

Supporting the no child left behind program

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The "No Child Left Behind (NCLB)" Program The "No Child Left Behind" program was instituted by the U. S. Congress in 2001, under the Bush administration (Debatepedia par. 1). The ambitious program is aimed at closing the achievement gap with choice, flexibility, and accountability. The program, among other things is aimed at helping disadvantaged students get quality education. The program basically involves government funding of schools in different states as long as they (the states) develop assessments and apply them to all students at specific grade levels. As opposed to focusing on nationwide examination and achievement standards, the program puts emphasis on each state setting its own education standards. Some of the changes that have come with the NCLB program relate to the role of the federal government in public education with respect to teacher qualification, annual testing, academic progress, and changes in funding. The NCLB program has been subject to a lot of debate and criticisms as noted by Debatepedia (par. 1). In spite of the criticisms the program faces, it is a program that is bound to bring a lot of positive change in the education sector. Although the NCLB has suffered from inadequate federal funding, the program has seen a significant improvement in student scores ever since its institution in 2002. More specifically, the test scores of students from minority groups or those who are disadvantaged in one way or another have greatly improved. Given its demand for quality education, the NCLB program has seen the dismissal of teachers who are less qualified which means that most of the teachers that are currently in classes are highly qualified. In this respect, it is estimated that across the U. S. the percentage of qualified teachers has increased to more than 90% (carleton. edu par 3). One of the

main aims of the No Child Left Behind Program was to reduce the achievement gap between minority and majority students (carleton. edu par 3). Going by the fact that the achievement gap between these two categories of students has notably reduced, it is worth noting that the program has been a success. The success of the program is further evidenced by the fact that about 450, 000 students who were in need of supplemental education services have accessed such services, something that would not have happened without the program (carleton. edu par 3). Yet again, because of the regular tests that students are subjected to, teachers have been able to identify the specific needs of individual students and have been able to attend to these needs on a case by case basis. While previously parents did not have a lot of choice with respect to the schools their children attend, the NCLB program has seen parents enjoy the privilege of deciding where their children learn. This in itself has given teachers and schools the incentive to work harder and make necessary changes to their educational strategies so that they are not closed down or end up without students to teach (carleton. edu par 3). In spite of its advantages and proven record, the NCLB program has been criticised for having the potential to subject teachers to teach the test in a bid to avoid being terminated from employment (carleton. edu par 3). The program has also been criticised for focusing on reading proficiency and math as opposed to other subjects and activities. Some critiques note that the program tends to blame teachers and school curricular for students' failure (Looking Glass Theatre par 3). Even though these criticisms are worth taking into consideration, the program has overall been successful. Furthermore, policies and strategies van be put in

place to remedy its potential weaknesses without having to abolish it altogether. Statistics show that the program is on track with the nation having the capacity to meet the universal grade level proficiency in reading and math whose deadline is set for 2014. Without doubt, the No Child Left Behind program is subject to a number of weaknesses. These weaknesses can quite easily be dealt with to ensure that the program's effectiveness is boosted. The program has many strengths which warrant its continued application. The program has seen more qualified teachers grace the classroom environment. It has further seen the achievement gap between minority and majority students significantly reduce over a short time. The program has also seen many students benefit from remedial classes and teachers have greater choice over their student's education among numerous other advantages. For its numerous benefits and little shortfalls, it is worth noting that the NCLB should be upheld. Works Cited carleton. edu. The Controversy: Has NCLB Been Successful or Has It Failed? 2013. Web. 28November, 2013 [http://www. carleton. edu/departments/educ/vote/pages/Pros_and-Cons. html](http://www.carleton.edu/departments/educ/vote/pages/Pros_and-Cons.html) Debatepedia. Debate: No Child Left Behind Act. 2013. Web. 28November, 2013 [http://dbp. idebate. org/en/index. php/Debate: _No_Child_Left_Behind_Act](http://dbp.idebate.org/en/index.php/Debate:_No_Child_Left_Behind_Act) Looking Glass Theatre. Arguments against NCLB. 2013. Web. 28November, 2013 [http://lookingglasstheatre. org/magazine/rg/no_child_rg/? title= nochild<title= nochildcon](http://lookingglasstheatre.org/magazine/rg/no_child_rg/?title=nochild&title=nochildcon)