



Why “No Child Left Behind” Hasn’t Worked

President Reagan wanted to dump the department but was prevented from doing so by his own big-government Republicans. And when George H. W. Bush became President in 1989, he initiated another federal education program, Goals 2000. Ten years later, the *Washington Post* reported (12/10/99): “The nation has not met any of the eight educational goals for the year 2000 set by President Bush and the governors of all 50 states.”



But that didn’t stop newly elected George Bush from signing into law on his third day in office an even bigger federal program, No Child Left Behind, on January 8, 2002. Standing beside him were smiling Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy and other liberals. Our spendthrift Congressmen had passed the bill 384 to 45 in the House and 91 to 8 in the Senate.

The purpose of the law was to set certain academic standards for the schools and make the schools accountable for their performances. An article in *Time* magazine, marking the 10th anniversary of the bill (1/23/12), reported:

Teachers and administrators say NCLB sets impossibly high standards and has narrowed curriculums, forcing teachers to teach to the tests, and it has labeled far too many schools as “in need of improvement,” creating a race to the bottom as states dumb down their standards to ensure that more of their schools meet NCLB’s rigid benchmarks. “It’s become meaningless,” Fairfax County superintendent Jack Dale says of the law, under which 62% of Virginia’s schools fell short of the mark last year, compared with 39% the year before.

When asked about the failings of NCLB, former President Bush replied:

No Child Left Behind basically says, if you’re going to fund schools, like we’ve been doing for years, we in the federal government ought to demand accountability, which seems to me a very conservative principle. Yet some conservatives are saying No Child Left Behind is an improper role for federal government. In that case, it’s more philosophy than actual analysis of how No Child Left Behind works and its effectiveness.

That statement made it clear that Bush knew the difference between conservatism and big-government Republicanism. He chose the latter, which has made the Republicans as responsible for our horrendous debt as the Democrats.

By the way, George H.W. Bush was the first President who racked up a budget of over a trillion dollars. His son raised it to \$3.1 trillion. When you’ve got all that much money to play with, you’ve got to find



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on January 27, 2012

ways to spend it. Worthless education programs are a great way to rip off the taxpayer while making the educators happy. It's also a sure way of bankrupting the country and leading us into world government.

Of course, none of these federal programs does anything to raise the test scores of minority children because they are stuck with all of these progressive programs that refuse to teach children to read with intensive, systematic phonics. And that's why dropout rates keep climbing, and the SAT reading scores have dropped to their lowest point in decades. According to the *Washington Post* of September 14, 2011:

SAT reading scores for graduating high school seniors this year reached the lowest point in nearly four decades, reflecting a steady decline in performance in that subject on the college admissions test, the College Board reported Wednesday.

So no matter how many federal educational programs the Congress creates, there will be no improvement in literacy for the simple reason that the progressives are opposed to high literacy. And it all goes back to 1896 when John Dewey, progressive guru-in-chief, wrote:

It is one of the great mistakes of education to make reading and writing constitute the bulk of the school work the first two years. The true way is to teach them incidentally as the outgrowth of the social activities at this time. Thus language is not primarily the expression of thought, but the means of social communication.... If language is abstracted from social activity and made an end in itself, it will not give its whole value as a means of development.... It is not claimed that by the method suggested, the child will learn to read as much, nor perhaps as readily in a given period as by the usual method. That he will make more rapid progress later when the true language interest develops ... can be claimed with confidence.

Dewey was, of course, dead wrong. Five-year-old children are dynamos of language learning, and that's why they should be taught to read at that age. Children taught to read by the progressive look-say method do not later make more rapid progress. They acquire reading disabilities that make it impossible for them to become highly literate. Dr. Samuel T. Orton, a neuropathologist who had studied reading-disabled children in Iowa in the 1920s, wrote in the February 1929 issue of the *Journal of Educational Psychology*:

I wish to emphasize at the beginning that the strictures which I have to offer here do not apply to the use of the sight method of teaching reading as a whole but only to its effects on a restricted group of children for whom, as I think we can show, this technique is not only not adapted but often proves an actual obstacle to reading progress, and moreover I believe that this group is one of considerable educational importance both because of its size and because here faulty teaching methods may not only prevent the acquisition of academic education by children of average capacity but may also give rise to far reaching damage to their emotional life.

The title of Dr. Orton's article was "The 'Sight Method' of Teaching Reading as a Source of Reading Disability." The title alone should have warned the educators that what they were about to unleash on the schools of America was a teaching method that would cause widespread dyslexia. But I suspect that this is what they actually wanted.

Dewey made the ultimate goal of progressive education quite clear when he wrote in *My Pedagogic Creed* (1927):

I believe that the social life of the child is the basis of concentration, or correlation, in all his



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on January 27, 2012

training and growth.... I believe, therefore, that the true center of correlation on the school subjects is not science, nor literature, nor history, nor geography, but the child's social activities. I believe, therefore, in the so-called expressive or constructive activities as the center of correlation.

The purpose of that socially oriented curriculum was to create a collectivist mindset in the child, to produce the kind of individuals who would bring about socialism in America. The downgrading of literacy and the upgrading of socialization became the basis of the new progressive curriculum. After a good 75 years of it, we have the literacy disaster that is destroying the American intellect, and we have a socialist in the White House. In other words, the progressives have been wildly successful in bringing capitalistic, individualistic America to the brink of a full socialist system, and as long as the progressives control American education, there is no way of knowing if our constitutional Republic can ever be restored.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

Subscribe