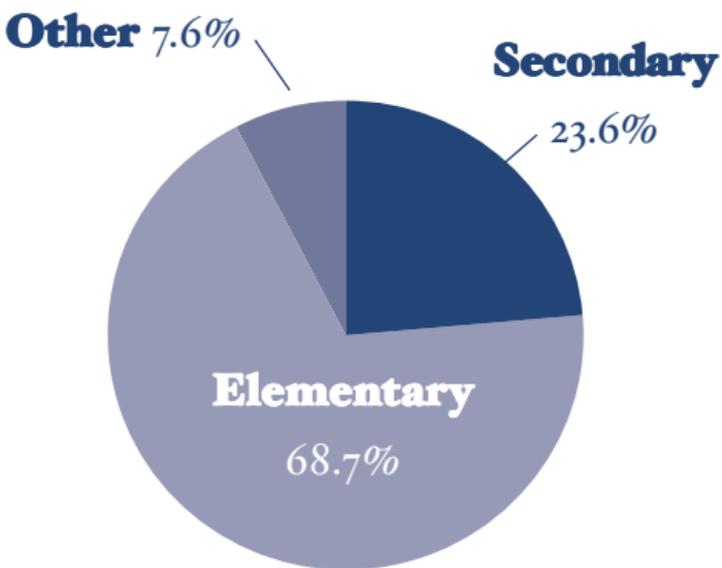
Additionally, the average unemployment rate for high school dropouts in 2003 was more than 1.5 times higher than the unemployment rate for people with just high school diplomas (8.8 percent compared to 5.5 percent) and almost three times higher than the rate for college graduates (8.8 percent to 3.1 percent).²

A recent report found that raising student achievement directly leads to national economic growth. The report estimates that “significant improvements in education over a 20-year period could lead to as much as a 4 percent addition to the Gross Domestic Product” or over \$400 billion in today's terms.³

Schools and Districts

As of the 2002-03 school year, there were 14,465 public school districts in the United States.⁴ The 95,615 public schools remain the primary educational delivery system in the United States.⁵

**Public Schools,
by Level: 2002-03⁶**



Alternative Education Systems

The number of alternative schools continues to grow as a response to the demand for more choices.

Private Schools 27,223 (1999-2000)⁷

Charter Schools 2,996 (2003-04)⁸

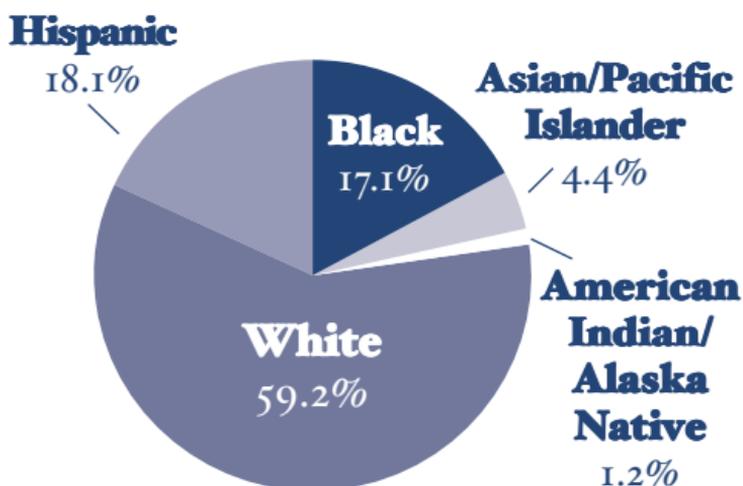
From 2000 to 2004 alone, more than 1,000 new charter schools opened, a 50 percent growth rate.⁹

Home Schooling

In 2004, the National Center for Education Statistics estimated that in spring 2003, the most recent period for which data is available, there were about 1.1 million homeschooled children, compared to 850,000 in spring 1999. ¹⁰

