

ANALYSIS OF AYP AND POVERTY

2012-2013 NeSA TEST RESULTS

Consequences on Schools in Nebraska

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to summarize the consequences of the requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in Nebraska. The analysis uses the data from the State of the Schools Report for the 2012-2013 school year and the 3 prior State of the Schools Reports.

This report analyzes

- the schools that met AYP requirements in 2012-2013 by poverty level
- the schools that were “In Need of Improvement” for 3 or more years by poverty level
- any indication that the punitive measures in NCLB are forcing improvements that are closing the achievement gap in Nebraska
- the future of our local and public education system in Nebraska as the penalties for failing AYP under NCLB kick in.

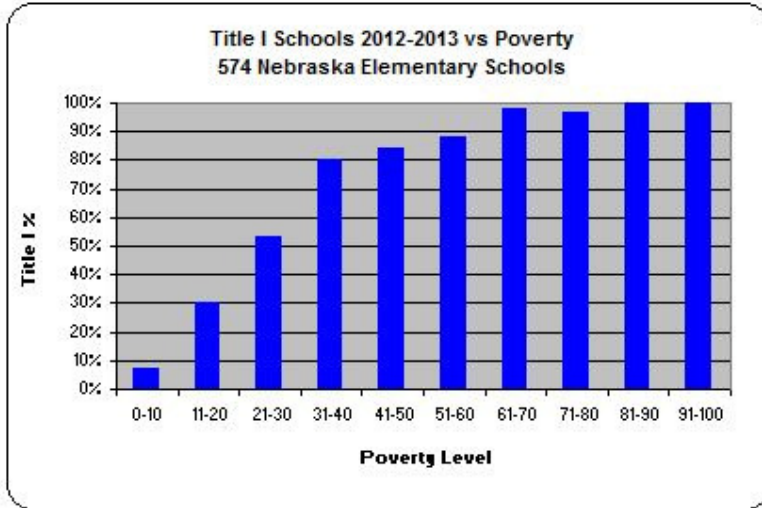
The Exhibit at the end of this report contains a brief summary of the AYP requirements and the consequences of failure under NCLB.

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has done a good job with the State of the School Report. The information is easily accessible and very user friendly. Having worked with several other states’ reports I certainly appreciate the Nebraska report.

The State of the Schools Report has significant data regarding AYP of all schools in Nebraska. Comparing this data to the poverty levels illustrates just how punitive the penalties of NCLB are on high poverty schools that quite frankly already have enough on their plates.

Title I Schools:

The penalties on school districts and schools only apply to Title I schools. Designations of Title



I schools are made by the state and federal Title I money is provided to these schools. The distribution of Title I elementary schools are shown here.

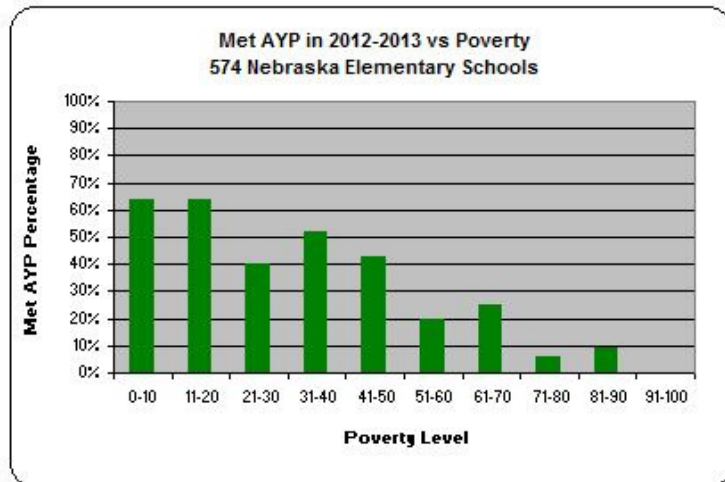
Nebraska has 574 elementary schools (not counting the stand alone pre-k schools). Of those 574 elementary schools

- 19 have grades 2 or below and are not tested
- 10 of the schools had their poverty rates redacted
- 1 school had no AYP data

This leaves 544 elementary schools with viable poverty and AYP data. 75% or 407 of these 544 Nebraska elementary schools are designated as Title I schools. Most of the schools that are not designated as Title I schools and can avoid the punishment of NCLB are low poverty schools.

