

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

What Parents Need to Know About:

- *School Accountability*
- *Public School Choice*
- *Supplemental Educational Services (SES)*

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal education law for public K-12 schools. The law is designed to increase the accountability of schools and school districts in order to improve student achievement. NCLB seeks to eliminate the achievement gap between different groups of students such as those based on race/ethnicity or on family income.

This handout will provide an overview of ways in which NCLB increases *school accountability* through standards, testing, school improvement status, and parental options (*Public School Choice* and *Supplemental Educational Services*).

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) law makes schools and school districts more accountable for improving the academic achievement of students. This is accomplished by:

- Requiring states to set academic *standards* for specific grade levels. These standards indicate what students should know at each grade level. The State must then determine whether or not students are achieving these standards through testing.
- States must test all students in grades 3-8 every year. They must also test students at least once between 9th and 12th grade. This testing is used to determine the percentage of students in different grades who are considered “proficient” in specific subjects such as reading and math.
- NCLB requires that 100% of students be proficient (on grade level) in reading and math by 2014.
- Each year, a higher percentage of students are required to be proficient (at grade level) in order to reach the goal of 100% by 2014. Schools whose students achieve that year’s target percentage are considered to be making *Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP).

- If a Title I school (schools that serve many low-income families and receive extra federal funding) fails to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years, the school is identified as being in “*Year 1 of School Improvement*.” If they do not make AYP the following year, they are in “*Year 2 of School Improvement*.” If they continue to not make AYP, they move into subsequent years of School Improvement status. There are additional consequences for each year a school remains in School Improvement Status (see the *School Improvement Status table*). Schools move out of School Improvement Status when they make AYP for two consecutive years.
- Information on whether your child’s school is in School Improvement Status (and if so, what year) can be obtained from the website of the Arkansas Department of Education (www.arkansased.org). A link to the specific webpage on the Arkansas Department of Education website is also provided on the Center for Effective Parenting / Arkansas State PIRC website (www.parenting-ed.org).

SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

As part of the accountability process, states and school districts are required to publish yearly report cards on school performance. These “school report cards” should indicate whether the school is in School Improvement status. The report cards also include information on the percentage of students found to be proficient in math, reading, and other subject areas tested (results are also broken down by subgroups such as grade level, gender, minority groups, special education, and low-income students). Parents should request a copy of the report card from the principal of their child’s school if they did not receive one for the past year.

The following website also provides information on the percentage of students proficient in math and reading for each state, school district, and even individual schools:
<http://www.schoolmatters.com>.

School Improvement Status and Consequences for Title I Schools

School Improvement Status	Public School Choice	Supplemental Educational Services (SES)
Year 1 of School Improvement	Yes	Optional
Year 2 of School Improvement	Yes	Yes
Corrective Action <i>School is required to develop a plan which may include some of the following changes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New curriculum - Decrease local school control - Extend school day or school year - Appoint outside expert - Internal reorganization 	Yes	Yes
Restructuring <i>School is required to develop a plan which may include some of the following changes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reopen as charter school - Replace principal and staff - Contract for private management - State takeover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other school governance 	Yes	Yes

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

What is Public School Choice?

Public School Choice is a provision in No Child Left Behind which allows parents to transfer their children to a higher performing school under certain circumstances.

Which students are eligible for Public School Choice?

Eligible students are those attending a Title I school that is in **Year 1 (or beyond) of School Improvement** status. Since the number of transfer slots available at other schools may be limited, transferring to another school is not guaranteed. Children from low income families who are most in need academically will be prioritized for available transfer slots.

Will I be informed if my child is eligible to transfer to another school?

Yes, your child's school district is required to notify you if your child is eligible. If you think your child might be eligible but you have not been notified, check with the principal of your child's school or your school district's Title I Coordinator.

What schools can my child transfer to?

Your child's school district must identify schools that you can select. The new school cannot be in School Improvement Status. (In some school districts, there may not be an eligible school available to which a student can transfer.)

Who provides transportation to the new school?

The school district must provide transportation to the new school. They must continue to provide transportation to the new school as long as the old school remains in School Improvement status.

How do I apply for the transfer?

The school district must tell parents how and when to apply for the transfer. This is usually done at the beginning of the school year. Parents must apply for the transfer by the required date.

SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION SERVICES

What are Supplemental Educational Services (SES)?

Supplemental Educational Services, often referred to as SES, are tutoring services paid for by the school district. Some schools are mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law to provide these tutoring services to students. The goal for providing Supplemental Educational Services is to improve students' academic achievement.

Who is eligible for **Supplemental Educational Services**?

Eligible students are those from low-income families who attend a Title I school in **Year 2 (or beyond) of School** Improvement status. SES services are also available in some Arkansas schools in Year 1 of School Improvement. Services are not restricted just to students of specific subgroups (for example a certain grade) that caused the school not to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools must make Supplemental Educational Services available to all eligible students including those with special learning or language needs. Priority is given to students from low-income families (generally those who receive free or reduced-price lunch) who are most in need academically.

When are **Supplemental Educational Services** provided?

Supplemental Educational Services cannot be provided during the regular school day. They can be provided in the mornings before school, in the afternoon or evening after school, on weekends, or in the summer.

How will I know if my child is eligible?

Your child's school district is required to notify you if your child is eligible. If you think your child might be eligible but you have not been notified, check with the principal of your child's school or your school district's Title I Coordinator.

Who is responsible for signing my child up for **Supplemental Educational Services**?

Parents are responsible for registering their child for Supplemental Educational Services by the deadline provided by their school district. *Even if your child is eligible, your child will not receive the free tutoring unless you sign up for it!*

Is the school district required to provide transportation for **Supplemental Educational Services**?