Students

*Public Elementary and Secondary School Students, by Race: 2002-03*¹¹

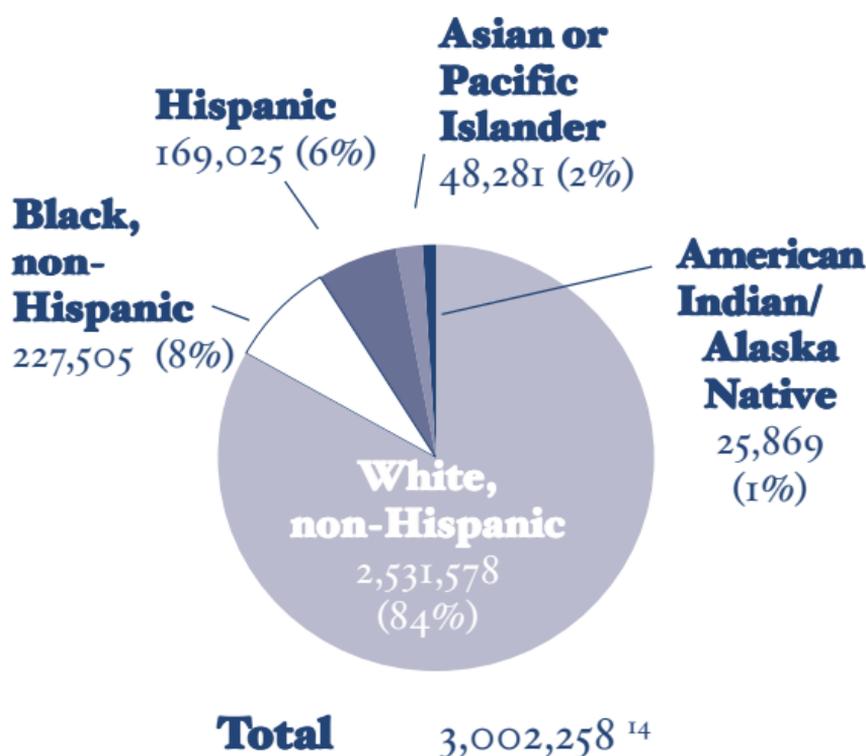


There are 48.2 million public school students in the United States. About 4.1 million students, or 8.5 percent, are English language learners.¹²

6.4 million students, or 13.4 percent of students ages 3 to 21, are served in federally supported programs for the disabled.¹³

Teachers

Public Elementary and Secondary School Teachers, by Race: 1999-2000



For the 1999-2000 school year, approximately 75 percent of all public school teachers were female.¹⁵

The average student : teacher ratio in 2002-03 was 16:1.¹⁶

The School Community

Teachers and Principals

The ratio of administrative staff members to teaching staff members is about even. Just over half (51 percent) of public school staff members are teachers.¹⁷

School principals are well-educated and experienced. Only around 10 percent of public school principals are under age 40, and 98 percent have a master's degree or above. About 44 percent of public school principals are women.¹⁸

Students

The majority of American public school students, 52 percent, attend suburban schools. Thirty-one percent of public school students attend city schools, and 17 percent attend rural schools.¹⁹

School Districts

- The 100 largest public school districts account for less than 1 percent of districts, but they also account for 22 percent of students and 16 percent of schools.²⁰
- The two largest public school districts are New York City Public Schools and the Los Angeles Unified School District. These districts are each larger than over half of the individual state education systems.²¹
- The states with the largest percentage of minority students are California, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Texas. In addition, the District of Columbia reports 95.7 percent minority students.²²

Graduation Trends

More Americans have completed high school.

- Between 1990 and 2003, the proportion of the adult population 25 years of age and over who had completed high school rose from 78 percent to an all-time high of 85 percent.²³

Bachelor's degrees are becoming more common.

- Between 1990 and 2003, the proportion of the adult population 25 years of age and over with a bachelor's degree increased from 21 percent to an all-time high of 27 percent.²⁴

College financial aid is on the rise.