Pass or Fail AYP in Nebraska by Poverty Level:

We know from previous studies of NeSA test data that a school's proficiency rate is highly correlated to its poverty rate (percentage of children eligible for free or reduced cost meals (FRL) under the National School Lunch Program of the federal government). It is thus important to consider the impact of poverty on success or failure under AYP.

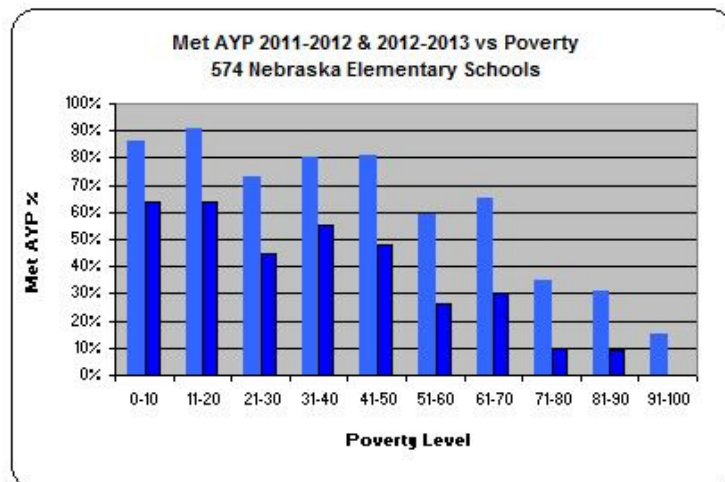


Poverty Rate	All Schools	Met AYP	% Met AYP
0%-10%	28	18	64%
11%-20%	56	36	64%
21%-30%	55	22	40%
31%-40%	89	46	52%
41%-50%	98	42	43%
51%-60%	89	18	20%
61%-70%	40	10	25%
71%-80%	31	2	6%
81%-90%	32	3	9%
90%-100%	26	0	0%
Total	544	197	36%

Schools that successfully met the requirements of AYP are shown here. Clearly most were low poverty schools. The passing mark in 2012-2013 was quite high and only 36% of all elementary schools met the standard (every group within the school must pass in addition to the total school).

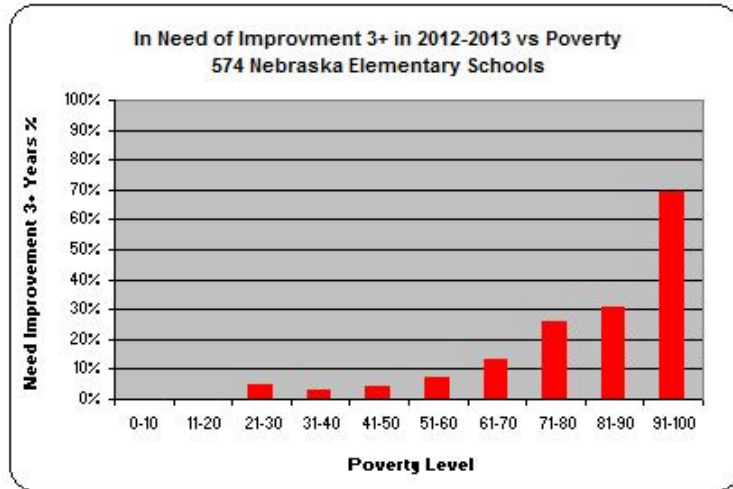
For schools that had lesser than 30% poverty the passing rate was 55%. For schools with over 70% poverty the passing rate was 6%. Just to put those numbers in perspective, it would appear that a low poverty school has almost a 10 times better chance of meeting the AYP requirements as a high poverty school.

