No Child Left Behind (NCLB), U.S. federal law aimed at improving public primary and secondary schools, and thus student performance, via increased accountability for schools, school districts, and states. The act was passed by Congress with bipartisan support in December 2001 and signed into law by. Thank you for your feedback. Our editors will review what you’ve submitted and determine whether to revise the article. Join Britannica’s Publishing Partner Program and our community of experts to gain a global audience for your work! External Websites. Electronic Privacy Information Center - No Child Left Behind. WRITTEN BY. Brian Duignan See All Contributors. No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was in effect from 2002–2015. It was a version of ESEA and was replaced by ESSA in 2015. Find out what NCLB did. The law held schools accountable for how kids learned and achieved. The law was controversial in part because it penalized schools that didn’t show improvement. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was in effect from 2002–2015. It was a version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). NCLB was replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015. When NCLB was the law, it affected every public school in the United States. Its goal was to level the playing field for students who are disadvantaged, including: Students in poverty. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was a U.S. Act of Congress that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; it included Title I provisions applying to disadvantaged students. It supported standards-based education reform based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals could improve individual outcomes in education. The Act required states to develop assessments in basic skills. To receive federal school funding, states had to give these. Signed into law in 2002, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) promised to revolutionize American public education. Originally supported by a bipartisan coalition, it purports to improve public schools by enforcing a system of standards and accountability through high-stakes testing. Many people supported it originally, despite doubts, because of its promise especially to improve the way schools serve poor children. By making federal funding contingent on accepting a system of tests and sanctions, it is radically affecting the life of schools around the country.