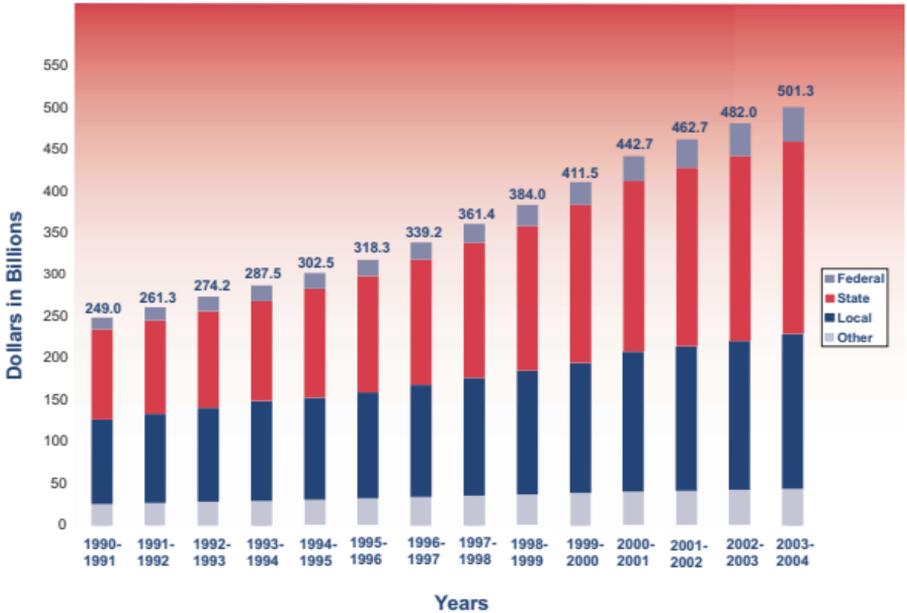
- Under the president's 2005 budget request, overall student financial aid would grow to \$73.1 billion.²⁵
- The number of recipients of grant, loan, and work-study assistance would increase by 426,000 to 10 million students and parents.

National Expenditures and Achievement

As a nation, we now spend \$501.3 billion annually at all levels of government on elementary and secondary education.

American taxpayers invest more in education than in the Defense Department. The United States invests more per pupil than almost any other nation in the world. Unfortunately, as Organization for Economic Development Education Director Barry McGaw noted, “The U.S. doesn’t get the bang for its buck.”

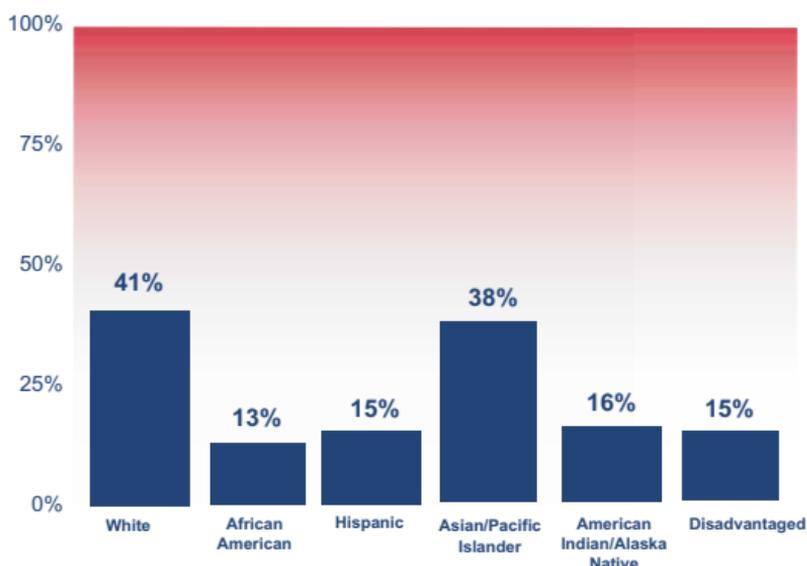
Expenditures for Elementary and Secondary Education²⁶



