



**N**o Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the name given to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (originally established in 1965) when it was reauthorized in 2001. In this new version, the law focuses on education reform and asks schools to describe their successes in terms of student achievement. NCLB is based on the philosophy

that all children can learn and that it is the responsibility of parents and educators to find the best ways to help them.

NCLB is a comprehensive law, but for this article we will only be focusing on the following three elements: School Accountability, School Choice, and Supplemental Educational Services. Although all NH schools are accountable and all students must be tested, the policies for Choice and Supplemental Services, as well as for other school improvement requirements pertain primarily to schools receiving Title I funds (federal aid to the socio-economically disadvantaged).

## 1. School Accountability

NCLB requires every state to set high standards for student academic achievement and to increase those standards every year. To measure student progress, schools in NH must test children in Math, English, Science and Language Arts in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. In NH, this is the statewide New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) test. To demonstrate that its students are meeting the standard, it is not enough for the school as a whole to improve. Each sub-group of students—students with disabilities, students who are just learning English, and minority students, for example—must also make enough progress. Each school must then combine student test scores and show “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) towards state-determined targets for each subject tested.

Each year the standards that every school must meet are increased, so that by 2014 it is expected that almost all students can meet the standard of “proficient” or higher. Because the bar is raised every year, what has happened is that more and more schools are finding themselves missing AYP, even if their students do just as well as—or even better than—in previous years.

**What Happens When a School Misses AYP?** A school that misses AYP in

the *same subject for 2 years in a row* is defined as a “school in need of improvement” beginning the following year. At that point, the school must offer parents the choice to send their child to another school

(see School Choice section below). If a school misses AYP in that subject for a third year in a row, the following year the school must offer free tutoring (see Supplemental Educational Services section below).

If the school continues to miss AYP, it must take corrective action, which may include changing personnel or curricula, consulting outside experts, or restructuring. During this time School Choice and outside tutoring must still be offered.

## 2. School Choice

School districts are required to notify parents when schools are designated as in need of improvement and to inform them about their options to send their child to another school. If the district does not have enough options to offer all students the chance to transfer, priority must be given to the lowest achieving, low-income students. If more than one school is available, the local school district must offer more than one choice to eligible students.

If no schools are available, the school must *still* notify parents that their child’s school is in need of improvement and that the child is eligible for choice, but that no choices are currently available.

If it is not possible for a school district to offer choice, school districts

# Is Your School “In Need of Improvement”?

are allowed to offer **Supplemental Educational Services** instead in the first year that a school is in need of improvement (see below). You can ask your Title I Director, or school principal, if this is an option for your child.

Parents may also transfer their child to a non-Title I school, if available, whether or not that school is in need of improvement. The school district must pay for, or provide, transportation to the new school. For NH Dept. of Education guidance, see <http://www.nhpirc.org/files/NHPSchoice.pdf>.

## 3. Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

Under No Child Left Behind, low-income parents can get free after-school or weekend tutoring for their children when their school has not met “Adequate Yearly Progress” goals for three or more years in a row.

The school or school district must let you know if your children are eligible for this program. The notice should give you a list and descriptions of all the accredited tutoring programs near where you live. The programs on this list have to be approved by the state.

If you want supplemental services for your child, the school district will make the arrangements at no cost to you. If your child does begin a tutoring program, the program must work closely with the school and with you to make sure that it is helping your child with the specific difficulties he or she is having in school.

If the school’s level of funding is insufficient to provide SES to each student whose parents request these services, the school district must give priority to providing services to the lowest achieving students first.

**For more information, visit [www.nhpirc.org/NCLB.shtml](http://www.nhpirc.org/NCLB.shtml).**

### MORE GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

For more information about No Child Left Behind, download NH PIRC’s 4-page guide to NCLB here: <http://tinyurl.com/NH-ABCsofNCLB>

### HOW’S YOUR SCHOOL DOING?

To see if your school is in need of improvement, contact your school principal or download the 2010-11 list here: <http://tinyurl.com/NH-SINIS-2010-11>