It is also interesting to compare the schools that met AYP in the 2011-2012 school years versus those that met the standard in 2012-2013:



That rate went from 68% in the 2011-2012 school year to 40% in the 2012-2013 school year. This decrease was mostly because the minimum proficiency standard increased. I suspect that few will meet the 100% standard in the 2013-2014 year that we are in now. In 4 years of working with this data I haven't seen a single school get 100% in all tests.

Note that while 40% of all elementary schools met the AYP standard in 2012-2013, several did not meet full AYP status since once you miss AYP you must meet it for two years in a row to achieve full AYP status (only 36% were in full AYP compliance in 2012-2013 as indicated above.)



Poverty Rate	All Schools	Fail 3+ Years	% Fail 3+ Years
0%-10%	28	0	0%
11%-20%	56	0	0%
21%-30%	55	3	5%
31%-40%	89	3	3%
41%-50%	98	4	4%
51%-60%	89	6	7%
61%-70%	40	5	13%
71%-80%	31	8	26%
81%-90%	32	10	31%
90%-100%	26	18	69%
Total	544	57	10%

When we look at schools that have been “In Need of Improvement” for three years or more (when the really punitive and expensive penalties of NCLB kick in) we see that these penalties are reserved almost exclusively for high poverty schools.

For schools with under 30% poverty the “In Need of Improvement” for 3 or more years rate was 2%. For schools with over 70% poverty that rate was 40%. Again, to put those numbers in perspective, it would appear that a high poverty school has about a 20 times better chance of being “In Need of Improvement” for 3 or more years than a low poverty school and as a consequence may have to bus children to other schools, provide tutoring or be put in a position of considering replacing their teaching staff and principals or worse.

Clearly high poverty schools are failing AYP at a much higher rate than low poverty schools. Under NCLB thinking this means that teachers at low poverty schools are doing a poor job of educating the children they see each school day while teachers in low poverty schools are almost all excellent. This is an absolutely ridiculous assumption since most school districts have both high poverty and low poverty schools and teachers are assigned to schools by the district as needs arise (i.e., at random).

Putting a Face on the Victims of NCLB:

It is interesting to look at the 22 school districts that contain the 57 elementary schools that were “In Need of Improvement” for 3 or more years as a result of the 2012-2013 tests. There is nothing like putting a face to the victim.

