

What's next for No Child Left Behind? - An Answer!

Let me make one thing perfectly clear. (Nixon) To blame the classroom teachers for the crisis in education is equivalent to blaming the combat soldier in Iraq for the mess they find themselves a part of.

"The road to Hell is paved with good intentions"

This was a phrase my grandmother would say when I would do something wrong and then say, "I didn't mean to do it." NCLB or "No child left behind" was fraught with good intentions. Unfortunately, the law of unintended consequences has ruled the implementation from the beginning.

Let's take "National Standards." It is good that we have a set of written standards to guide the development of curriculum. It is good that states have followed by implementing state standards that meet or exceed the national ones. It is good that the laws have put teeth into the accountability to those standards. However, at the grassroots level, the classroom teacher powerless, voiceless, facing a hostile and often uninvolved public, defensive administrators, uninformed school boards, and pugnacious politicians, find themselves going against their own professional judgment and teaching the facts contained in the standardized test that measure the accountability to NCLB.

There are five nationwide goals for all children embodied in NCLB:

- proficiency in reading and math by the 2013-2014 school year
- English proficiency for limited English proficient students
- qualified teachers in every classroom by 2005-2006
- safe and drug-free learning environments
- high school graduation for all students

I propose two separate but equal solutions to meet these goals. (no pun intended)

1. **Fully fund a K-4 war on basic literacy (administered locally)**
2. **Fully fund and develop an accredited K-12 online school that meets the national standards in all major languages. Make it operational 24/7/365 and available to every citizen. Have computer centers in every school that is open to walk-in learners and staffed by accredited Mentors. (administered nationally)**

These two programs would exist concurrently. In addition establish a "National Center for Excellence in Curriculum". This would be a research center providing technical assistance, online and by phone, to educators and families needing assistance. In addition this center would continuously investigate and empirically assess educational theories and practice to find and implement the best at the grassroots level. This center would also inform the two programs.

The center should be autonomous from any educational institution but draw upon the intellectual capital of them all.

This would cost much less than the current fragmented solutions and could easily be within the national timeline