



Student Testing/Accountability

1. What are the testing requirements in NCLB?

The law requires states to implement annual reading and math assessments for grades 3-8, and once in high school. States select and administer their own tests and must implement them by the 2005-06 school year. Beginning in 2007-08, states must administer science assessments once in elementary school, once in middle school and once in high school. States also have to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as a check on their assessments.

2. What will the federal government do to help states pay for these new requirements?

Approximately \$387 million has been appropriated each year to pay for the development and implementation of assessments.

3. How will students' test scores be used? What accountability mechanisms are in place for local school districts?

The law requires states to hold schools accountable—using the annual assessments in reading and math—for the academic progress of students, by defining adequate yearly progress (AYP) not only for disadvantaged students but for the entire student population. Within 12 years, states will have to show that all students will reach a “proficient” level—as defined by that state. Gradual progress has to be shown throughout the 12 years. Individual schools that do not

meet the standards, which are set by the state, will be deemed “low performing,” triggering designations of “school improvement” and “corrective action.” A similar designation is in place for school districts that fail to make AYP. Data must be disaggregated and reported by race, poverty, English language learners, and disabilities.

4. What specifically happens to schools that do not make AYP?

Schools that do not meet the state-defined AYP for **two consecutive years** are designated as **schools in need of improvement**. Once identified, schools will receive technical assistance to improve their performance and to develop a two-year plan in which to turn around the school. School districts are also required to offer public school choice to all students in the failing school not later than the first day of the school year after the school has been identified as needing improvement. Districts must provide transportation and also must use some of their Title I funds to pay for transportation.

If a school does not make AYP for **three consecutive years**, the school remains in school improvement and the district must continue to offer public school choice and to offer low-achieving students **supplemental services**, which is after-school tutoring. School districts are required to use some of their Title I funds to pay for the cost of the supplemental services.

5. What happens if a school continues to fail to make AYP over the long term?

If a school fails to make AYP for **four consecutive years**, the district must implement a **corrective action plan** that includes options such as implementing a new curriculum or replacing certain school staff. The district must continue to offer supplemental services and public school choice to students in corrective action schools.

The district must make significant changes in the governance structures of schools that fail to make AYP for **five consecutive years**. These could include state takeover, the hiring of a private management contractor, staff restructuring, or converting schools to charter schools. Again, the district must continue to offer supplemental services and public school choice to students attending schools in this “restructuring” category.