SUMMARY OF 57 NEBRASKA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS - IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT 3+ YEARS																		
District	No. of Schools	No. of Title I Schools	Meet Stand. Reading	Meet Stand. Math	Meet Stand. Science	Meet Stand. Writing	Students			Teachers				Ethnic & Racial Makeup				
							No. of Students	% Poverty	% ELL	Masters	Experience	No. of Teachers	Ratio S/T	Native American	African American	Hispanic	White	Other
OPS	30	30	57%	47%	36%	52%	14,394	84%	22%	50%	12.1	991.0	14.6	1%	34%	33%	24%	8%
Bellevue	4	0	75%	68%	60%	56%	1,458	38%	6%	55%	13.4	98.6	14.8	1%	10%	9%	73%	7%
Fremont	2	2	60%	51%		56%	519	84%	38%	61%	14.0	37.8	13.6	1%	1%	67%	32%	1%
Hastings	2	2	74%	70%	56%	67%	622	81%	22%	49%	16.9	47.4	13.1	1%	3%	31%	62%	3%
LPS	2	2	69%	67%	39%	55%	913	92%	39%	44%	13.4	94.0	9.7	3%	16%	42%	22%	20%
Alliance *	1	1	66%	61%		69%	297	59%	4%	25%	12.2	19.5	15.2	9%	1%	19%	62%	9%
Chase County *	1	1	86%	79%	91%	61%	325	30%	15%	41%	20.0	25.6	12.7	0%	0%	25%	74%	1%
Columbus	1	1	77%	72%	79%	50%	283	65%	20%	56%	19.2	17.2	16.5	1%	1%	44%	51%	2%
Crete *	1	1	68%	64%		67%	786	59%	41%	58%	13.3	49.4	15.9	0%	1%	59%	37%	3%
Fairbury *	1	1	72%	70%	81%	77%	271	54%		55%	15.5	19.4	14.0	1%	2%	6%	90%	1%
Grand Island	1	1	60%	55%	20%	58%	432	94%	66%	47%	12.1	32.0	13.5	0%	1%	81%	16%	1%
Harvard *	1	1	60%	49%	54%	46%	181	69%	17%	0%	8.6	12.6	14.4	3%	2%	31%	65%	0%
Lakeview *	1	1	79%	77%	79%	57%	189	36%	17%	44%	20.2	15.1	12.5	0%	1%	23%	74%	2%
Lexington	1	1	45%	49%	30%	41%	356	95%	60%	29%	17.5	26.3	13.5	1%	4%	84%	9%	3%
Norfolk	1	0	78%	78%	84%	59%	593	48%	2%	58%	14.9	40.9	14.5	3%	3%	23%	67%	4%
O'Neill *	1	1	70%	68%	80%	60%	395	51%	12%	68%	23.7	32.7	12.1	0%	0%	18%	79%	3%
Papillion-LaVista	1	0	90%	80%	75%	96%	370	24%		79%	14.2	25.1	14.7	0%	3%	2%	91%	4%
Ralston	1	1	72%	64%	47%	32%	150	71%		25%	9.2	10.0	15.0	3%	5%	30%	56%	5%
Sidney *	1	0	80%	81%	76%	50%	203	31%		24%	9.8	13.5	15.0	0%	0%	13%	82%	4%
So Sioux City	1	1	67%	56%	36%	60%	389	70%	41%	49%	12.2	32.4	12.0	1%	2%	65%	26%	7%
Southern *	1	1	71%	73%	85%	75%	212	41%		29%	17.1	19.9	10.7	2%	0%	3%	90%	4%
Umo N Ho N Nation *	1	1	11%	6%		37%	375	94%		25%	12.4	30.7	12.2	99%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Avg. Large District	47	41	62%	53%	42%	54%	20,479	78%	25%	51%	12.8	1,453	14.2	1%	24%	34%	33%	7%
Avg. Small District	10	9	66%	63%	78%	64%	3,234	52%	18%	37%	15.3	238	13.5	11%	1%	20%	65%	3%
Total	57	50	63%	55%	47%	56%	23,713	73%	24%	48%	13.3	1,691	14.1	3%	20%	32%	39%	7%

* Small District School

Large school districts are school districts with over 1,000 elementary school students. These school districts have 47 of the 57 schools that are “In Need of Improvement” 3 years or more and 20,479 students compared to 3,234 in the 10 small district schools. The large district schools have higher poverty and ELL rates and lower proficiency rates than their small district counterparts. There are 1,691 teachers in these 57 schools which represents almost 16% of all elementary school teachers in Nebraska.

In most cases, the reason for missing AYP was obvious – high poverty and high ELL rates (the OPS schools, Grand Island and Lexington are prime examples), but in a few cases it is less clear. In many of those cases, schools were caught when one or more groups of students failed the AYP requirement.

The elementary school listed in the Papillion-LaVista School District is a good example of the silliness of NCLB. It was caught by their special education group failing AYP while the average proficiency rates for the school were extremely high.

