

The no child left behind statute

[Family](#), [Children](#)



The "No Child Left Behind" statute introduced by President Bush and passed by the congress has created a number of problems for the educational programs intended for adolescents in elementary and secondary schools.

The financial situation of the elementary and secondary schools is extremely poor because the states governments have been eliminating vital elementary educational programs. The school administrations have been reluctant to provide extended courses to the students. Furthermore, the textbooks are not being printed consistently, making not only the students but also the teachers extremely vulnerable and helpless.

The funding disparity has also created huge gaps between the education being provided to the children belonging to the rich families and those belonging to the poor ones. The shortcomings and the rhetoric behind "No child left behind" act needs to be exposed so that effective measures can be taken to curtail the damage (Susan, 2003). The consistent lack of attention being given to elementary and secondary education, particularly to adolescent literacy is posing a grave threat to the future of the American education system.

The purpose of this thesis is to reveal the shortcomings of "No child left behind" law by first understanding the basic details of the act related to adolescent literacy programs and then persuasively assessing the loopholes in it. Lastly, the thesis gives carefully crafted recommendations aimed at not only the federal and state governments but also the school districts, parents and the educators. The aim is to create an understanding of the present and future needs for those educational programs that are aimed at adolescents and identifying the present gaps in the federal educational law.

The American value of education emphasizes that all children, regardless of their gender, religion ethnicity should be able to acquire the basic skills of education and then carry those basic skills through to the elementary, secondary and high level education. Unfortunately, research has shown that the reality of the present education system is on the contrary. In a recent study, conducted by " National Assessment of Educational Progress" (NAEP, 2002), it has been noted that as much as 26% of the students are unable to read their textbooks fluently and almost half cannot comprehend the meaning of the text (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003).

It is worth noting that the legislators and government officials realize the gravity of the situation but have been unable to cope with it. If nearly half of the students in the elementary schools are unable to effectively read their course books, then, these students will find higher education very difficult. The " No Child Left Behind" act has made things even more difficult because the focus has been on a long-term solution, whereas, it is imperative that the needs of the present generations are addressed immediately.

This is because millions of students will be unable to cope with the demands of the future workplace needs if their basic educative skills are not enhanced at the right time (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003). The challenge for the present legislators, teachers, parents and school administrations is to counter the threat of adolescent illiteracy by introducing effective programs, backed by appropriate amount of government funds.

The difficulty lies in the ineffectiveness of the present educational law to cater the needs of adolescents as the most problematical educational

dilemma to deal with has been the deficiency in the reading, writing and speaking skills of adolescents. The present educational and political leadership need to create and implement productive adolescent educational programs, which are feasible in the present schooling environment (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003).

Dough Mesecar, who is currently a senior policy adviser to the secretary of Education, while giving his comments on the present status of the NCLB act asserts in an interview, " The achievement scores are up, and we're very pleased to see both the achievement gap starting to close, kids are learning more, a very positive report in the sense that the Center for Education Policy report is a self-survey, so these are states and districts reporting on their own to the center that their scores are up, achievement gaps are closing.

So we feel very positive that this is yet another report showing the trends are definitely heading in a positive direction. " Contrary to the above statement, many experts believe that the " No Child Left Behind" act presents a grave threat to the American values. But, before revealing the shortcomings of the " No Child Left Behind" law, it is imperative that the basic features of the law that are related to elementary education are clearly understood. It is important to note that at least four areas of the act have been considered to have severe repercussions on the adolescent literacy.

These four features are as follows: The " No child left behind" (NCLB) act encourages superior standards. The law makes it imperative that those schools, which are being supported by the government through funds, align their endeavors with the standards set by the local state. Furthermore, the

law makes it imperative for these schools to employ only skilled and qualified workforce and only work on evidence-founded programs that are time-oriented and result-oriented.

It is believed that these measures will enhance the level of education because it will not only minimize the inadequacy of unqualified teachers but also enhance learning as only scientifically verified teaching initiatives will be offered to the adolescents (Jim Donlevy, 2002). The law asserts that the annual progress of all the schools will be noted in relation to the competence achieved by the students in subjects such as mathematics and science, and in skills such as reading, writing and speaking.

Standardized procedures and methods will be drafted to evaluate the progress of each district, school, as well as every group within each school. It is important to note that these "assessments" have put a great deal of added stress on all elementary schools because they have to align their educational endeavors within the parameters of elementary education set by the state (Jim Donlevy, 2002). The NCLB act has set very high standards for elementary schools all over America. If a particular school fails to meet the standards of the state for 2 successive years then that particular school will have to craft counteractive programs.

Should the school fail to meet the State's requirements for the 3RD consecutive year, tougher measures will be introduced, which may include replacements in the school workforce, complete modification of the school syllabus and maybe even state takeover (Jim Donlevy, 2002). The law allows parents to send their children to a school located in another district should

their present school fail to meet the standards set by the State. The cost for this transfer of school along with the daily cost of transportation will be met by the local government.

