

No Child Left Behind Who needs it?

It is controversial, and it is disruptive. Teachers unions and school administrators complain about it. And, some see it as part of an agenda to privatize public education.

Most middle-and-higher-income families don't need NCLB. And, most families with college backgrounds and college-bound children don't need NCLB. So, who does need NCLB?

The educationally disadvantaged, that's who.

- Poor students.
- Students who are struggling with English.
- Students with various kinds of disabilities (80% of whom suffer learning disabilities, not physical disabilities).

NCLB is about bringing these student subgroups up to grade-level in English language arts and in mathematics. Because these factors tend to be correlated with ethnicity, NCLB is also about ethnicity.

One of the problems with NCLB is that it excludes large numbers of the very children it was intended to help. Many disadvantaged students attend schools that are not eligible, for example, Roosevelt and Peabody schools. Between the two schools in 2003-04, 355 poor students, 259 English learners and 75 students with disabilities tested below grade-level proficiency in English language arts. NCLB does not address their needs.

Similarly, substantial numbers of disadvantaged students attend schools were eligible but met NCLB targets. Franklin and Harding are example. (The AYP threshold are not high.)

We finally get down to the disadvantaged (and non-proficient) students attending PI schools. They need it. But, few are receiving its main benefits.

Don't forget the those who don't need it but are getting one of its main benefits—school transfer.

So focused on the 15±% of the glass that is full that we tend to ignore the 85±% that is empty.

What are the benefits?

Who, for example, at Santa Barbara Junior High School?

- 84.2% of the socio-economically disadvantaged students (equals 355 students)
- 88% of the English Learners (equals 263 students)
- 95.7% of Students with Disabilities (equals 111 students)

These are the numbers of students who were not proficient or better in mathematics in 2004. They did not make AYP. They need help (NCLB requires it).

But, even if NCLB does not require helping them, others need help. Subgroup that made AYP (closely), but still have large majorities below proficient. These kids need NCLB, but won't get it.

Then there are the non-Title1 schools. Significant numbers of students are still not proficient or better. List. These kids need NCLB, but won't get it.

	2002-03								
Latinos	526		620						
SEDs	374		422	84.2m	355				
ELs	282		299	88.0m	263				
SwDs	110		116	95.7m	111				

There is cause for complaints. Many are right.