NCLB's Intent was to Close the Achievement Gaps in Learning:

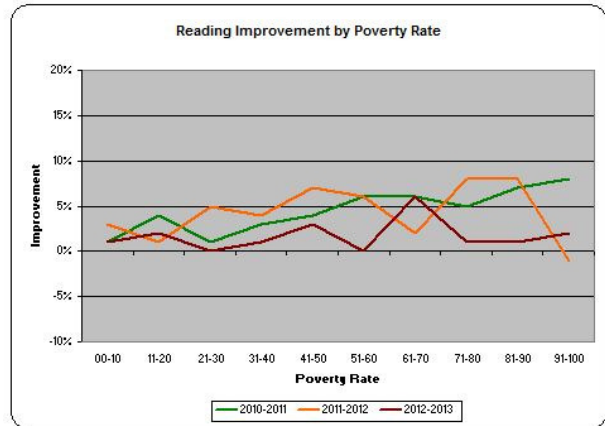
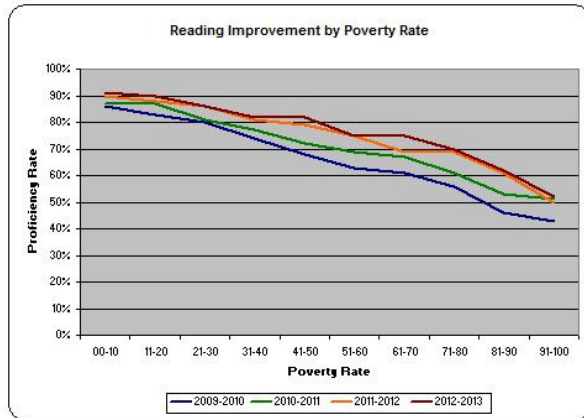
One of the major intents of NCLB was to close the learning gaps between African-Americans and Hispanic and white students.

It is thus important to see if we can tell if the penalties under NCLB for failure in achieving AYP has had any effect in Nebraska since statewide testing has started 4 years ago. I cannot do this by race or ethnicity, but I can do it by poverty level. To me poverty is the villain not race or nationality. I have known way too many African-Americans and Hispanic men and women that were much smarter than me to believe that race or ethnicity is the issue.

The following are the

- average proficiency rates by poverty levels
- amount of improvement in proficiency rate by poverty levels

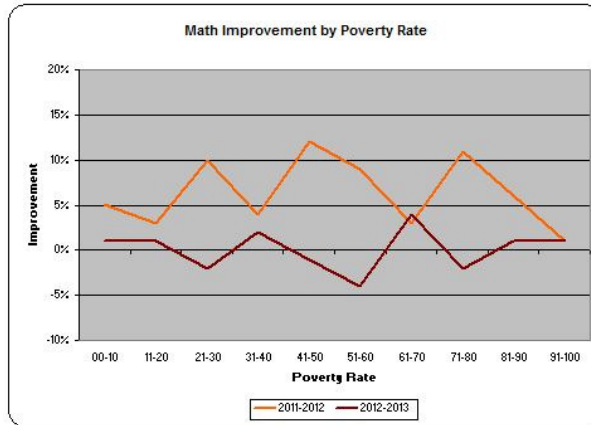
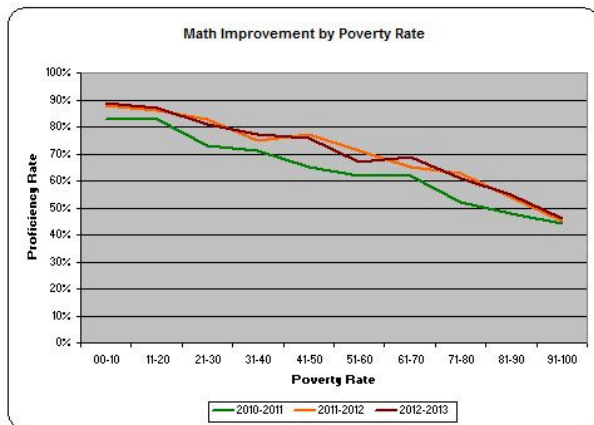
since statewide testing began in the 2001-2010 school year for 277 large district schools (over 1,000 elementary students in the district):