Furthermore, if the students attending these low-performing schools need home-tutoring or any other measure to augment their children's achievements, then the local government will provide funds for those measures as well. The primary objective of the NCLB law is to enhance the possibility of success in elementary education for all Americans. This is being done by placing specific standards and then taking effective measures to make sure that these requirements are being met (Jim Donlevy, 2002). The most severe negative outcome for the elementary schools will be that they will lose their freedom to experiment with the instructional methods.

While scientifically proven methods offer a great deal of benefits to the students, the creativity and progress in discovering newer and more effective instructional methods will be lost. Furthermore, while numerous research studies about effective reading methods have been conducted, very little research exists on other educative areas, such as speaking, writing and learning. Therefore, elementary teachers and schools will be finding it very difficult to meet the standards of the State (Jim Donlevy, 2002). Another major loophole in the NCLB act is that the "counteractive measures" for schools will be extremely costly.

It is important to note that the measures set forth for under-performing schools are unfeasible to implement. If the number of schools that fail to comply with the standards set by the State for 2 successive years increases

substantially, then the funds required to bring the necessary changes in the workforce, syllabus and structures of the schools or a complete State takeover will be extremely difficult to manage as the funds for education are being slashed every year by the Bush Administration (Jim Donlevy, 2002).

The condition laid out by the NCLP to only employ specialized, qualified and licensed teachers is posing severe problems for struggling schools. It is vital to note that those schools that have either failed to or are struggling to comply with the standards set by the local government consistently employ replacement-teachers from far-off areas and are bound to face shortages of licensed teachers.

Furthermore, many experts believe that this tendency will increase in the coming years and the struggling schools will face tougher challenges to meet this condition, while those schools that have been meeting the State's standards of initiatives have been consistently employing certified teachers. Therefore, the persistence of the NCLB act to employ only licensed and specialized teachers has made it unrealistic for low-performing schools to meet this condition (Jim Donlevy, 2002). Additional troubling features of the NCLB Act

The funds allocated for the successful implementation of NCLB are not only limited but also very poorly directed. While the NCLP act lays clear emphasis and provides adequate funds for crafting accountability structures and carrying out transformations for schools that fail to comply with the Standards of the State, it fails to provide adequate funds for conducting research on equally important academic areas for adolescents' literacy,

namely, educator training and constant learning, the needs and interests of adolescents and framework for educating and learning in subject areas.

This misdirection of funds will further hamper the progress of low-performing schools (Mark W. Conley and Kathleen A. Hinchman, 2004). Furthermore, NCLB gives very little consideration to the framework of literacy strategies. The three areas cited in the NCLB act are alphabetic acquaintance, fluency, and comprehension strategies. While the adolescents have been able to develop the first two categories (alphabetic knowledge and fluency), they have found the last category (comprehension strategies) to be extremely difficult.

This is mainly due to the fact that new frameworks for subject-contents are being developed, which create the need for the development of newer comprehension strategies. Nevertheless, several studies have asserted that NCLB mirrors very limited research on this issue and sets a very restricted standard on strategies related to the development of newer comprehension strategies (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Alexander & Jetton, 2000). It is important to note that adolescents do not come prepared for the challenges they will face in their elementary and secondary education.

One cannot wait for newer laws to be enacted or school reforms to be initiated. Immediate strategies have to be developed so that the present threats emerging from the NCLB act can be turned into an opportunity for all schools. The federal and local State governments should reflect on the following strategies for immediate and quick-fix actions: Firstly, recognizing

those strategies that have been successfully implemented by high-performing schools and then enforcing the low-performing schools to adopt those strategies (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003).

In order to present those successful strategies to low-performing schools and ensuring that they have comprehensively understood all the aspects of the strategies, the government ought to set up presentation-places to illustrate those plans and achievements (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003). Encourage programs that educate teachers on scientifically verified instructional methods. Despite the fact that confusion about the proper definition of adolescent literacy still prevails, modern research has been able to give some direction to the dilemma.

These directions should be used as a framework to allocate funds for teacher training programs that have been clinically verified to be productive (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003). Increased consideration should be given to literacy instruction because no current teacher training programs inform the teachers about the difficulties they will face while dealing with the literacy instructions in their teaching careers (Michael F. Hock and Donald D. Deshler, 2003).

These recommendations should be implemented with immediate affect because we are all aware that schools are very multifaceted and therefore manifold characteristics and strategies have got to be adopted (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Marzano, 2003). It is important for the government officials to note that neither the adolescents nor the teachers can be ignored because they both are the pillars for growth and development of any society

(e. g. , Pressley, 2001; Strickland & Morrow, 2000; Stronge, 2002) (Margaret Taylor, 2004)

The " No Child Left Behind" act can be considered to be more idealistic than realistic because while the aims are very noble, the funds required to achieve these noble aims are very limited and a number of vital issues have been ignored. The State governments have been busy in establishing high standards of achievements for all schools without making efforts to really understand the complexities of the present system and the repercussions of their policies on the schools, parents, teachers and the students.

Therefore, a proper reaction to the present threats being posed by the NCLB act should be thorough, carefully directed, and all-inclusive if across-the-board transformations are desired. Lastly, endeavors to bridge the differences amid the objectives and the present capabilities have got to be the most important concern if the aim is for adolescents to productively challenge the needs of the business and the society.