FAIR, FLEXIBLE AND FOCUSED

President Obama's Blueprint for Accountability

We must reform our schools to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps, inspire our children to excel, and turn around those schools that for too many young Americans aren't providing them with the education they need to succeed in college and a career.

—President Barack Obama

NCLB focuses on high-need students.

No Child Left Behind has helped focus the conversation about school reform on student achievement. It shines a bright light on the achievement gap. For the first time, schools are reporting information about how they are serving all students.

But NCLB has many flaws.

- It provides states with incentives to lower standards.
- It mislabels schools as failing and imposes one-size-fits-all interventions.
- It doesn't do enough to recognize student growth or school progress.

President Obama's Blueprint for Reform will fix NCLB's flaws by:

- Asking states to set standards that prepare students for college and careers.
- Creating a fair accountability system that recognizes and rewards growth and progress.
- Providing flexibility to state and local educators to innovate and create local solutions.
- Focusing rigorous, meaningful interventions and support for the lowest-performing schools that also have not demonstrated any progress.

The accountability system will:

- Recognize and reward schools that increase student achievement and close achievement gaps —and recognize and reward districts and states that turn around their lowest-performing schools.
- Give the majority of schools and districts the flexibility to use a wide variety of data to design their own improvement plans to increase achievement and close gaps.
- Challenge schools that have achievement gaps that aren't closing or low student achievement that's not improving to use data-driven, evidence-based interventions.
- Require states to identify the bottom 5 percent of their schools that haven't made progress and turn them around using one of four models. These are schools that have been low-performing year after year. It's time to stop tinkering around the edges. These schools will need dramatic changes to produce dramatic results.

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