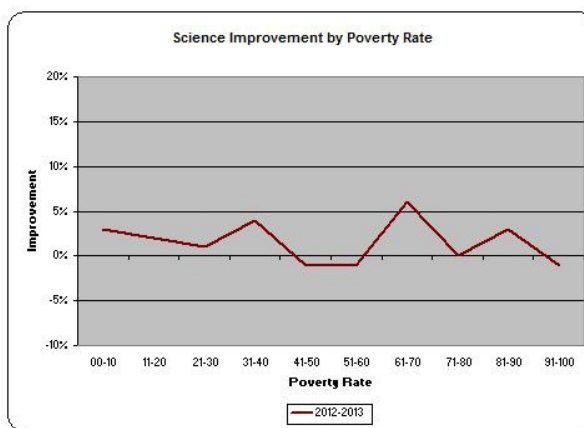
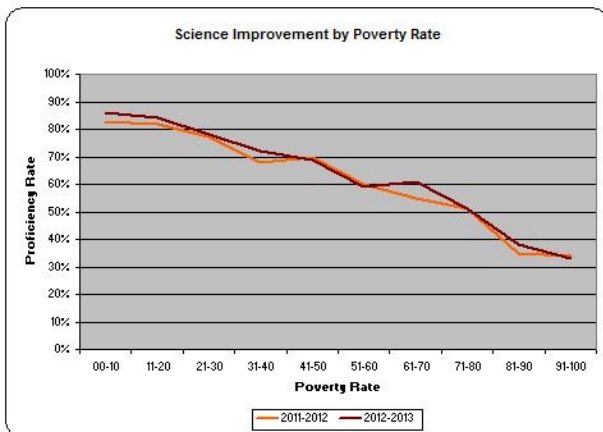
Reading: In Reading we actually do see improvement for two of the three years in question and in the first year there was more improvement in the higher poverty categories. This means that there was some closing of the poverty gap that year. In the second year there was improvement but it was basically across all poverty levels and thus no closing of the poverty gap. In the last year there was virtually no improvement at any poverty level

This pattern begs the question: are we seeing improvement or simply learning to take the test. As you will note, this pattern of no improvement at any poverty level last year is seen in all the tests.

I was visiting my son and his family in Atlanta in August and my 3rd grade granddaughter said her class was getting ready for the Georgia statewide tests and made the comment that she had just learned that if you don't know the answer to a question but know that one or two answers are wrong then you should guess at one of the other answers. This is in 3rd grade! This is not education in any stretch of that word; shame on us and shame on our federal government!



Math: In math we see improvement after the first test, but that improvement is generally at all levels of poverty and thus no closing of the poverty gap. Last year there was again virtually no improvement as we saw in reading.



Science: In science we have only last year to view and like both reading and Math there was virtually no improvement at any poverty level and thus no closing of the poverty gap.

Bottom line is that the gap between high poverty schools and low poverty schools has only minimally been closed in these 4 years and even that is questionable. Does this represent real learning or simply becoming better NeSA test takers?

What I see is Nebraska teachers reacting to the intimidation of NCLB and teaching to the test and students simply learning to take tests better. Not a good omen for one of the best education systems in the country.

In order to fill a 40% gap between the low poverty and high poverty schools we are looking at a 10 to 15 year process if the early year's improvement rates are real learning. But in 10 to 15 years there will be no public education system since the 100% proficiency is impossible to achieve and under NCLB all schools will evolve into corporate schools under federal regulation.

Summary:

I see NCLB as a cartoon example of the Red Bead Experiment made famous by the late Dr. W. Edwards Deming, the business system expert that created the Japanese industrial miracle in the 1950's and 60's. A brief video on the Red Bead Experiment can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3ewHrpqclA>

Essentially the Red Bead Experiment points out that it is a waste of time to blame workers for failures in the system. No matter how much you intimidate and threaten them, they can't change the system.