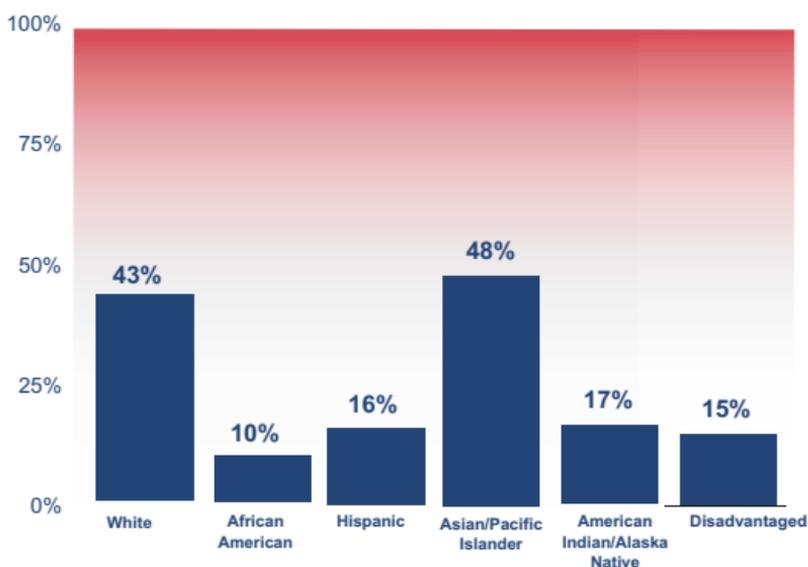
National Expenditures and Achievement

Much work remains to close the achievement gap in the early years. Even after four years of public schooling, most students perform below proficiency in both reading and mathematics. Minority and disadvantaged students are most at risk for falling behind.

