



EDITORIALS

American Education Isn't Making AYP

Let's start by establishing that No Child Left Behind is seriously flawed, unfairly labels schools as failing when students are improving and offers schools one way to pass and 37 subgroup ways to fail.

But let's finish by acknowledging the U.S. education system as a whole is failing, 70 percent of eighthgraders can't read at grade level, 93 percent of middle school science teachers have little to no science training, 24 countries outscore us in math, 20 outscore us in science and 20 have better graduation rates.

It is important to point out the NCLB system is weighted against passing and overshadows success stories — like Navajo Elementary, which revamped its curriculum to make adequate yearly progress for the first time; like Rio Grande High, which improved reading proficiency by 24 percent in one year but still failed to make AYP; like Sierra Vista Elementary, which again failed in one subgroup but whose students surpass state goals; like Griegos Elementary, which has made AYP for four years and has scores rivaling more affluent campuses.

But it is just as important to acknowledge there is a lot of work left to be done. It must be done, and it must involve more than throwing money at the problem. That isn't enough.

Because until our schools embrace and meet rigorous standards, there's no reason for businesses to come to or stay in America. And when the best jobs go overseas, our future goes with them.

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