Dr. Deming was also adamant that the raw material in any business operation had to be strictly controlled if a quality product was to be expected at the other end of the system. In an education environment that means the damage done to children by poverty must be eliminated or the system is guaranteed to fail. Most of the rest of the developed world has done this. We haven't. We have child poverty at 22% versus Finland which has under 5% and leads the world in test performance. Fixing poverty's effects on our children is the job of our governments not our teachers.

Finally he was aghast at what he called "management by the numbers" where weak and lazy managers simply sit in their office and study numbers that represent the performance of their operation. But this is exactly what NCLB demands.

"No child left behind" was a noble idea that at best is (and was in 2001) a terribly naïve and uninformed approach to a complex social problem. NCLB has many very predictable consequences and many victims especially among the poor. It is just begging to be revised, but it is so profitable to so many people it has been impossible to get changes even considered in our Congress. NCLB was to be re-authorized in 2007 and in 2012 but it has not been touched.

Nothing in NCLB or in President Obama's Race to the Top addresses the real problem in education that has existed for long before ESEA – educating children that are damaged by high poverty levels. It is interesting to remember that the movie Blackboard Jungle was released in 1955 (when President G. W. Bush was in 3rd grade and before either President Obama or Secretary of Education Arne Duncan was even born)! Nothing has changed since before 1955.

Our public education system is near becoming a corporate system run by the federal government under NCLB in not too many years. We cannot stand for this. Our educators – in the Unicameral, in the Nebraska Department of Education, in our teacher training universities and colleges, in our teachers unions and our individual teachers and principals – all must demand that changes be made to the punitive approach of NCLB and the intrusion of the federal government into our local education systems. The numbers and knowledge are here to get change and the power to force change is available with our teacher's unions. We can't just sit and let the consequences of NCLB happen.

EXHIBIT I - AYP BASICS:

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. In its Title I it provided federal money for states to allocate to high poverty schools to **help** these already strapped schools. In the 2001 President G. W. Bush signed a re-authorization of ESEA entitled ‘No Child Left Behind’ which put very **punitive strings of NCLB on this Title I money** paid to states.

NCLB requires that 100% of all students in a school and school district be proficient in statewide tests in reading, math and writing (as its name implies – No Child Left Behind). The 100% is the goal in the 2013-2014 school year (that is the school year we are in now). Prior to that, states set standards that increase each year so as to grade into the 100% in 2013-2014. In Nebraska the standard has been:

- 2010-2011 – reading 67% proficient – math 51% proficient
- 2011-2012 – reading 78% proficient – math 67% proficient
- 2012-2013 - reading 89% proficient – math 84% proficient
- 2013-2014 – all 100% (including writing)

It is important to understand that to pass AYP:

- the whole school must pass
- each of 7 ethnic or racial groups must also pass
- those eligible for free or reduced cost meals must pass
- English language learners must pass, and
- special education children must pass.

If any group fails, the school fails, no matter how well the other students did. The exception is if there are fewer than 30 students in any group, that group can be excluded. A school may also pass AYP even if their proficiency rate fails by showing improvement or growth.

If a school fails AYP for two years they are considered “In Need of Improvement.” This is where the real punitive aspects of NCLB start to kick in with progressive penalties for schools and school districts and taxpayers:

- **After 2 years of “In Need of Improvement”:** Schools must allow students to transfer their children to other public schools – in addition they also must develop a school improvement plan and spend 10 percent of their Title I money on teacher professional development
- **After 3 years “In Need of Improvement”:** Schools must provide eligible students with tutoring with a per student cost of about \$1,100 to \$2,000 depending on the area
- **After 4 years “In Need of Improvement”:** Schools must take "corrective action," such as replacing school staff, adopting new curriculum or extending the school day
- **After 5 years “In Need of Improvement”:** Schools face takeover by the state or a contracted private education firm.

In 4 years of analyzing the State of the Schools Reports I have yet to see a school get 100% on all the tests. We must understand that Nebraska is one of the better school systems in the country. But none of our schools get 100%.