4th-Grade Reading Proficiency: 2003²⁷



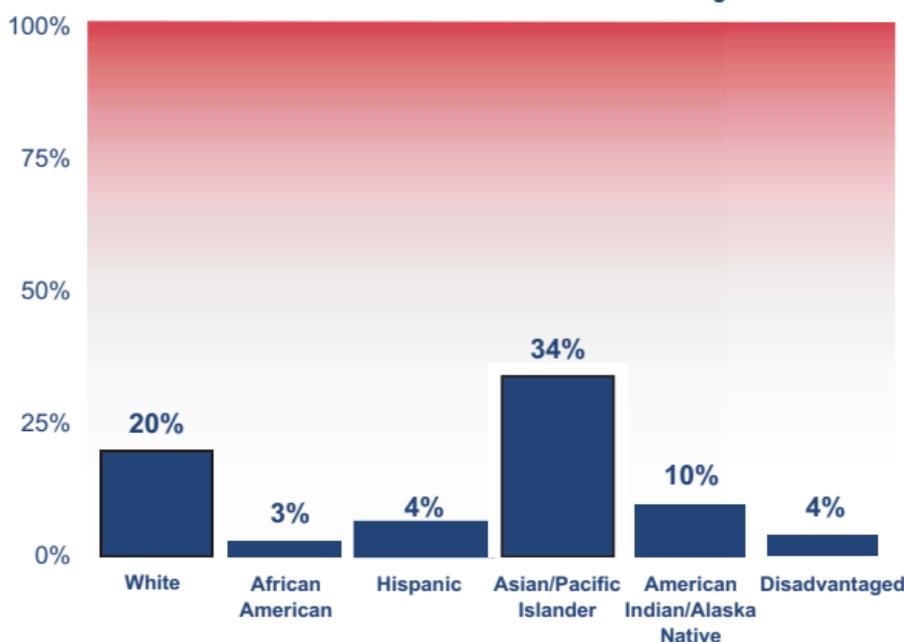
4th-Grade Math Proficiency: 2003²⁸



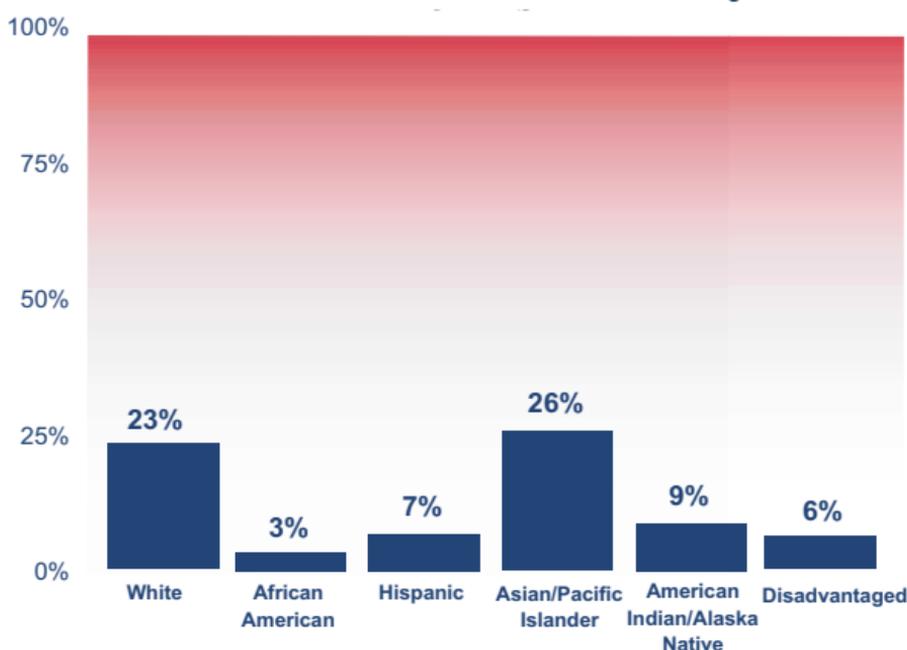
National Expenditures and Achievement

Upon graduating from high school, few students have acquired the math and science skills necessary to compete in the knowledge-based economy.

12th-Grade Math Proficiency: 2000²⁹



12th-Grade Science Proficiency: 2000³⁰





The History of *No Child Left Behind*

The principles of *No Child Left Behind* date back to *Brown v. Board of Education*, when the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in public schools and determined that the “separate but equal doctrine” was unconstitutional. That decision is now 50 years old.

Just after the passage of the *Civil Rights Act* in 1964, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* became law in 1965. *No Child Left Behind* is the 21st-century iteration of this first major federal foray into education policy—a realm that is still mainly a state and local function, as envisioned by our Founding Fathers.

On Jan. 8, 2002, President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-110) into law with overwhelming bipartisan support. The final votes were 87-10 in the Senate and 381-41 in the House. Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Congressmen George Miller (D-CA) and John Boehner (R-OH) were its chief sponsors in the Senate and the House.

No Child Left Behind ensures accountability and flexibility as well as increased federal support for education. *No Child Left Behind* continues the legacy of the *Brown v. Board* decision by creating an education system that is more inclusive, responsive, and fair.

Improving the Academic Achievement of the Economically Disadvantaged

The flagship federal education program, known as the “Title I” program, provides supplemental education support for students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in school.

The program serves more than 15 million students in nearly all school districts and more than half of all public schools, including two-thirds of the nation’s elementary schools. Too often, these students do not receive the educational foundation they need to achieve their full potential in school or in life.

Support: Title I program funding increases to \$13.3 billion for students in high-poverty schools under the president’s 2005 budget request. The president requested his third consecutive increase of \$1 billion for disadvantaged students, or 52 percent over 2001 funding.

Preparing, Training, and Recruiting Highly Qualified Teachers and Principals

Under *No Child Left Behind*, all teachers must be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year. One of the most important ways to close the achievement gap and provide all children with a great education is to provide them great teachers. Studies have shown the single greatest effect on student achievement is teacher quality. For this reason, America must remain steadfast in meeting the goal of ensuring that every classroom has a highly qualified teacher.

To be “highly qualified,” a teacher must (1) hold a bachelor’s degree, (2) hold a certification or licensure to teach in the state of his or her employment, and (3) have proven knowledge of the subjects he or she teaches.

Support: Under the president’s 2005 budget request, teachers receive \$5.1 billion in support through training, recruitment incentives, loan forgiveness, and tax relief—up from \$4.4 billion in 2004.

Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students

President Bush is committed to expanding educational opportunities for all students, including students who are learning the English language and students who are new to this country.

Children learning English face some of the greatest educational challenges due to language and cultural barriers. That is why President Bush and Congress pushed through the historic education reforms of *No Child Left Behind*. The law ensures that all children—from every ethnic and cultural background—receive a quality education and the chance to achieve their academic potential.

Support: The president's 2005 budget provides \$681 million for English language acquisition funding for children who are learning the English language, so they can reach their academic potential and fully participate in the American dream.

Giving Parents Choices and Creating Innovative Education Programs

No child should be trapped in an underperforming school. Under *No Child Left Behind*, students who attend Title I schools that do not make adequate yearly progress, as defined by states, for two consecutive years have the option of transferring to a higher-performing public school or a charter school within their district.

The promotion of charter schools is an important component of *No Child Left Behind*. These schools are held to the same accountability standards as traditional public schools, but they face fewer burdensome regulations. The result is more room for educators to be innovative and more choices for parents.

Support: Funding for choice and options for students and parents expands to \$504 million under the president's 2005 budget request—an additional \$113 million—to empower families to find schools that best meet the needs of their children, in particular those who need help the most.