School districts are not required to provide transportation related to SES. The family (or SES provider) must provide or arrange transportation, if needed, for the student.

Who provides **Supplemental Educational Services**?

Different kinds of organizations and individuals are eligible to provide Supplemental Educational Services; however, you must use a provider who has been approved by the State Department of Education.

Why does the State Department of Education have to approve SES providers?

The approval process is intended to help insure success. In order to be approved providers must show that they use methods that are based on research and lead to improved student achievement. They must also show that their instruction is in line with state standards.

How do I find out who are approved SES providers?

Your school district should provide you with a list of approved SES providers. A list of approved providers can also be obtained from the website of the Arkansas Department of Education (www.ArkansasEd.org). When you get to the home page, click on the “No Child Left Behind” box at the bottom of the page. (A list of approved SES providers can be accessed from the “No Child Left Behind” page.) Provider information on the website includes contact information, focus areas, and the school districts served by each provider. A link to that specific webpage on the Arkansas Department of Education website is also provided on the Center for Effective Parenting / Arkansas State PIRC website (www.parenting-ed.org).

Who selects the SES provider for my child?

Parents are responsible for selecting a SES provider from the list of approved providers that is given to them by the school district.

Questions to ask when selecting a SES provider

Choosing the best SES provider for your child is important. Listed below are some questions you should ask SES providers to help determine which one is best for your child. A worksheet is also provided at the end of this handout to help you record answers and to compare different providers.

- *How are services offered?*
Are services provided one-on-one with your child or in a group with other students? Are they provided by a person, by a computer, or both? Think about what type of tutoring services would be best for your child. If your child has difficulty working independently, a provider who offers “face-to-face” services may be better than “computer-based” services.
- *How large is the group?*
If the services are offered in a group, ask how many students will be in the group. If the group is large, your child may not get the individual attention he/she needs. There should be no more than 10 students per tutor in a group.
- *Where does the provider offer services?*
Supplemental Educational Services may be offered in a variety of places including schools, community centers, offices, places of worship, and homes. Make sure you are comfortable with the location. Since the school district does not provide transportation for SES, make sure that you consider transportation issues when you select a SES provider.

- *When does the provider offer services?*

Supplemental Educational Services must be provided outside of regular school hours. Services are typically offered after school, before school, or on weekends. Make sure the provider you select offers the services at times that will work for you and your child.

- *How often and how long will sessions be?*

Check to see how many times a week your child will receive services and on what days. Also ask how long each session will last. You need to make sure your child will be able to attend all the sessions.

- *Who will be providing the services and what are their qualifications?*

Ask who will be providing the services to your child. Find out their qualifications and experience in providing tutoring and academic support. Some services may be internet-based or computer-based and involve little, if any, direct contact with a “live” tutor.

- *Will it be the same person working with your child in each session?*

If you select an organization that provides SES services, find out if it will be the same person that works with your child at each session. Some organizations may use different tutors at different sessions. You need to consider your child’s individual needs and whether this will be an important issue for them.

- *What subject areas do your services address?*

Make sure the provider’s services focus on the areas of need for your child. Talk to your child’s teachers in advance to help identify the areas your child needs the most help with (i.e., math, reading, science).

- *How will you keep me informed on my child’s progress?*

Find out how often the provider will let you know about how your child is progressing. Ask how this will occur (e.g., a written report, a meeting, a phone call, etc.). Ask about what will happen if your child does not make adequate progress.

- *What is your success record in raising student achievement?*

Ask the provider what type of success they have had working with other students similar to your child. Ask the provider if references from other parents are available. If references are available, ask for them.

If the services are computer-based ask the following questions:

- *What computer skills will my child need?*
Does your child have the necessary skills? If not, will the provider train them?
- *Will I need a computer and internet access?*
If the services are provided while your child is at home, you need to know if you need a computer and internet access. Some providers may bring a computer to use during a home session.
- *Is assistance also available from an actual person?*
If the services are computer-based, find out if there is also a person who will be available to help my child. If such support is phone-based check to see if there will be any long-distance phone charges that you will have to pay.

Developing an agreement with a SES provider

After selecting a SES provider, you should meet with the provider and a school representative to develop a formal agreement. This agreement should include:

- Specific academic goals for your child.
- Timelines for achieving those goals.
- A description of how your child's progress will be measured and reported to both you and the school.

What should I do if the SES provider is not helping my child improve?

Let your child's principal know that your child is not making progress. Ask if the school district has a process for switching to another SES provider.

Parent Worksheet

This worksheet is provided to help parents in collecting and comparing information about different SES providers.

SES Provider Information				
Questions to Ask SES Provider	Provider Name:	Provider Name:	Provider Name:	Provider Name:
How are services offered? (Individual, Group, Computer) If in a group, how large is the group?				
Where does the provider offer services?				
When does the provider offer services? How often and how long are sessions?				
Who will be providing the services? What are their qualifications ?				
Will it be the same person each session?				
What is the student-teacher ratio ?				
What subject areas do your services address?				
How will you keep me informed on my child's progress?				
What is your success record in raising student achievement? Are references from other parents available?				
If the services are computer-based , ask the following questions:				
What computer skills will my child need?				
Will I need a computer and internet access?				
Is support available from an actual person?				



Arkansas State PIRC/ Center for Effective Parenting



**Check to see how your child's school measures up!
Go to:**

www.schoolmatters.com



*AR State PIRC/Center for Effective Parenting
Little Rock Center: (501) 364-7580
NW Arkansas Center: (479) 751-6166*

For additional resources, visit our website:

www.parenting-ed.org

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