

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (PL 107-110). The law reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The law is intended to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind academically. It is to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, and the preparation and recruitment of quality teachers in schools.

NCLB requires that 100% of American public school students reach proficiency standards set by individual states in reading and math (and as of 2008, science) by 2014. The law also requires states to disaggregate data by income, race/ethnicity, language status, and disability; proficiency must be met by all children (with the exception of a very small number of severely disabled students); and schools must show ongoing “Adequate Yearly Progress.” Schools whose students fail to achieve these goals face increasingly serious penalties and sanctions.

**WHEREAS**, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001’s stated purpose is “to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind;”<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the law demands that states set adequate yearly progress targets and then meet them or lose federal money;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, among the tests for adequate yearly progress is that all teachers in core subjects must be “highly qualified” by the end of 2005-2006;<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, NCLB defines the core subjects as English, Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Foreign Languages, Civics & Government, Economics, Arts, History, and Geography<sup>4</sup> but not Health Education or Physical Education; and

**WHEREAS**, some schools have interpreted NCLB’s requirement to mean that teachers in health education and physical education do not need to be qualified in their content areas or be provided with professional development to improve their skills;<sup>5</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the only acknowledgment in NCLB for the contributions of any aspects of a coordinated school health program are in the areas of drug and violence prevention (Title IV, Part A) and for the benefit of low-achieving students who are at risk of not meeting the state’s academic achievements standards, are among a targeted population, and for whom health, nutrition, and other social services are not otherwise available (Title 1, Subpart 1 “(iii)(I)” (A); and

**WHEREAS**, many schools are not able to provide sufficient and appropriate professional development to build the capacity of teachers to teach effectively despite limited content

knowledge;<sup>6</sup> and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** that the American School Health Association:

1. Supports the intent of No Child Left Behind to raise educational standards; improve teacher preparation, training, and recruitment; school reform; dropout reduction; school accountability; and provide quality education.
2. Recommends that federal, state, and local governments provide adequate funding and technological resources to schools to meet the goals of No Child Left Behind.
3. Recommends that health education and physical education be added to the definition of core academic subjects in No Child Left Behind to ensure that such instructional programs meet the standards for academic accountability.
4. Recommends that revisions to No Child Left Behind address the need for qualified pupil services personnel professionals (school nurses and physicians, mental health specialists, school social workers, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, occupational and physical therapists, dietitians, nutritionists, prevention specialists, behavior specialists, and others) in providing a system of support for student learning.
5. Recommends that all teachers, including those who teach health education and physical education, should be highly qualified to teach their subject matter.

## References

1. Section 1. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Available at:  
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2. DuBois LA. No Child Left Behind: Who's Accountable? Available at:  
[http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref\\_No\\_Child\\_Left\\_Whos](http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_No_Child_Left_Whos). 2006
3. Title 1. Section 1119. a. 2. A (2001). No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Available at:  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>
4. Title IX, Part A, Section 9101, 11. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Available at:  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>
5. Are We Leaving Kids Behind? A Report on the Impact of No Child Left Behind on Physical Education and Health Education in the United States. Kent OH: American School Health Association; 2007.
6. Mizell H. NCLB: Conspiracy, Compliance, or Creativity? Maryland Council of Staff Developers Conference, April 23, 2003, Columbia MD. Available at:  
[www.middleweb.com/HMnclb.html](http://www.middleweb.com/HMnclb.html)

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