Making the Education System Accountable

Accountability is a crucial step in addressing the achievement gaps that plague our nation. For too long, the poor achievement of our most vulnerable students has been lost in unrepresentative averages. African American, Hispanic, special education, limited English proficient, and many other students were left behind because schools were not held accountable for their individual progress. Now all students count.

Under *No Child Left Behind*, every state is required to 1) set standards for grade-level achievement and 2) develop a system to measure the progress of all students and subgroups of students in meeting those state-determined grade-level standards.

Support: For fiscal year 2005, President Bush requested \$410 million to support the development and implementation of state assessments to ensure students, parents, and teachers receive vital information about the performance of individual students, schools, and school districts.

Making the System Responsive to Local Needs

In addition to being accountable, states and school districts have the flexibility to pursue educational excellence by the means that best meet their needs. *No Child Left Behind* provides unprecedented levels of flexibility regarding the management of federal funds.

For example, most school districts may transfer up to 50 percent of the funding they receive under four major formula grant programs (Teacher Quality State Grants, Educational Technology State Grants, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants, and State Grants for Innovative Programs) to any one of these programs or to the Title I program for disadvantaged students.

Helping All Children Learn to Read

Because President and Mrs. Bush know that reading is the foundation for all other learning, the administration has set the goal of making sure every child knows how to read at grade level by the third grade. Reading opens doors to children who otherwise would struggle through school, lacking the skills to succeed and grow. Literacy is a vital skill for a successful student.

Children who learn to read well early in life are more likely to be engaged in school and experience academic success. A deficiency in reading skills impacts achievement in all other areas of education.

Support: Under President Bush's latest budget request, reading funding increases to a total of \$1.4 billion, including \$1.1 billion for the Reading First program, \$132 million for Early Reading First programs, and \$100 million for the Striving Readers program to meet the president's goal of ensuring every child can read on grade level.

Helping Children With Disabilities

The Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all children—including children with disabilities—receive a high-quality education. Before the passage of *No Child Left Behind*, the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required that students with disabilities be included in state and district-wide assessment programs. *No Child Left Behind* builds on this requirement by ensuring that these assessments measure how well students with disabilities have learned required material in reading and mathematics. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can have results from specially designed alternate assessments used in accountability decisions instead.

Support: Special Education Grants to States Program would receive a record \$11.1 billion under the 2005 budget request. This represents the president's fourth consecutive request for a \$1 billion increase to support children with disabilities—a 75 percent increase over the funding level when the president took office and the highest level of federal support ever requested for children with disabilities.

Terms To Know

Adequate Yearly Progress: Under *No Child Left Behind*, each state establishes a definition of “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) to use each year to determine the achievement of each school district and school. States are to identify for improvement any Title I school that does not meet the state’s definition of adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years.

Participation Rate: In order to make “adequate yearly progress” (AYP), schools must demonstrate that at least 95 percent of all students participated in the state assessment at each grade. This requirement must be met for all students in a school and for subgroups of those students defined by race/ethnicity, poverty level, disability, and English language proficiency.

Disaggregation: To ensure that children who are performing poorly are not lost in averages of achievement results, each state must report the performance of various subgroups if the subgroup is large enough for statistical reliability as determined by the state.

Highly Qualified Teacher: To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have: 1) a bachelor’s degree, 2) full state certification

or licensure, and 3) demonstrated competency in each subject they teach.

Demonstration of Competency: New elementary school teachers have to pass a state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills. Teachers in middle and high school must prove that they know the subjects they teach by passing a state test in their subjects, completing an academic major or coursework equivalent to a major in their subjects, or by receiving an advanced degree or advanced certification/credential. Experienced teachers may also prove competency through HOUSSE (see below).

High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE): NCLB allows states to develop an additional way for current teachers to demonstrate subject-matter competency and meet highly qualified teacher requirements. Proof may consist of a combination of teaching experience, professional development, and knowledge in the subject garnered over time in the profession.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001



U.S. Secretary of Education
Rod Paige

We should think big thoughts and have high expectations. The American school system must become and remain the best in the world. We need all of our students to excel, not just some. The president wants to raise all schools to the highest levels of scholarship and motivation. The essential first step is the *No Child Left Behind* law, because it makes education more inclusive, fair, and successful.



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